Embedding a University teacher education programme in a school; an evaluation of a school and university partnership

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Contents

Executive summary

Introduction
The government Implementation Plan 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers' (2011:8) suggests that 'we will … require university ITT (Initial Teacher Training) providers to involve schools fully in their provision'. In 2012, the University involved in this research looked to experiment with an innovative way of embedding a University programme in a school. This research inquiry investigated this unique experiment, focusing on project evaluation as seen by key stakeholders. The political climate surrounding teacher education in England changed rapidly following the start of the project, and the experiment of school-embedded provision was not continued after July 2013. The research project therefore took on a new dimension as a source interest for those endeavouring to forge successful partnerships between schools and HEIs (Higher Education Institutions).

Research aims
The original aim of the research project was to investigate the extent to which this model of embedding a university programme in a school appeared to result in:
- Confident NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers)
- Skills
- Reflective practitioners
- Understanding of wider aspects of school life
- Employability/better knowledge of what it is like to work in a school
- Student teacher retention

The subsequent aims brought about by changing government education policy were:
- to consider challenges and opportunities inherent in school-based and school-led teacher education and offer suggestions for effective practice
- to consider effective partnership working between schools and universities.

Methods and methodology
A case study approach was used for this research project in order, as Gray explains (2004: 124), 'to uncover a relationship between a phenomenon and the context in which it is occurring'. The focus of this study is specific: an innovative programme of teacher education resulting from a partnership between a school and a university within the timescale of an academic year. The research investigated the impact of the innovation on both institutions and on school and university staff and student teachers concerned. The study presented here took the form of an evaluation which investigated the experience of an embedded programme of teacher education. Case study involves living with complexity and ambiguity together with a readiness to accept uncertainty. Such an open-ended approach was suited to the present study, which was explicitly experimental, and where the focus, the professional development of individual student teachers, was open-ended. The programme was regarded from the outset as a pilot; the research was intended to track the programme in action, and to gather a range of perspectives on its impact over the

year, in order to generate the questions which those involved in its introduction would need to consider for subsequent development.

The research tracked the progress of the teacher education programme from September 2012 – September 2013. The research over that year was originally intended as an initial evaluation of 'embeddedness' in practice which would aim to benefit development of the programme in the future. Because of changes at the university during the year, and the subsequent introduction of School Direct in the school, plans for further development of the programme were cut short. The research continued as an evaluation, and the experience of the programme was used within the school to inform the planning for School Direct.

The participants and stakeholders on the project comprised:

- the PGCE student teachers on the programme
- university MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) staff for the programme (MFL programme leader, MFL lecturer /tutor in the school)
- school staff involved in the programme

Participant perspectives were obtained through individual face to face interviews with staff and student teachers and through a student teacher evaluation questionnaire. Researchers also carried out observations of the programme in action and collected documentation on the programme and contextual information on the school.

Observations took place during the first four weeks of the autumn term before the student teachers dispersed for the initial school placements.

The first round of interviews with school and university staff took place during the second half of the autumn term. All interviewees were asked the same questions in order to ensure consistency in comparison; the interviews were semi-structured. The interviews were recorded, anonymised and then sent to be transcribed; once the transcripts returned they were sent to interviewees to be checked for accuracy before the start of data analysis.

The second round of staff interviews took place towards the end of the summer term. The same procedures were followed as above. The questions were the same as in the first round except for the omission of questions concerned with the planning of the programme in order to place the emphasis on participants' views of the programme's impact at the end of the academic year.

A questionnaire for the student teachers aimed to identify student teacher perspectives on the programme for further exploration in the student teacher interviews. All student teachers who had agreed to take part in the research were invited by email to complete the questionnaire.

The student teacher interviews took place during the first half of the summer term; student teachers who had completed the questionnaire were invited to take part in a short confidential interview in which they were asked for their views on the embedded programme and its impact on their experience of teacher education.

Ethical approval for the research was gained from the University Ethics Committee. Note that many of the quotations from participants in the research are not directly attributed; this is to protect the confidentiality of the participants in this small scale project.

Main findings
It is acknowledged that the main findings of this report are from a limited sample of participants and often from one individual. The success of the embedded programme is through the perceptions of these participants and it is not possible to make comparisons with more traditional programmes of teacher education. The value of the findings lies in the questions they raise, and the ways forward they suggest, concerning school/university partnership.

General
- School and university staff felt that regarding the priorities for teacher education, student teachers need 'exposure to all aspects of teaching' in order to acquire as early as possible a holistic perspective on everyday life within a school and within a professional community.
- School and university staff felt that the cultivation of reflection was an essential part of teacher education.
- School and university staff felt that structured observation was crucial, and student teachers should observe as many different teaching styles as possible.
- The embedded programme allowed student teachers to see the practical side from day one.
- The embedded programme was particularly useful for foreign student teachers to learn about the routines and culture of an English school.
- The programme was beneficial for school staff as it encouraged a focus on mentoring skills.
- Although there were benefits to having the university tutor with the student teachers, there were also some feelings of claustrophobia.
- There were benefits for school staff, providing opportunities for them to gain experience in teaching student teachers. It was valuable for staff to see the enthusiasm of student teachers.
- The student teachers who went on to do their teaching placement in the school seemed to have benefited most, as they felt part of the school.
- There was limited suggestion that the student teachers were far less forward on the academic side than in previous years, despite the advantages of immersion in the school context.

- The large number of student teachers involved (25) had made their full engagement in school life problematic.
- Planning the initiative had been a challenge. There had been inadequate time to plan thoroughly and coherently for the collaboration of two discrete institutions, with their own cultures, priorities and practices.
- Not all parties were concerned from the outset in the planning and perceptions of the rationale behind the initiative differed between individual stakeholders.
- Other perceived disadvantages of the programme were: the lack of transparency and communication between university and school staff, and the student teachers; the room allocated to the student teachers separated them from school life; the student teachers might have appreciated a university environment; for the student teachers, travel to the school was too far (often students deliberately choose a university close to home to minimise travel costs).
- After all the effort on both sides to make the programme successful, it was deeply regretted by university and school staff that the programme would not continue because of the government initiative of School Direct

Impact
The extent to which this model of embedding a university programme in a school appeared to result in:
- Confident NQTs – there was a general feeling that the student teachers had much more self-confidence by the end of the programme. However, there was no way of telling whether this might have been the case on a traditional PGC course, or whether the students' confidence would continue into their NQT year
- Skills – there was some evidence to suggest that the student teachers understood better the complexity of a teacher's role through the opportunity to try things out before the pressure of a formal placement. They had gained knowledge of the school system through experience of a particular school; this was particularly useful for the foreign student teachers.
- Reflective practitioners – there was no evidence to suppose that the students developed further in this respect than in a good traditional university programme, but all participants agreed on the importance of reflection.
- Understanding of the wider aspects of school life – the student teachers were believed by some participants to have gained an understanding of school life much earlier than they would on a traditional course, however this view was not shared by all.
- Employability/better knowledge of what it is like to work in a school – there was some evidence to suggest that the mock interviews in the school had been beneficial and that some student teachers had been appointed to jobs earlier than usual.
- Student teacher retention – there was some feeling that the embedded programme might help those not sure whether they wanted to teach or not to decide at an earlier stage than usual; there was also some limited suggestion

5

from student teachers that teaching placement was more important overall in the decision as to whether to become a teacher or not.

Partnership

- The importance in this kind of partnership of striking the right balance between the needs of the school, the needs of student teachers, and the needs of the University.
- 'Embeddedness' was seen to go beyond 'school-based' to become a real meshing of purposes.
- It was felt that problems with communication, different institutional cultures and difficulties with timetables could be resolved for the second year.
- For successful partnership, respective partners need to understand the contribution of the different components of the programme and where they fit into the whole.
- Time is needed to develop an equal partnership.
- The school staff felt more confident about the prospect of working with School Direct because of the 'embedded' experience with the student teachers.

Concluding thoughts and recommendations

By the end of the first year of the embedded programme (July 2013), the Government had introduced School Direct as the way forward for teacher training: With the emphasis on teacher training moving to schools, it was decided by the university not to continue the embedded programme into its second year. The disappointment of this was evident in the interviews with the participants who, despite early misgivings and the difficulties that had to be surmounted, had nevertheless been keen to 'do it better' next year. In terms of this research project, the emphasis of its value has shifted. Originally it was hoped it would be possible to use the embedded programme as a model for others to copy; however, with a new government initiative, the value of the research has shifted; this report offers a commentary on partnership working between a particular school and a particular university, thereby presenting possibilities for new models of partnership which might arise from School Direct.

Recommendations:

1. Within a constantly shifting landscape of teacher education, it is essential to maintain the values associated with good teacher education for children and young people. Although the embedded programme had to be abandoned because of new government initiatives, the research has value in suggesting the following imperatives for effective partnership between schools and universities:

    - the importance of involving all school and university stakeholders in planning from the outset;

6

- the importance of establishing and maintaining effective lines of communication for everyone;

- the importance of engaging in transparency in order to cultivate trust.

2. This study suggests that there is a constant need to continue to research teacher education; new 'experiments', 'initiatives', etc. are not necessarily well grounded or successful and it is recommended that all new ideas in education are piloted and thoroughly researched for their effectiveness.

3. This research involved school teachers, university tutors, student teachers and, by extension, children and young people; it is recommended that any initiative in teacher education be seen to benefit all stakeholders and, particularly children and young people. The views of participants in the research suggested ideas on what it is to be a teacher, and where teacher professionalism is to be found. It is recommended that these concepts be considered in depth when formulating any new initiative in teacher education

Full report
1. Introduction
1.1. The government Implementation Plan 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers' (DfE, 2011b:8) suggests that 'we will … require university ITT providers to involve schools fully in their provision'. In 2012, the university involved in this research looked to experiment with an innovative way of embedding a University programme in a school. The university in this research project has highly successful MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate of Education) provision, and developed an enhanced partnership with a partner secondary school for this experiment. This research inquiry investigated this unique experiment, focusing on project evaluation as seen by key stakeholders. The political climate surrounding teacher education in England changed rapidly following the start of the project, and the experiment of school-embedded provision was not continued after July 2013. The research project therefore took on a new dimension as a source of interest for those endeavouring to forge successful partnerships between schools and HEIs (Higher Education Institutions).   As such it will be of interest to all those involved in initial teacher education, in all phases (early years, primary and secondary) from all areas of the UK and beyond.

2. Research aims
2.1 The original aim of the research project was to investigate the extent to which this model of embedding a university programme in a school appeared to result in:
- Confident NQTs
- Skills
- Reflective practitioners
- Understanding of wider aspects of school life
- Employability/better knowledge of what it is like to work in a school
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The subsequent aims brought about by changing government education policy were:
- to consider challenges and opportunities inherent in school-based and school-led teacher education and offer suggestions for effective practice
- to consider effective partnership working between schools and universities.

3. Background
3.1 In February, 2012, the university[1] showcased the Education Faculty's unique Learning Partnership model to Nick Gibb, the Minister for Schools. The university's unique Learning Partnership model set out to develop collaborative ways of working with schools, academies, local authorities, private companies and professional organisations across the region and internationally.
Following in-depth discussion with faculty staff and student teachers, the minister was able to see at first hand how the model works while on a visit to one of the university's existing partners, the research school involved in this research project. The minister described the partnership as 'potentially inspirational' and officially

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[1] The 'university' refers to the university involved in the research throughout the document.

opened and toured the new joint modern foreign languages (MFL) facility where, from 2012, in what was described as 'a ground-breaking development' the university MFL student teachers would be based throughout their course. The aim of this innovative partnership was to immerse the student teachers in a school environment throughout their studies so that when they graduated as newly qualified teachers they would enter the profession with extra confidence and skills.

Reasons for the initiative

3.2 The university / school MFL initiative was developed for a number of related reasons. There was considerable pressure to ensure that teacher education maximised the opportunity for student teachers to benefit from work-based learning. The reason that MFL was chosen rather than other subjects was because the Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) report on language teaching reported that, in the area where the school is located, schools tended to show weakness in speaking and use of the target language:

> The overall progress made by students[2] at Key Stages 3 and 4 was good or outstanding in over half of the 470 lessons observed. However, there were weaknesses in too many lessons, particularly in speaking, listening and reading in modern languages.

> In many of the secondary schools visited, opportunities for students to listen to and communicate in the target language were often limited by many teachers' unpreparedness to use it. Too often, students were not taught how to respond to everyday requests and thus routine work in the target language and opportunities to use it spontaneously were too few.

<div align="center">(Ofsted, 2011:6)</div>

The university has a reputation for its unique approach to the teaching of languages which specifically emphasises these attributes. Consequently, locating MFL teacher education in a school in the area reported on here by Ofsted was seen to provide an opportunity to gain greater synergy between initial training and continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers.

In 2012, the university had flourishing MFL PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) provision. This initiative involved a cohort of student teachers undertaking a large element of their training in the research school following two weeks induction. Although student teachers continued to undertake their main placements in a number of schools with several working at the school involved in this research, the previously university-based elements were significantly more integrated into the school context (for example: observing, pupil shadowing, micro teaching and joint planning, delivery and reflection on teaching sessions) and work with children and teachers began earlier in the programme. The intention was that this integrated training would ease the normal chasm that student teachers face in moving from the university environment into teaching practice.

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[2] 'Students' refers to pupils in the school.

School and university partnership

3.3 The DfE's (Department of Education) teacher training strategy, 'Training the Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers' (2011a:13) quote Reinhartz and Stetson, (1999): 'where teachers have had extensive initial training in schools, they perform better'. The DfE suggests this as an argument to support their intention to increase the involvement of schools in ITT (Initial Teacher Training). In the implementation plan of Training the next Generation of Teachers (2011b:11) they recognise the role of Higher Education Institutions in initial teacher training (ITT) but recommend strengthening the university- school partnership:

> Meaningful involvement of schools in teacher training is already found in the best university-led partnerships that offer PGCE courses. While increasing the role of schools through "School Direct" and accrediting groups of schools as ITT providers, we will also require university ITT providers to involve schools fully in their provision…only universities and other providers who demonstrate extensive school involvement and high quality training continue to have a role in ITT.
>
> <div align="center">DfE (2011b:13:8)</div>

The research project tracked a unique experiment in partnership between a university and a school. This partnership implied an increased amount of collaboration in order for it to work.

4. Methodology and Methods
4.1 Case study
A case study approach to investigation is particularly useful, as Gray explains (2004: 124) 'when the researcher is trying to uncover a relationship between a phenomenon and the context in which it is occurring'. While surveys tend to collect data on a limited range of topics from many people, case studies can explore many themes and subjects, but concentrate on a specific range of people, organisations or contexts. The focus of this study is specific: an innovative programme of teacher education resulting from a partnership between a school and a university within the timescale of an academic year. The research investigates the impact of the innovation on both institutions, on school and university staff and on the student teachers concerned.

In recommending the particular advantages of case study for evaluation, Simons (1996: 228) refers to the importance of studying an innovation in context, in order to 'try and understand the broad range of factors that contributed to the success or failure of the innovation, to capture the complexity of the interactions as the innovative ideas were interpreted in practice, and to understand the uniqueness of the case'. The study presented here takes the form of an evaluation which investigates the experience of an embedded programme of teacher education.

Case studies have the advantage of allowing more space than quantitative studies for participants' perceptions and judgments; presenting these multiple perspectives makes case study more open-ended and more complex; it provides 'opportunities for

policy makers to increase their understanding ... in order to make informed judgments'. Multiple sources of data also help to enhance 'construct validity' (Gray 2004: 129) because as multiple sources of evidence they can provide 'multiple measures of the same construct'. A case study approach allowed researchers here to include a range of perspectives: they collected course documentation; they observed the programme in action; they gathered a range of participants' perceptions through semi-structured interviews, with staff from both institutions and with the student teachers. The case study approach accrued diverse perspectives on the embedded programme over the academic year.

Simons accords a further advantage to case study in its freedom from 'the strictures of pre-ordinate designs' (1996: 229); this allows researchers to change focus within the case if necessary and also provides flexibility, particularly helpful in studies like the present one, enabling, for example, the timing of research procedures, such as interviews and observations, to respond to the realities of everyday life in a school.

Case study does have drawbacks; they can generate large volumes of data and they can be very time-consuming. The disadvantage most commonly cited is that it is often difficult to generalise. In acknowledging the focus of case study on the particular and unique, Stake (1978: 6) asserted its capacity for offering an alternative route towards generalisation:

> To know particulars fleetingly of course is to know next to nothing.
> What becomes useful understanding is a full and thorough knowledge
> of the particular, recognizing it also in new and foreign contexts.

Stake refers to this process as 'naturalistic generalisation ... arrived at by recognizing the similarities of objects and issues in and out of context and by sensing the natural co-variations of happenings'. Simons (1996: 231) refers to 'the paradox of case study' in advocating its appropriateness in examining educational change, 'By studying the uniqueness of the particular, we come to understand the universal'. Although, at first sight this appears 'self-contradictory',

> ... it is precisely through the engagement of the case worker in the paradox
> and living with the tension that creates, holding it open to disbelief and
> re-examination, that we eventually come to realise the significance of
> the event, instance or circumstance and the universal understanding it
> evokes'.

As Stake (1978: 7) observed, the case study 'proliferates rather than narrows. One is left with more to pay attention to rather than less'; case study involves living with complexity and ambiguity together with a readiness to accept uncertainty. Such an open-ended approach is suited to the present study, which is explicitly experimental, and where the focus, the professional development of individual

student teachers, is open-ended. The programme was regarded from the outset as a pilot; the research was intended to track the programme in action, and to gather a range of perspectives on its impact over the year, in order to generate the questions which those involved in its introduction would need to consider for subsequent development.

4.2 Validity and reliability

Case studies rely on data collected from particular samples or situations; this means that researchers need to give particular consideration to validity and reliability. Yin (1994, in Gray 2004: 135) notes the difficulty in case studies of defining the constructs being investigated. The role of multiple perspectives is crucial in order to avoid the risk of definition according to the researcher's personal impressions. Here the concept of 'embeddedness' is the construct under scrutiny. A framework for definition was implicit in the structure and location of the programme; individual interpretations of the concept were collected by researchers through interviews with the university and school staff involved, and with a sample of the student teachers on the programme. Views from the student teacher group as a whole were elicited through an evaluation survey at the end of the year. In addition both researchers carried out observations of the programme in action and documentation relating to the course was collected from the university tutor. Together the range of perspectives testify to the complexity of the construct, as demonstrated by the findings in the following chapter.

According to Gray (2004: 138), conditions for reliability are met 'if the findings and conclusion of one researcher can be replicated by another researcher doing the same case study'. In this case both researchers visited the school and carried out observations, both researchers were involved in data analysis and they agreed on the findings and conclusion. The research itself was carefully documented throughout; data collection included the gathering of general contextual information on the school and the use of prepared data collection instruments according to set procedures; as the programme was a pilot, this meant that the same procedures could be applied to any follow up study in the future.

4.3 Method

The research tracked the progress of the teacher education programme from September 2012 – September 2013. The research over that year was originally intended as an initial evaluation of 'embeddedness' in practice which would aim to benefit development of the programme in the future. In September 2013, the project included the possibility of more extensive research, and comparative study with other models in the following year. Because of changes at the university during the year, and the subsequent introduction of School Direct in the school, plans for further development of the programme were cut short. The research continued as an evaluation, and the experience of the programme was used within the school to inform the planning for School Direct.

4.3.1 Participants and stakeholders
The participants and stakeholders on the project comprised:
- the PGCE student teachers on the programme
- university MFL staff for the programme
  (MFL programme leader, MFL lecturer /tutor in the school)
- school staff involved in the programme

All staff involved in the programme agreed to take part in the research. The 25 PGCE student teachers recruited to the course for September 2012 were also invited to take part. All but nine of the students agreed to participate and completed the student teacher evaluation questionnaire. These students were subsequently invited to take part in the student teacher interviews.

Throughout this report participants are referred to in the following ways:

- student teachers / trainees: both these terms are used to describe participants following a university course to gain Qualified Teacher status. The terms are copied as they are used in either texts or interviews.

- university lecturer/ tutor: this term is used to describe a member of university staff engaged in teacher education.

- professional mentor: this term refers to the member of staff in the school with overall responsibility for working with the student teachers.

4.3.2 Data collection
As Gray points out (2004: 132), within a single case there may be different units of analysis. In the present study the units of analysis were as follows:
- the official procedures and processes of the programme as presented in the course documentation
- participant perspectives
- observations of the programme in action

Participant perspectives were obtained through individual face to face interviews with staff and student teachers and through a student teacher evaluation questionnaire. Researchers also carried out observations of the programme in action and collected documentation on the programme and contextual information on the school.

Observations
Observations took place during the first four weeks of the autumn term before the student teachers dispersed for the initial school placements. The researchers were present during activities as non-participants; they observed two sessions when the student teachers worked with the university tutor in the room allocated for their use in the school; the researchers also observed the student teachers working with teachers and pupils in the MFL classrooms. Field notes were taken on site to record the observations, and were written up immediately afterwards.

Interviews

The first round of interviews with school and university staff took place during the second half of the autumn term. The university lecturer was involved in planning the programme and was responsible for teaching the student teachers; as the course tutor for an embedded programme the lecturer was formally 'based' at the school. The school staff included the headteacher, the professional mentor for PGCE students, the head of the MFL department, and a member of MFL staff. Prospective interviewees were sent an e-mail inviting them to take part in the research; the e-mail included the following attachments: an information sheet about the research and a consent form, which the participant could either return electronically or complete on the day of the interview. Interviewees were advised that if they accepted the invitation, the full schedule of interview questions would be sent prior to the interview. There was no compulsion to prepare for the interview, it was suggested that they might want to look through the questions in advance in order to allow time for consideration.

All interviewees were asked the same questions in order to ensure consistency in comparison; the interviews were semi-structured, with each question introducing a topic to allow interviewees to develop their own perspective on it with as little interference from the interviewer as possible. The interviews were recorded, anonymised and then sent to be transcribed; once the transcripts returned they were sent to interviewees to be checked for accuracy before the start of data analysis.

Second staff interviews

The second round of staff interviews took place towards the end of the summer term. The same procedures were followed as above. The questions were the same as in the first round except for the omission of questions concerned with the planning of the programme in order to place the emphasis on participants' views of the programme's impact at the end of the academic year.

Student teacher questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed to identify student teacher perspectives on the programme for further exploration in the student teacher interviews. All student teachers who had agreed to take part in the research were invited by email to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted through Bristol Online Surveys and allowed student teachers to retain anonymity throughout.

Student teacher interviews

The student teacher interviews took place during the first half of the summer term; student teachers who had completed the questionnaire were invited to take part in a short confidential interview in which they were asked for their views on the embedded programme and its impact on their experience of teacher education. Interviewees were selected on a 'first come, first served' basis according to availability on the day. As with the staff interviews, all interviewees were asked the same questions, and the interviews were semi-structured to allow the student teachers to develop their own perspectives. The interviews were recorded and then anonymised, and once the transcripts returned from the transcriber they were sent to interviewees to be checked for accuracy before the start of data analysis.

4.3.3 Data Analysis

The interview data were analysed through a repeated process of comparison of interview responses across transcripts with close reference to the interview questions, the observation notes, and to the programme and school contextual data as necessary.

Examination of the questionnaire responses comprised checking the frequency of type of response for each question, identifying more individual responses and considering any common themes.

4.3.4 Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was gained from the University Ethics Committee. This was based on the following information requested by the committee: project description; aims of the research; research process; potential outcomes and dissemination. It was made clear to all prospective participants that they could choose whether to take part; it was explained that those who did participate had the right to withdraw consent for their interview data to be used at any time up to the point at which the interview material was aggregated with other data during data analysis.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. It was made clear to participants that they would have the opportunity to check their own transcripts before the start of data analysis and that the identity of the participant would be anonymised before transcription. They were also informed that the recordings would be kept on a password protected computer and destroyed after five years in accordance with university policy. The research team ensured that the PGCE students were aware that there was no connection between their assessment and this research and that no data collected would go further than the research team.

A copy of the informed consent form (Appendix 1) and information sheet (Appendix 2) are to be found in the Appendices at the end of this document.

No data were collected relating to any children or young people at the school and at no stage during the research was any reference made to any individual child or young person. Throughout the report, the names of the school and university are anonymised for any external publications.

5. Findings

5.1 Interviews

The first round of interviews with university and school staff took place during the second half of the autumn term. During their first four weeks the student teachers had spent a total of five full days in the school and had also visited other schools in the area. Interviewees were asked to reflect on the development of the programme and its impact on the institutions and individuals involved during those first few weeks of the academic year.

5.1.1 Defining the priorities for a teacher education programme

The interviewees were asked first what in their view was most important in a teacher education programme. Everyone agreed that student teachers needed 'exposure to all aspects of teaching' in order to acquire as early as possible a holistic perspective on everyday life within a school and within a professional community. One individual explained that if student teachers are going to be 'fired up' about what it is to be a teacher

> ... the logic of that is that they need to be in school working
> with young people because that is the motivation ... seeing the
> impact on young people.

They needed extended opportunities to observe for themselves the diversity of roles and responsibilities of a teacher, as form tutor and subject teacher within the classroom, and as a member of staff within a department and within the structure of the institution as a whole. At the same time, interviewees believed time for reflection was critical; as 'reflective practitioners' it was important that a teacher education programme allocated sufficient time to explore educational theory and corresponding opportunities to analyse and share practical experience with their peers and university tutor in the light of their academic studies. It was suggested that 'selecting the right people to start with was important', a certain 'attitude to professionalism' as well as the academic ability required. Once on the course it was a matter of helping student teachers to understand 'how and when and why learning actually happens'. No matter how much observation and interaction with pupils takes place, unless this is followed by analysis and structured discussion it will be of little benefit. 'Structured observation', was crucial, observation complemented by sessions for 'being made to think', to analyse and discuss 'what they had seen in the classroom'. It was recommended that student teachers should observe as many different teaching styles as possible and notice respective impacts on different groups of pupils. The 'key' was to enable student teachers to take the subject knowledge and 'unlock the secrets of that so that they can deliver it ... in a variety of different ways...':

> ... it's not just knowing the language or knowing the pedagogical
> theory, it's how to be able to get that across to a wide variety
> of students ... putting the theory into practice...

The embedded programme was seen to have allowed student teachers 'to see the practical side from day one ... theory in action'. While you cannot expect new teachers to be 'completely ready for the classroom' it was suggested that by the end of a programme student teachers should have acquired 'the skills for further professional development and growth', and the 'desire to progress to being better at it'. The aim was to prepare them 'for another thirty five years of learning ... which is why ... being based in a school is probably what it's all about'.

1.1.2 Planning the initiative

Participants were asked to talk about the planning stages of the initiative; accounts varied in accordance with institutional roles and respective levels of involvement.

University teaching staff first heard of the plan for a 'school-based' teacher education programme at the beginning of January 2012. Misgivings were expressed at first concerning erosion of the university based PGCE, and after a series of discussions within the university the concept of 'embeddedness' evolved. One interviewee drew a contrast between 'school-based', a perfunctory matter of 'relocation', and 'embeddedness' which indicated 'a meshing of purposes ... an internal dialogue between the PGCE and what's happening in school, for the mutual benefit of both'. Discussions between the course tutor and the school were said to have started in April and detailed planning continued until the beginning of July. The professional mentor at the school, who also taught modern languages, worked on the initial planning with the university tutor, with the headteacher overseeing arrangements for teaching resources, accommodation, and other financial matters. The head of the school's MFL department was involved in all discussions on matters relating to the department. Members of MFL staff became involved later in the term; although some were initially reluctant to make the necessary changes, especially at such short notice, others welcomed the initiative 'with considerable enthusiasm' as an opportunity to improve the quality of learning and teaching for pupils. Those who would be putting the programme into practice had been taken by surprise at the announcement of the impending embedded programme; however they found 'ways of working together' with the course tutor 'for the mutual benefit of both', and collaborated towards implementation which would enhance learning for pupils, staff and student teachers.

The overall structure of the PGCE course over the academic year was already established; the planning that remained to be done...

> ... was how could we improve on that to make it an advantage
> for the students who were going to be based in school and
> so it was a case of trying to add extra things in mostly,
> rather than take anything out.

School and university had specific priorities; the university wanted to retain the lectures and other events in the existing structure and the school needed to consider ways to make use of the student teachers' extra school time to broaden their experience. The final structure of the embedded course was believed to be similar in many respects to that of previous years. The main difficulties arose from the fact that the school timetable for the new academic year was not available until late in July, which allowed very little time to fit the student teachers' activities into the school day over the year. In addition to this, at almost the end of the summer term the senior leadership team altered the timing of the school day; lunchtimes and various other

sessions were re-timed. This made the planning process 'fairly rushed' for those concerned. On top of this, by the end of the summer term school staff still did not how many student teachers they were planning for and timetabling in these circumstances was agreed to have caused daunting logistical problems. Although this was eventually resolved, various activities originally envisaged remained unplanned or had to be redone again in September, because they had to accommodate twice as many student teachers as expected; this had placed heavy demands on staff time. The student teacher observations of MFL lessons were particularly problematic; French and Spanish lessons happened at different times and teachers had to accommodate another 'eight bodies in the classroom just watching'. Departmental staff adopted a flexible' approach; the solution was to 'get through that stage quite quickly so that they could start intervening and being engaged with the pupils'. Planning for January would be 'much easier' because they knew the timetable and they knew how many student teachers to cater for.

All the interviewees accepted that this had been the first year, 'it's a bit of a pilot and you learn from certain occurrences', and teaching staff agreed that in subsequent years planning and organisation should be much more straightforward.

5.1.3 Perceptions of the rationale

The initiative was said to have evolved through existing contacts between senior management at the school and the university, and their mutual interest in exploring ways of developing links which could relate to the school's status as a Language College. The new emphasis on school-based education following the government's White Paper (DfE, 2010) made the proposal timely for the university. Initial discussions identified an opportunity for basing an entire MFL programme in the school as was said to have already happened in one or two schools locally. A learning partnership between the two institutions was set up and an associated action plan.

The rationale for the new embedded programme was seen by different participants in different ways. According to the interviews, senior management in the school saw the programme as an opportunity to raise standards of achievement in languages, and consequently the school's profile as a language college, in the first instance through the CPD which the programme would involve. The university aimed to enhance its PGCE provision in response to national initiatives through an innovative approach to teacher education. One individual made a clear distinction between these two goals, emphasising the importance of recognising this distinction in the partnership, and preventing the expectations of either partner from taking precedence:

> ... the two things are separate in my view. They can combine; they
> can be a knock-on effect but the two pursue very different ends
> and therefore they have to explore it very differently.

The school had been taking student teachers on placement for about ten years. Teacher education at the university was regarded as 'practical based' in comparison with some other institutions and links between the university and the school were well-established. According to one school interviewee their experience had made them keenly aware of the potential for student teacher progress. The university's concept of embeddedness appealed to the teaching staff for two reasons. Firstly, instead of having a large number of extra 'bodies' in the MFL department 'just watching and then suddenly trying to take over lessons' it meant student teachers spent less time observing; they were encouraged to be more engaged in lessons, to work with small groups of pupils or with individuals, which introduced them to working with a class more gradually, rather than their being 'thrown into the deep end' on their first placement. MFL staff also appreciated the extra time in school afforded to student teachers from abroad; student teachers from Spain, France and Germany generally had very little experience of the English education system and there was

> ... a lot of unlearning to do before they can start learning...
> they needed that extra time in schools just to get their heads round
> what an English school is like. The school culture and the way we
> expect to do things; the way children expect to learn - it is very
> different.

5.1.4 Defining an embedded programme of teacher education

The concept of embeddedness, as described above, emerged from discussions within the university to connote a 'meshing of purposes' between the two institutions. Participants were asked for their own definitions of an embedded programme of teacher education. One interviewee identified a 'value-added' dimension to embeddedness, seeing the school as bringing 'something that cannot be brought by any other means' to university provision. Others drew a distinction between being embedded and being 're-located'. Being embedded meant putting an idea 'right to the heart of what you're doing; turning it into a routine'. An embedded programme of teacher education within a school could be judged as embedded if it 'worked for all of the stakeholders ... allowed PGCE student teachers to grow as good practitioners coming into the profession', and enabled the school to look at its own practice, work with 'cutting edge strategies ... being able to risk take .... maybe experiment a little bit more'.

For the current student teachers the 'embedded' programme in practical terms meant being 'co-located' with the languages department; observations confirmed that a large classroom, opposite the languages block, equipped with coffee-making facilities and computers had been allocated specifically for the use of the student teachers and the course tutor. The student teachers had been given identity badges which let them through the doors, 'a symbol' to identify them as members of staff rather than visitors. Staff involved in administering the school's classroom management procedures were said to be working with the student teachers to familiarise them with the classroom management structure. The school was also

aiming to include all 25 student teachers in professional development through participation in action research. There was, however, some feeling that logistical problems caused by the unexpectedly large number of student teachers had meant they were unable 'to make valuable use of the fact that they're based in school' to the extent originally expected. The main staff room was simply unable to accommodate 25 extra people for morning briefing, and the same was true of the MFL staffroom. With a self-contained room of their own, this year's student teachers had little opportunity to meet other staff informally and gain the insight into day to day school life which more mobility around the school might bring.

The point was made that to make the programme 'really embedded' student teachers need ample opportunity to reflect and discuss their experiences in the classroom with their tutor and their peers. Observation of a session between the student teachers and the course tutor confirmed that student teachers were excited by their classroom experiences, eager to analyse what they had seen and hear one another's views.   The student teachers spent part of that session learning about theoretical principles of MFL teaching, and frequently contributed comments to whole class discussion which drew on their classroom experience; they also worked in small groups on planning for part of a lesson they would teach, considering possible scenarios again, drawing on their recent classroom experience.

It was anticipated that the programme would become more embedded over time, as 'a fully school-based programme' which included 'the social side of it, the way you're expected to live', a holistic approach which would offer the student teachers deeper insight into the role of a teacher in the everyday life in a school. One interviewee believed it would be 'fully embedded' when the university tutor felt part of the MFL department and the members of the MFL department 'consider themselves to be members of the university team'. In a 'fully embedded' programme the student teachers would feel part of the school staff, part of the life of the school, spending most of their time there. They would learn

> ... in a deliberate and structured way, but almost through osmosis
> as well, you know what it is to be a teacher in a real school ... in
> which the full realities of working in a school … The electricity going off
> and it being difficult to work because the heating hasn't started ... all that
> sort of stuff. ...and add to that all of that kind of human thing of working with
> young people...

Generally speaking, all interviewees agreed that an embedded programme would be one where the student teachers were as integrated as far as possible into the day to day life of the school in a way in which all 'stakeholders' might benefit. It was felt that the difficulties experienced so far were largely practical ones and it was hoped that planning, and time for planning, would alleviate them in the following year.

5.1.5 Comparing the programme with a 'traditional' programme of training

The school had been receiving student teachers on placement from more traditional programmes of education for a number of years; it was said to be currently involved in a range of programmes from the traditional to varying degrees of 'school-based'. The embedded programme was seen as an innovation and interviewees were asked how they would compare it with a more traditional course.

For one person a very significant difference was the way that from the very beginning of their course the student teachers were 'physically close' to groups of children, able to see them around the school as well as in the classroom. Someone else referred to the way the university and the school were 'working with, as opposed to working alongside' one another, for example through the series of meetings in the preceding June and July, to make sure that provision, content and calendar for the first four weeks of the course 'really meshed' with what was happening in the lessons on the school timetable. The embedded programme aimed to allow the student teachers to be 'acculturated and professionalised from day one ... in a professional environment' and the sessions with the tutor on site were designed 'to pick up and unpick' their experience. The fact that the student teachers could observe Form Time for example, during the first four weeks, was unanimously agreed to have been especially helpful in mediating the 'culture shock' for MFL student teachers from other countries and other educational systems. They could start acclimatising to the pastoral role of a teacher in an English school, along with the practical application of school rules and customs, much earlier than in a traditional programme, where their first encounter with an unfamiliar school culture would not be until the beginning of their placement.

While agreeing extra time in school was a 'huge advantage', one person pointed out that the crucial corollary of extra time in school was more analysis:

> ... more training and input on what to see or what to notice and
> how to talk about it if they're going to make good use of the extra time
> they're spending observing .... otherwise they're just getting familiar
> with what's happening; they're not questioning what's happening.

Someone else who expressed enthusiasm for the concept of embeddedness, seeing it as 'hugely beneficial' once it could be 'done properly', and not in such a rush, nevertheless wondered how the student teachers felt about having less time than offered on a traditional programme to access university resources, such as the library, and university academic and social life.

According to the data, the comparison with a traditional programme raised important questions which would need to be taken into account in the course of planning for a subsequent programme.

5.1.6   Perceptions of impact on relationships between those involved

Differences from a traditional programme of education as above were also noticed in the effect of the embedded dimension on relationships between participants; the interviews offered a range of perspectives on this aspect of the course.

Anticipating the introduction of the embedded programme as a three-year project, the first year was seen as experimental, a pilot while the second year was said in one instance to be 'about readiness for doing it properly in the third year'. In terms of the relationships between the student teachers and the MFL teachers, school staff were used to mentoring student teachers on placement; but in the context of the new embedded programme, a number of the MFL staff, along with teachers of other subjects, were currently undergoing a more focused form of mentor training with the university course tutor. The aim was to 'professionalise' the student teacher/teacher relationship to enable teachers to take on a greater role in mentoring the student teachers, similar to that of the course tutor, and 'develop themselves professionally as a result of doing that'. One individual envisaged the 'logic' of the concept of 'school-based initial teacher education' as 'university staff working in schools ... school staff working on university type activity'. The teachers concerned

> ... would have a high level of expertise in what are the best ways
> to teach because you know you're being reflective; you're
> working with academics who know a lot about best practice
> .... clearly if you're involved in the training of student teachers
> then you're having to think quite a lot about what being an
> outstanding teacher is.

The programme differed from traditional programmes of teacher education in the way physical location affected relationships between the student teachers and their tutor, and between the student teachers and the teachers in school. The tutor spent every day of the first four weeks in the student teachers' company, 'based' at the school, in the same room rather than having a separate office as would have been the case if the course was based on campus. On days the student teachers were not in the school, the room, equipped with a number of computers and Wi-Fi access, was available for MFL to use as an extra workspace. Tutor and student teachers sharing the same room was said to have generated a feeling of 'being in it together from early on', with individual student teachers volunteering to provide various items for making coffee to make the place their own. But although the student teachers were always 'professional' and 'respectful' there was a sense it might have seemed 'more intense' and 'claustrophobic' to share the same space with their tutor compared with being on campus, and it was felt that at times it might have been easier for both sides if opportunities for privacy had been available.

Several interviewees reported that timetabling and location made it difficult for individual student teachers and teachers to talk to each other informally. While the university tutor could commute between the staffrooms and the university 'training room' at break and lunchtimes, and did so, as observation confirmed, opportunities

for this kind of socialising and professional exchange for the student teachers could not be timetabled into the school day and because they had a room of their own, the 25 student teachers stayed there rather than going to the main staffroom or the MFL office at these times. There was a perception that different locations had to some extent made the different status of the teachers and the student teachers more conspicuous. One person compared the student teacher/teacher relationships to that with 'Placement A student teachers who 'are usually like this'. The fact there were 25 of them was felt to intensify this impression. It was noted that other PGCE student teachers had started going down to the student teachers' 'base' and that it had become 'a little of a PGCE hub' I don't know if that's more positive or negative'. In some ways it was seen as helpful; with only one computer in the MFL staffroom it meant the student teachers had somewhere of their own to work, and if three or four student teachers needed to discuss and reflect on their classroom experiences there had their own space to do it in; 'they can kind of go and do it out there or scream and shout and cry ... it gives each group their breathing space a little bit, they can go and reflect and talk'.

The fact the teachers did meet and work with the student teachers, during the five days they were in school during the initial three weeks of the course before placement, provided an opportunity unavailable on other programmes; nevertheless there was not time to 'really get to know them' before most of the student teachers dispersed to other schools. However, interviewees noted that regarding the four student teachers who stayed at the school for their first placement staff had been able to build on those first few days:

> .. that gave them a head start ... we gained quite a bit of time
> in terms of being able to talk to those trainees as people
> who knew their way around the school, knew what we
> were referring to, which they might not have done otherwise.

There was no doubt that the earlier contact had resulted in 'a closer working relationship'; staff felt they knew these student teachers better and hoped the student teachers might 'feel more part of the team'. Subject mentors for these student teachers were reported to have felt:

> ... more involved in and committed to, closer to, had a better rapport
> with and a better knowledge of the trainees from having seen them
> around the building, having some sort of interaction with them
> before they came on placement.

It was interesting to speculate, as one individual did, on whether subject and professional mentors in the other placement schools were aware of the embedded dimension, the fact that these student teachers had already experienced a school

environment, and if so, whether other schools were giving them opportunities to talk about it.

Relationships were certainly affected by the introduction of the embedded programme and, as we have seen, ambivalence prevailed concerning the advantages and disadvantages of changes in location for course tutor and student teachers.

5.1.7 Early perspectives on student teacher impact

The programme aimed to enhance professional learning in teacher education by offering student teachers earlier extended experience of everyday life in a school. Participants were asked for their views on the extent to which the programme so far might result in the following attributes:

- Confident NQTs
- Skills
- Reflective practitioners
- Understanding of wider aspects of school life
- Employability/better knowledge of what it is like to work in a school
- Student teacher retention

During the autumn interviews it was generally accepted that it was much too early for more than conjecture, but interviewees agreed that spending more time in school would almost certainly have a beneficial effect in acculturating student teachers to school life, to the generic aspects of a teacher's role and day to day responsibilities. As we have seen, the first four weeks were felt to have been particularly valuable for the student teachers from other countries used to other educational systems, and for the four student teachers who would be working in the school on placement. All interviewees agreed that the placement student teachers were noticeably more confident than student teachers on previous programmes and also more confident than placement student teachers in other subjects. In terms of skills, the first classroom encounter for the student teachers was registration, 'not the most structured of school activities', where some classes would be sitting in small groups rather than in a more formal 'seating plan' arrangement. It was felt quite possible that 'the skills that they want to quickly acquire and quickly work through are probably very different from what the programme and the university think they should be starting out on'; the first thing the student teachers will want to learn will be how to deal with classroom management:

> ... they can see these groups of kids, they see the teacher and
> the form tutor who will know the students well – and I think
> that will be the first thing that they – probably the first
> thing that students think about anyway - Not can I teach French?
> Can I do this role? Can I be the form teacher? Can I do registration?

This generic dimension might be even more pertinent for student teachers from other educational systems. The student teachers' observations of 'form time', assembly and MFL teaching were organised 'on a carousel basis' in order to allow them all to experience the range of a teacher's responsibilities. In addition, all the embedded student teachers had been able to teach part of a lesson, and it was felt that 'there's a newfound realisation of how complex a teacher's job actually is'; it had 'opened their eyes to all sorts of questions.' In terms of skills, sustaining control, and, as MFL teachers, 'varying the repetition,' or pacing the sequencing, they had a chance to experiment during a shared opportunity for practical classroom experience, and the corresponding time to reflect without the pressures of a first placement, because at this stage no formal expectations of progress or achievement were attached to their performance.

Researcher observation testified to a real 'buzz' emanating from the student teachers in the session with the tutor following this classroom experience; as a first step towards becoming reflective practitioners they were evidently keen to share and analyse their perceptions of what had happened. It was generally felt that during the days the student teachers spent in the school over the first four weeks there had been more scope to ask them

> more leading questions ... not as much as we would have liked;
> we didn't have as much time as we might have hoped, but certainly
> the understanding of wider aspects of school life - that was definitely
> an improvement.

In terms of reflective practitioners, one interviewee thought that the embedded experience might initiate 'a shift' in thinking from 'day one' for the student teachers, getting them to work out how to 'balance out' their MFL pedagogy and teaching techniques against 'the reality ... of surviving in a class'. One school interviewee believed that while it was definitely an improvement on the practical aspects of teaching, the programme did not add anything to the 'very strong' training for reflective practitioners already carried out during the university's more traditional programmes. In terms of enhancing employability it was noted that the embedded experience might be particularly relevant for student teachers from abroad giving them greater insight into 'the pastoral side ... how British schools work'. One interviewee noted the importance for student teachers with 'that potential to become really great teachers' to be able to draw on enhanced familiarisation with school life in order to be able to 'present themselves in a better way' and 'have more to talk about' at interview to enable future employers to recognise that potential. Regarding student teacher retention it was reported that the four student teachers now on placement in the school had been asking if they could stay for their second placement. This had been 'quite refreshing', the first time it had happened; it seemed to be 'another sign that they have felt more confident on their feet'. At the same time someone else reflected that facing the reality a lot sooner, and seeing teachers at

various stages of their careers early in the course, might help student teachers to decide earlier on whether or not teaching was for them.

5.1.8 The challenges of the programme

The planning stage, (see 6.3.2 above), had presented challenges to both institutions. Once the programme started it was seen to have presented further challenges for both university and school staff. They were being asked to work in a 'very different way' and it was felt that changes in working practices and attitudes needed time.

For teachers in the school it meant finding the time to 'develop those skills which are particular to initial teacher education' in order to contribute to the programme in addition to responding to the ongoing pressures of their daily workload. It was suggested that in this respect the 'organisation and communication' had been significantly inadequate'. It was reported that certain teachers felt they had not 'been involved or consulted' in the early stages, and shortcomings in communication had persisted when the student teachers were in the school, with teachers being given very short notice of student teachers going in to observe lessons. The programme needed to be 'better integrated in the department' and it was felt that it would have been beneficial for teachers whose lessons were going to be observed to be more involved in the planning at an earlier stage; with so many pressures on them already, it was important for them to be fully aware of and able to contribute to the development and implementation of the programme in order for them to be fully committed to it. It was said that time had not been available for this in the current course and this was 'something to learn from'.

For the university it required greater 'responsiveness' and flexibility in order to achieve greater coherence between what the student teachers did in university seminars and what they saw in school. What they saw depended on what was happening in particular classes on particular days, and this could involve last minute timetable changes. Occasionally it was felt that university sessions were 'out of sync' and it had been necessary to swap sessions around, or provide additional resources for the times when the student teachers had not been able to observe particular activities. However, the fact that the student teachers saw the teachers and their tutor reacting and responding to unforeseen demands on their expertise and adaptability was regarded as very useful in showing them the realities of a teacher's day to day experience.

With the introduction of Schools Direct and its impact on the current PGCE some people saw one of the immediate challenges in terms of how to make the most of 'which bits have worked ... where do you focus your attention and your time at the moment?' There was a perceived dilemma between being 'a bit ambitious with that particular thing over a long time', and being realistic as the school prepared for the student teachers' return in January while anticipating the impact of Schools Direct in future years.

Both school and university were experiencing the challenges of accommodating a shift of emphasis in their approach to teacher education. This was currently being exacerbated by the unexpectedly large number of student teachers on the programme. Now the programme was underway it was becoming possible for everyone involved to see what needed to be done, and could be done, if the opportunity remained to improve it in the following year.

5.1.9 Hopes for the outcomes of the programme

The programme was an experiment; during the autumn interviews, those involved were optimistic to varying degrees about the impact on the student teachers so far, in terms of professionalisation and acculturation, but were unclear at such an early stage how much difference the programme might make to the student teachers' professional development over the rest of the year.

'As a lowest common denominator' the hope was that the programme would match the 'high quality' achieved in previous years; and it was seen to have the potential to add more. Given the greater opportunities for acculturation, one individual hoped the programme and its dissemination might ultimately result in:

> ... more languages teachers who are really committed to staying in English and British schools ... because we simply haven't got enough British people to do it.

While they gained more observations of teaching and were said to be more 'attuned' to school life and social interaction in the classroom, the student teachers were 'far less forward' on the academic side than the previous year's student teachers 'about the academic theories behind language learning' and they could not access the library and other resources as easily as student teachers on campus. The school anticipated professional development for staff in terms of investigating their own practice 'discussing what they're doing in their classrooms and why' and also in helping them to feel more 'confident and competent at teaching adults, which is quite a big thing for some of them'. Some staff were already appreciating the opportunities afforded by the programme both for 'going back to educational theory', evaluating their practice, and having student teachers full of 'energy and enthusiasm' working with pupils in their classrooms. It was suggested that it would be valuable for both school and student teachers to 'attach' student teachers to work with small groups of children that needed 'a bit of intervention, a bit of support', if time could be made available. The whole experience would then result in 'well formed, well rounded student teachers confidently going off and getting jobs within the industry'. Once a more 'symbiotic relationship' between school and university was established, it was felt 'there was 'an awful lot that we can learn'.

Interviewees could not say exactly how long it might take for the programme to be fully 'embedded'. From one perspective 'It would be when you can't really tell which

bit is the University and which bit is school'; it could open possibilities for 'a far broader relationship between the University and the school that will manifest itself in lots of different ways'. In spite of the extra demands on individuals' time and adaptability, the programme was welcomed by all interviewees as a means of invigorating pedagogy and as a 'very positive 'hands-on' experience' which made teaching 'more real' for the student teachers.

5.2. The second round of staff interviews
The second round of staff interviews focused on perceptions of the impact of the programme as it unfolded in practice over the academic year.

5.2.1 Perceived advantages of the embedded programme in practice
Participants were asked first whether they believed the embedded programme had had any particular advantages. It is worth bearing in mind here, as one participant observed, that the question was 'highly contextualised'; 'advantages' for student teachers, for example, depended on the individual student teacher; in their view, for every student teacher for whom it had been perceived as an advantage there might be an equal number of counter examples. In the same way the programme itself was contextualised; it took place during a particular year of the university's validation cycle, as explained below, and it was 'embedded' in a particular school; in different circumstances, advantages and disadvantages might be different and perceived in a different way.

5.2.2 Advantages for student teachers
The situation for the student teachers during the year of the programme, 2012/13, saw the 'convergence of unrelated factors'.   Every five years the PGCE programme went through a revalidation process, which involved a redesign of the course; even though the principles and objectives, the overall aims and philosophy remained the same, the way that the course was structured and designed was seen to impact on the student teachers. Consequently, with revalidation and redesign of the course taking place at the same time as the introduction of the embedded approach, it would be very difficult to relate any perceived benefits to student teachers exclusively to the embedded approach per se.

According to participants, two groups of student teachers were felt to have benefited particularly from the embedded approach. The first group were the large number of student teachers from abroad and the second group were the small number of student teachers who had been or were currently on placement in the school.

The embedded experience had enabled the student teachers from abroad to gain much earlier firsthand experience of the English school system and school culture and both school and university staff agreed this had made them much more confident for their first placement. It had 'helped them resolve situations about their identity much earlier than had been the case hitherto'; they were said to have been much more self-assured, more 'professional', in the first weeks of placement in

handling the dilemmas which confront teachers in everyday dealings with pupils. They had had opportunities to familiarise themselves with

> ... the types of students, the types of teaching, the fact that the students move around and not the teacher ... a cultural difference.

This had meant, for example, that they had been able to ask 'better questions' in general educational studies, and could make comparisons between what they had seen in the school, what they had seen in their first placement school and what they saw in the school on their second 'embedded' four weeks in January. In comparison with student teachers from abroad in previous years, the increased confidence in this year's student teachers from abroad 'was really quite telling'. However, although the embedded approach had clearly benefited the student teachers, two of the participants noted that an embedded approach could have had this particular benefit in any school; it could not be specifically related to this particular institution.

With reference to placements, it is worth bearing in mind the comments of one member of staff who explained that this particular year placement B had been extended by another three weeks. This had given the student teachers much longer on teaching practice than in previous years when placement B had ended at the end of the May half term. The student teachers had then returned to the university campus and spent two weeks on 'enrichment' at another school, observing something they had not experienced on teaching practice (e.g. primary, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), etc). This participant felt that 'enrichment', being only observation, was not as beneficial as the extra time on placement which the student teachers on the embedded course would have. It was felt that extra time on placement in itself would make the student teachers feel better prepared and thus more confident for their first year of teaching. Given that this was the case, it was felt that it might be difficult to relate any increased confidence or other benefits to the student teachers at the end of the academic year to the embedded approach alone.

During these second interviews, school staff all agreed that with one exception, for student teachers on placements A and B in the school, the embedded approach had

> ... some real advantages ... They've felt that they've been part of the school. They've integrated ... relationships could be formed and they gained an understanding of what it was like to be in a real school.

Before placement started they knew a lot of members of staff; they knew where everything in the school was; they knew or recognised a few of the children, and were moving towards a potential teacher identity:

> ... you know it wasn't quite so overwhelming to launch straight
> into school and perhaps it made them sort of see things more
> professionally and less as a student in that they are more involved
> and committed.

It was reported that placement student teachers said that because they knew their placement school from 'day one' there was 'none of that 'them and us' side of things', and this was seen as a great advantage. This was seen to apply particularly to the two student teachers currently on placement in the school who were also, at the beginning of the summer term, said to have 'done very well in terms of jobs'.

Regarding the four student teachers on placement at the school in the autumn, staff reiterated views expressed at the time, that spending the first four weeks of the programme in the school had made these student teachers 'very well prepared' for their ensuing placements there, but no-one knew whether it had had a similar effect on student teachers with placements elsewhere. As participants pointed out, during the four weeks of the autumn term 'even when they weren't on placement', the 25 student teachers 'did not spend a huge amount of time' in the school because they had the rest of their programme, which included visits to other schools. One of the student teacher interviewees also made this point, as the student teacher findings will demonstrate below.

5.2.3 Advantages for the school
In terms of benefits to the school, the chance to build staff-student teacher relationships for placement earlier was felt to have benefited staff as well as student teachers.

> Within the department it's made us feel more involved
> with the students. More responsibility and ownership
> of their training. ... I think it's helped in terms of rapport
> and the relationship between staff and the PGCE students.

One person referred to benefits for the school's own student teachers, occasions when all 25 student teachers worked on intervention with their Year 11 students for example, or worked with small groups in the classroom and gave immediate feedback on French and Spanish language skills. The presence of the student teachers was also seen to have helped to promote languages within the school:

> ... to be able to book events for us that work around our school
> year. We organised in January a Year 9 G and T day and that worked
> brilliantly for our Year 9 as they're thinking about second language
> choice in the future - to try and get them to see that actually by
> working, by keeping up two languages or moving to two languages
> that language is something they can use in their career.

According to the interviews both school and university staff believed the embedded approach had clear advantages for student teachers and the school. Student teachers seen to have particularly benefited were those from abroad and those undertaking placement in the school. At the same time some participants were keen to point out the difficulty of disentangling any advantages from those which might be related to contextual factors, such as the revalidation process, the extension of the timescale for student teacher placements and the particularity of the school itself.

5.2.4 Perceived disadvantages of the embedded programme in practice

Participants were asked whether at this later stage in the year they believed the embedded programme had had any disadvantages. For one participant the 'main disadvantage' had been the fact that the programme would not be continuing into the following year. The school had had 'high hopes for [the programme] that aren't going to come to anything or aren't going to come to fruition in the way that we had planned'; staff had put in 'a lot of time and effort' and this disappointment was reflected in the comments of other school participants.

As in the first round of interviews, the failure to allow adequate time for planning, inadequate communication and co-ordination, at all levels, was highlighted by participants. One individual noted the difficulty of finding enough time to dedicate to 'trying to balance the needs of the school which are really important, and the student teacher, with the needs of the University', especially since the programme had been changed that year. It was felt that 'had the model and the decisions been made a lot earlier on in the year, the previous year, there would have been time for school staff to be 'up skilled', and more opportunities for them to work with the university tutor 'just to see what they're doing'. The timescale and lack of consultation had created pressure for those on the ground: 'it was those political decisions that had repercussions for us'. As in the first round of interviews there was again reference to 'a certain lack of transparency and communication' concerning the programme within the school and within the MFL department. Things had run more smoothly after January, when staff knew the exact number of student teachers to plan for, but because it was 'a pilot' there were said to have been times when the department had not been 'kept in the loop' and occasions where timetabling was changed 'on the day', creating difficulties for teaching staff which had had 'a negative impact on morale in the department'.

Although the student teachers were 'in theory' embedded in the school for five weeks in January, as well as the four weeks in September, one person pointed out that in reality they were in school much less frequently because of the time spent visiting other schools:

> They didn't come every day at all. They were only here
> a couple of days a week in the event so that again was
> not as we'd envisaged, but that was the university wanting
> them to go and see things in different schools. So things that
> they had normally done as part of their university-based

training, the university wanted them still to do.

With only two days a week in school, opportunities to integrate the student teachers within everyday school life were limited. Nevertheless, as one participant noted, the student teachers spent more time observing lessons because they were 'based' in the school, than student teachers in previous years, who only had the specifically arranged school visits. With such a large number of student teachers to offer observation opportunities, this meant that some student teachers had observed more 'boring' activities, such as 'A' level pupils doing written assignments or younger pupils doing tests. Although some student teachers were indeed reported to have found this 'boring', it was felt that this had contributed to giving them a 'more realistic perspective' on the variation in a teacher's everyday classroom activities, rather than the uninterrupted stream of 'artificial' deliberately interesting lessons which they might encounter on pre-arranged school visits.

Participants referred to the 'pressure' created by the unusually large number of student teachers, the difficulties of organisation and co-ordination. Another reason suggested for the fact the student teachers had not 'integrated' as much as in previous years was that even during placement, they had 'the training room' for their own use and consequently did not spend time in the department office mixing socially and professionally with staff colleagues. Someone also observed that it might be hard for the student teachers to feel they were 'constantly visitors somewhere', and wondered whether 'they felt this being their home or that they're in a safe and comfortable environment, away from placement'. For those who had just spent three years in the university the university might be familiar and reassuring, and there was also the point that all the student teachers might have appreciated 'the variety', a change of scene.

Two school participants commented that watching student teachers on practice sessions in the first four weeks of the year meant they had developed 'preconceived ideas of the student teachers' abilities', which was a disadvantage when the student teachers returned on placement and their performance might be quite different.

Overall, perceived disadvantages reflected those referred to in the autumn interviews; rather than identify disadvantages of the embedded approach per se, participants frequently described specific aspects of the way in which the programme had been put in place: to the lack of time for planning, inadequate consultation and communication across the full range of individuals involved and the repercussions of accommodating such an unexpectedly large number of student teachers.

5.2.5 Views on the extent to which the embedded programme appeared to have made a successful contribution towards the following:

- *confident NQTs*
- *skills*
- *reflective practitioners*
- *understanding of the wider aspects of school life*
- *employability/better knowledge of what it is like to work in a school*
- *student teacher retention*

As in the autumn interviews, participants were asked whether in their view the embedded dimension could be said to have contributed successfully towards the outcomes listed above. One participant commented that these expectations related to the point at which the programme had become fully embedded.

As one participant pointed out, in relation to perceptions of any causal relationship between the positive outcomes noted here and the embedded dimension, it is worth bearing in mind the 'convergence of unrelated factors' noted above, and the characteristics of a particular student teacher cohort. In spite of the shorter duration of the programme however, all participants believed it appeared to have increased the confidence of all the student teachers; according to one individual every one of them 'has wanted to apply for jobs'. At the time of the interviews, student teachers on the MFL cohort were also said to have been successful in obtaining full time posts much earlier than other subject areas. Two of the participants pointed out that there was no way of telling how confident they might be as NQTs, out on their own in a different context; on the other hand someone else commented that increased confidence might lead in some cases to complacency, where student teachers might not be 'testing themselves as far as they might'.

There seemed to be agreement that the embedded programme had enabled the student teachers to acquire a wider understanding of school life rather than any more skills than they might have done on a traditional programme, although they were said to have acquired 'personal presentation skills' more quickly, behaving like teachers rather than student teachers when they moved around the school. In terms of reflective practitioners, one individual referred to the performance of the student teachers during mock interviews for teaching posts, which had taken place this year in the embedded context of the school. The mock interviews for all 25 student teachers, had taken place in January, and university and staff participants agreed that the fact they had taken place as if in real life, in a school, rather than at the university, had been very beneficial. Staff involved in conducting the interviews were said to have been 'quite impressed ... their feeling was that as a result of the embedded nature of the programme, student teachers were able better to reflect on their practice'. One person suggested that being more exposed to the wider school environment than previous student teachers may have given them a more holistic view of teaching; this in turn might lead to more reflective practice:

... perhaps it opens their eyes to aspects of education, be it the pastoral side or even just the bureaucracy and the administrative side of things that really on PGCEs in the past they've been somewhat shielded from.

Someone else commented that the student teachers on placement were 'very able to talk in general educational studies sessions about other issues around the school – special needs, bullying, child protection and those sort of issues so they seem to have more ideas'. One person pointed out that in some cases increased confidence could be detrimental, 'reducing their reflective side' so they did not question practice in themselves and others.

In terms of retention, although some student teachers had withdrawn before the of the programme in September, no-one had left since that time, and according to the perceived enthusiasm for applying for jobs, the embedded programme did not appear at the time of the interviews to have deterred any of the MFL student teachers from seeking employment in the UK.

Generally speaking participants agreed that the embedded dimension had undeniably increased the student teachers' self-confidence in a school environment and had given them opportunities to gain a wider picture of school life which might in turn contribute to their development as reflective practitioners. It was too early to judge their competence as NQTs, but the fact that so many of them were applying for jobs was believed to reflect positively on the programme as a whole. The extent of the specific contribution of the embedded dimension remained, however, somewhat elusive.

5.2.6 Could anything have been done differently?
Considering the experience of the embedded dimension over the year, participants were asked whether they thought anything could have been done differently. In the autumn interviews all participants were critical of the speed at which the programme had been introduced; they referred to lack of consultation and lack of morale arising from the considerable inconvenience of extra commitments and reorganisation at very short notice. Reflecting on the experience during the second interviews, one participant suggested that 'the lines of communication could have been widened to the whole department' rather than just the one meeting that took place with the head of department and the university tutor. For one thing this had meant that it took longer for the university tutor and departmental staff to get to know one another. Moreover, because the content and delivery of the programme over the term was not continuously communicated to all those involved, well in advance, and once the programme had started, 'the internal coherence of the programme wasn't as explicit and logical as it had been in the past'; this had repercussions for all concerned. The embedded programme required a much more collaborative process, more of a 'partnership' than had been possible in such a short timescale; the lack of co-

ordination was also seen as unhelpful for student teachers' learning. Towards the end of the programme, memories of the difficulties for the school appeared to have receded; however it was not an experience they would wish to repeat:

> Obviously if you were going to do it again then you'd like to think
> that there would be the planning and organisation would be better
> and less last minute because certain things, I think, hadn't been
> considered.

School participants felt the programme could have made more use of the school and engaged to a greater extent with school staff. Originally the hope had been to transfer the programme to the school as a pilot for the first year, and use that time to plan with the university for a more fully embedded programme which would involve a wider range of staff in contributing to the programme and a wider range of experiences for the student teachers. Three of the participants wished the opportunity had been available for more departmental 'practitioners' to spend more time on pedagogy with the university tutor 'as a sort of refresher'; that would have been particularly valuable:

> We would have liked it to have been more easily possible for our staff
> to sit in on the training sessions, then we could have learnt what the
> University was telling the trainees, but that never quite seemed to happen.

Once the university had made its new arrangements for the following year the university tutor had to return to the university and there was said to have been very little contact with the school, 'it just stopped', with no sense of closure. One participant noted that there had been no opportunity for a shared 'debriefing'. This was seen as regrettable; it would have been helpful for the school

> ... to know how they think it went ... it would have been nice to have
> some sort of discussion I would have thought, at the end of the year.

If it had been possible the school would have preferred to follow the programme through its second year with the intention of gaining more experience and then moving into School Direct. However, while the programme had been 'an opportunity that was lost', the school recognised and appreciated the fact that the university had faced considerable change over the course of the year, which had unavoidably affected the programme's development.

Inadequate communication and the lack of time for an informed and considered approach to organisation and coordination recurred in the responses here. On both sides there was a sense that more work could have been done to instil a sense of genuine partnership.

5.2.7 Lessons to be learned for School Direct or other partnership arrangements for teacher education?

By the time of the second interviews the school was already planning for School Direct across a range of subjects for the following year. Participants were asked whether any lessons could be learned from the embedded programme to inform School Direct or other partnership arrangements for teacher education. Two school participants highlighted a discernible impact on staff confidence:

> ... our staff are now much more confident about the School Direct programme than they might have been, than they might have been otherwise. It's not such a big leap of faith is it? To have that and also ITE (Initial Teacher Education) students in school when you've just had 25 partly in school.

At the same time, someone else suggested that the programme could almost be seen as 'counter-productive' in that staff had put in 'all that effort' which had now 'disappeared' and they were immediately being asked to make a similar effort 'in a different way' for School Direct. However, all participants agreed they had 'learned a lot' from the experience of the programme. A school participant referred to learning in terms of 'things that we've done with the School Direct that weren't done with the Languages embedded programme'. In addition to selecting the student teachers and 'to a large extent' promoting the programme, the school had been responsible for the design; they had produced

> '... a far more school-based programme... The students, next year, will have a different sort of experience ... A lot more focus on progression and what they're going to do, and the way in which we prepare them for employment at the end of the programme.

It was felt that part of the reason for this design was a question of 'ownership'; School Direct was seen as 'very much more owned' by the school, and was said to 'feel better' than the embedded programme as a result. The school had been able to bring its own expertise and 'distinctive approach to learning through Adventure Learning' to the design for School Direct so that the PGCE student teachers, would be 'prepared for working in an Adventure Learning school' within their own subjects; this was felt to be beneficial for the student teachers as in addition to being equipped work in any other School they would have the advantage of training in an Adventure Learning school.

One individual affirmed that the embedded programme had been 'a very good model', which they had been able to use for School Direct. They noted however, the importance for future models, of making sure that respective partners understood the contribution of the different components of the programme and where and how 'they fitted in' to the whole.

> If you are part of making up a programme that you do know
> what the other components of the programme are doing as well
> so that you can make sure that it's a whole programme and
> where your part fits into it.

'Continuity' in communication in this respect was seen as essential throughout:

> ... what we've learned is that we do need that communication
> and that strategic planning to make sure that we have got that...

This view was shared by other participants; 'communication transparency' across the full range of staff was crucial from the start so that not only do 'people feel involved but also feel valued, rather than put upon'. A cautious note here was struck by one individual, who drew attention to the 'invisible hours ... that would not 'be accounted for', which would need to be put in on both sides in order 'to embed a collaborative approach' which allowed the mutual understanding of respective contributions to develop.

On both sides it was felt that the time allocated to the programme had not afforded the opportunities required over the year for an 'equal partnership' to flourish, a partnership in which not only the management team but also 'the roots – the actual teachers who are going to find themselves tutoring …' would be included.

5.2.8 Closing comments on the programme

At the end of the interview participants were invited to say anything else about the programme which they felt they had not covered in answering the specific questions. Given the fullness of their previous responses this question elicited only a few more comments. All participants agreed that the embedded programme had been beneficial for the student teachers in introducing them to the school environment much earlier than traditional models, and had been worth exploring in this respect; one person volunteered that once the first term was over the impact on the school had been much less than anticipated. Everyone acknowledged that the programme would have run more smoothly if the planning and implementation had not been so 'rushed' at the start, and school participants in particular expressed their regret that they would not have the opportunity to develop the pilot programme over a second year.

According to the interviews, the theory underlying the embedded model was undoubtedly worthwhile; it needed more time to develop a committed partnership in order to fulfil its perceived potential.

5.3 Student teacher Questionnaires

The survey was carried out in April during the student teachers' second placement; the number of questions was kept to a minimum in order to impinge as little as

possible on student teachers' time. Sixteen of the 25 student teachers on the programme (64%), agreed to participate in the research, and seven of the sixteen, 28% of the group as a whole, completed the questionnaire.

The first question asked for reasons for choosing the course. Four student teachers chose the course because it was near home, one student teacher had got a bursary, another cited a contract between the university and their university abroad and a third 'expected enhanced employability'. As the student teachers were not told at the application stage that the programme was embedded in a school, they could not choose, or reject the course as an option on this account.

The second question asked them for any advantages they saw in the programme being embedded in a school. Three of the seven student teachers said it was very helpful to spend more time in the school environment, and gain a more 'authentic' experience, 'a valuable insight into what teaching is really like'. Two student teachers felt it was helpful in bridging the gap between university and placement, 'it made me feel less anxious about the transition', one student teacher referred to the advantage of having their own room, 'our own space, with good facilities ...', the remaining student teacher 'couldn't think of anything.'

The third question focused on drawbacks of the embedded programme. Although one satisfied student teacher saw 'none', most of the student teachers (five out of seven responses) said that the school was 'too far from home'. They said they had not been told they would be based in a school; this meant 'an extended journey' for most of them, costly in both time and petrol. The fact they had not been 'forewarned' about the embedded dimension, and the travelling involved, had been the cause of considerable dissatisfaction:

> Not being forewarned that we would have some kind of 'school base'.
> (I personally would have looked more carefully at other PGCE options
> in the North West had I known this was going to happen).

> For many people, travelling to and from the school was an issue due to
> extended journey times and costs.

> Having to drive up there - petrol not reimbursed. Expectation that we
> would ferry everyone else up there as well if we had a car.

Notably, one student teacher drew an unfavourable comparison between the embedded experience and a programme where lectures would have taken place on the university campus:

> The school is just too far. For people living in XXXX and further south,
> the journey has been ridiculously long for usually things that could have
> been done in university (and thus closer).

One person said that the teachers' schedules were 'too tight' so 'we sometimes have no one to turn to when we struggle because everyone is too busy'. This student

teacher was also critical of the amount of teaching they were given; 'I had 1.5 hours of teaching a week, which is much below the minimum I should have taught'. Some difficulties may have arisen partly as a consequence of the unexpectedly large number of student teachers on the course:

> We only had one room so sometimes had to stand outside for an hour
> or more as we had nowhere to go. I didn't feel like we were part of a
> course embedded in a school, we were just also in the school building
> - I think possibly an aim would be that we would see and be more a part
> of the school environment than just our placement schools, but in reality
> we weren't.

Student teachers were asked whether they would have done anything differently if they were designing an embedded programme. While one student teacher would not make any changes, two of them felt the embedded experience had been fairly narrow and that it would have been more interesting and more useful for the future to have done some observations in 'challenging schools', or 'maybe see two contrasting schools', or 'be in a school with behavioural issues'. Two other student teachers thought there should be 'more opportunities to get involved in classroom activity', as this is 'invaluable experience' for placement'.

Two student teachers made the point that a clear account of the embedded dimension at the stage of application would have been appreciated:

> Inform the students when they apply, not just when they're on the
> course.

The final question asked student teachers whether this particular course had affected their intention of becoming a teacher. Two student teachers said the course had not made any difference to their original intentions; one person, who wanted to teach but questioned their own ability, felt the experience had been very positive in this respect. Two student teachers from abroad said they had found it helpful to observe the English school system; in one of these cases, although the programme had not been 'quite what I expected it to be' it had not had a negative effect; they felt it was the practice of teaching 'the hard context where we are expected to work in' rather than the course, which was likely to 'change intentions'.

One person had 'considered quitting a few times'. They had been depressed by what they saw as very low expectations of pupils and by the way teachers were restricted by 'an awful load of time invested in making sure you tick all the boxes'. Another student teacher said that if they had not been placed in 'lovely schools with supportive mentors who have shown me what teaching is', the course itself would definitely have put them off. While praising the commitment of the university tutor, this student teacher felt that the course had been 'poorly organised ... when you pay 9000 pounds you expect a certain level of service which this course has not delivered, and being based in a school when we were not fully informed only started the whole course off on a bad foot!'

In summary the questionnaire responses suggest that while the experience of the embedded programme varied from one student teacher to another, this year's course had not made as much of the potential for student teachers to feel the benefit of the school environment as might have been hoped. And it was clear that the lack of information about the embedded dimension at the application stage had caused many student teachers considerable inconvenience and expense, and in some cases given rise to explicit resentment.

5.4 The student teacher interviews

The interviews took place at the beginning of May during the student teachers' second placement. All student teachers who had agreed to participate in the research and received the questionnaire were invited to take part; however only three of the 16 volunteered to do so. Two of the three participants were from abroad. The aim of the interviews was to ask student teachers the same questions as in the questionnaire to allow them to consider their responses in more depth.

The first question asked for reasons for choosing the course. One student teacher responded that they wanted to study 'close to home' and knew that the university had a good reputation. They wanted to work in the area and knew that there were placements locally available. The other two student teachers, both from abroad, had wanted to live and work in the UK. They had heard that the university was holding interviews for prospective applicants in their city and were accepted onto the course. One of these student teachers was hoping to work in 'the field of languages, probably teaching'; the other said they had chosen the university's XXXX option rather than XXXX because 'XXXX scares me' and they felt in XXXX they would be more 'protected'.

The second question asked student teachers' views on any advantages of a teacher education programme which was embedded in a school. Two of the student teachers agreed that it had been 'a real advantage going into a real school environment'. It had been very useful to observe classes, to plan and teach a lesson and also to talk to one or two teachers informally;

> It gave you a more realistic picture as opposed to the picture
> that you just get when you're at University.

One student teacher from abroad explained that with no teaching background or experience in a school, the embedded dimension had been 'a great relief and a great help' and would certainly have influenced their choice if they had known about it in advance. This student teacher also commented on the value of opportunities to observe GCSE and 'A' level classes at the school, which had proved very useful in interviews for teaching jobs later on. The embedded experience had given the student teachers an insight into the 'type of language' used in pedagogy:

> ... not only the theoretical aspect, or that thing of reading a curriculum,
> or confidence, but it was - well - 'I know what they do', the
> type of language...

The third student teacher on the other hand, also from abroad, completely disagreed; embeddedness had no particular advantages, it was just a question of relocation:

> I don't think it's made a huge difference. I think that the main
> experience that we get of school is through our placements
> ... most of the sessions were basically lectures but held at [school]

This student teacher acknowledged that they had 'done some observations' and talked to a few teachers, but 'the overall impression' remained; embeddedness had caused considerable inconvenience; instead of taking twenty five people to the school they could have taken one teacher from the school to the university:

> ... the outcome would have been the same with less hassle.

The next question asked the student teachers specifically about disadvantages of the embedded dimension. Two of them reiterated the view as above, a recurring theme of the questionnaire, the considerable inconvenience and expense of travelling to the school. This problem was said to be particularly acute for student teachers with children, and for student teachers from abroad who did not have cars. One person added that when student teachers needed to go to the university campus, they had to make a special journey outside the school day, and this became an additional difficulty for student teachers with long distances to travel or childcare to take into account. The same student teacher also noted the disadvantage of being confined within the school to a single room all day:

> ... long days being stuck in that one room. It got on peoples' nerves a bit.

The third student teacher, however, could not identify any disadvantages with the embedded situation of the course. They had found it 'really helpful' to see 'how teachers apply things', rather than just imagining theory in practice.

The following question asked student teachers to imagine designing a teacher education course embedded in a school, and asked whether they would do anything differently from the way things had been arranged during their own programme. One student teacher sounded very satisfied and would not make any changes. They had particularly liked working alongside other trainees, 'because you're sort of supporting each other, helping each other, sharing ideas' and had appreciated seeing 'a range of different teaching styles'. This student teacher had also found it very useful to have a room of their own, equipped with computers where they could work. One of the other two student teachers expressed equal satisfaction; they had enjoyed the combination of university sessions on theory, the scope 'to reflect on the ethical', and on things which are 'really hard to learn' in the abstract, with opportunities 'to apply them instantly':

> ... and then you have this practical part to apply what you've learnt
> on the ground every day, I think this is the perfect thing.

The third student teacher, however, was very clear about making changes. Accepting that their suggestions would not have been 'feasible' for the current year,

with such a large number of student teachers, they said they would have preferred to start the course with some 'mini placements', 'sessions with the children', before engaging with any university sessions on theory. This student teacher came from abroad and had no experience or knowledge of the English school system.

> We were in school but as I said you could have done that at Uni,
> it didn't make a difference. It was just a room ... for those of us
> who are from overseas we're not familiar with the system...
> I mean everything's new. I didn't know that there are state schools,
> there are grammar schools – and then we were thrown at a lot of new
> things that we didn't quite have the time to process.

While acknowledging that they got to speak to some 'real teachers', they felt it would have been much more helpful to spend some time in the classroom first, to acquire firsthand experience of curriculum and pedagogy before attending university sessions.

> I would benefit a lot more from having the sessions once I know my
> needs, let's say, rather than just being bombarded with information that
> I didn't know how to tackle.

In their view, the practical work in the classroom would stimulate questions to explore in the university sessions, which could then set the experience in its theoretical context.

> ... to give you say an overall understanding of ... a deeper,
> deeper understanding.

The final question asked the student teachers whether the embedded programme had affected their intention of becoming a teacher. This did not appear to be the case for any of them although for all three of them it was their experience of placement which seemed to have made the most impact. The embedded dimension of their course appeared to have receded by the first weeks of their busy summer term. One student teacher felt 'really positive' and was enthusiastic about their school mentors and the support they received with lesson plans. The two student teachers from abroad, who said they had chosen the course because they were very keen to live and work in the UK, also seemed happy to start a career in teaching; again it was the placement experience which seemed to be uppermost in their minds.

At the end of the interview the researcher asked each student teacher whether there was anything else they'd like to say about the programme or their experience of it. One student teacher who had been 'really worried about going into a school' reiterated their appreciation of the opportunity to be in 'an actual school ... seeing what the student teachers are like ... We went round the class helping them; we taught them a lesson.'   They said they would certainly recommend an embedded programme to other student teachers

> ... that really helped going into it and made it feel less scary.

You felt like you had a little bit of an edge on other people
who hadn't done that.

One of the student teachers, who came from abroad, agreed. They were particularly glad that they had chosen the embedded programme which had allowed students to spend time in the classroom, working with pupils without the pressure of being on placement. This had given them 'a framework' which enabled them to 'think of a solution in that framework'. Without 'the framework', the embedded experience

... that first day you go there ... before the children, it's a really
difficult audience. If you have tried and you have seen it before,
it's a bit easier I think.

The third student teacher, again from abroad, differed markedly from fellow interviewees, as we have already seen. For them the weeks spent 'being based' at the school had been

... just a tiny bit of the course. A very tiny, tiny, tiny bit of the course.

He had nothing else to say about it.

The student teachers who were interviewed represented only a very small proportion of those who volunteered to participate in the research, and an even smaller proportion of the student teacher group as a whole. The perceptions above are presented for illuminative purposes only. Nevertheless the views of these three student teachers demonstrate individual variation in their responses to the embedded experience, not only across the group as a whole but among those student teachers who came from outside the UK. While two of them had thoroughly appreciated the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the school and classroom environment, the third remained conspicuously indifferent. Variation within such a small number of responses undoubtedly suggests possibilities for further variation across the group as a whole.

6.Discussion

The original aims of this research were to investigate the extent to which a teacher education programme in one subject area (MFL) embedded in a school, rather than taking place in a university, appeared to result in:

- Confident NQTs
- Skills
- Reflective practitioners
- Understanding of wider aspects of school life
- Employability/better knowledge of what it is like to work in a school
- Student teacher retention

The additional aims, added when it was clear that School Direct would mean that the programme would not run for a second year as originally planned were:

- to consider challenges and opportunities inherent in school-based and school-led teacher education and offer suggestions for effective practice
- to consider effective partnership working between schools and universities.

This research project was small scale and presents the perceptions of stakeholders in the programme for consideration by the reader. It does not claim that this programme of teacher education is any better or worse than other programmes in the past or programmes which will be employed in the future. Within the acknowledged limitations of the study, this discussion will draw together reflections on the data gathered.

There seemed to be a consensus amongst the school and university interview participants in the autumn term of the project that priorities for teacher education are: being involved in school life; developing the qualities of reflective practitioners; engaging with educational theory and interpreting this in practice; the inadequacy of observation without discussion and analysis; understanding learners' needs. These convictions raise the question as to whether this type of embedded programme fulfils these requirements in any different or possibly 'better' way than the traditional university based programme together with 28 weeks of teaching practice.

The initiative for what could be termed the 'experiment' described in this report was deemed to be timely in terms of the White Paper (DfE, 2010) but there is some evidence from the interviews with school and university participants in the autumn term that the motivation and assumed outcomes were somewhat different amongst the main stakeholders; the school was looking to raise standards amongst pupils and staff in the subject area of MFL, whereas it seems that the university had a broader aim to enhance its PGCE provision, using MFL as the vehicle. But why change from a programme which appeared to have worked well? According to participants, it seems that, although the initiative came from the university, it was the school that found the new idea most appealing because of the more gradual way that student teachers were introduced to teaching. This is comparable to Burch and Jackson's partnership study where it was felt that 'the initiative for working together came from the university; there was evidence to suggest that university colleagues were reaching out to schools.' (Burch and Jackson, 2012: 7.4.2)

In the autumn term, the notion of 'from the word "go"' seems to have been the main advantage seen by interview participants of the 'embedded' nature of the programme. That is to say that the student teachers were with pupils 'from the word "go"' and able to engage in all aspects of the life of the pupils 'from the word "go"'. This was seen as adding to the professionalism of the student teachers. This begs significant questions which are beyond the scope of this research study to address – what is professionalism and how can you claim it is being acquired? Extra time in school was hailed as a 'huge advantage' which is a strong endorsement of the initiative, but there were some hints of 'however' which we will return to later in the discussion.

The perceived enhanced partnership between school and university is something which could be taken as an advantage over the more traditional teacher education

programmes based in a university, although it must be acknowledged that in this pilot of the programme, this was not handled in the best of ways; staff did not feel included in the planning. Burch and Jackson (2013) found that partnership between school and university colleagues was enhanced by coming together in a 'Third Space' (Soja, 2010; Zeichner, 1996) to design, develop and deliver teacher education with jointly shared understanding and vision. This is echoed by interview participants in the autumn term of this research who enjoyed the possibility of working in a deeper form of collaboration. The fact that the university lecturer was based in the school with the student teachers evidently brought the university closer to the school; however, the reverse, that is to say the school closer to the university, is not so evident, except perhaps in the planning and development of the programme.

It is often stated that terminology used in schools and universities mean different things to different people (TEAN, 2013: Burch and Jackson, 2012: 7.5.1). Just how clear did it seem to the participants in this study that they had the same definition of the main term used to describe the programme: 'embedded'? Definitions of embedding include: to fix into a surrounding mass; to surround tightly or firmly; envelop or enclose; to incorporate or contain as an essential part or characteristic. We discover here however that 'embeddedness' was a term to connote a 'meshing of purposes' between the two institutions, which would again imply a deepening of the meaning of partnership. This takes it further than these definitions as not only was the university programme to be fixed and enclosed within the school, but there was a distinct feeling of bringing the purposes of the two establishments together, again reminiscent of Burch and Jackson's research into Developing Partnership through Third Space working (2013). This seems to have been accomplished to a certain degree by the consensus in the early stages that integration was key and that staff of both institutions should feel a joint commitment, appointment even, to both university and school. However whether true 'embeddedness' and the bringing together of purpose can be achieved when the student teachers must, logistically, be segregated as a unit is a moot point. What is learnt here is that partnership between school and university can be enhanced by this sharing of purpose, by the understanding on one another's roles.

Burch and Jackson found that the worthy aims of partnership brought with them problems too (2012: 7.5), in the planning and carrying out of the teacher training. It is clear that the planning for the embedded programme was problematic. The university staff were concerned about a possible erosion of their position, and the school staff became concerned at the amount of time they were needing to spend on organising this programme. This was a significant change for all concerned and brought with it the difficulties that such change occasions. The ever-present shortage of time in education was a major, and predictable, factor, but three significant points come out of the difficulties of the planning stages of the programme. Firstly, the main priorities and strengths of each institution were retained, indicating the enriching potential of working together. Secondly, the institutions found ways of working together, based again on the fundamental joint purpose of giving the best education

possible to the children and young people. Thirdly, this was acknowledged as a pilot and, with optimism and determination, the professional spirit of teachers and tutors was apparent in the certainty they felt that 'it would be better next time'. There was no doubt that 'those that had to make it work' had experienced some negative impact that the instigators of the programme in the publicity surrounding the experiment had not foreseen; this interestingly optimistic feeling that the considerable teething problems and logistical difficulties would be better next time is echoed in the 2013 TEAN School Direct event where delegates felt: 'There are huge challenges but the extension of current partnerships is to be celebrated' (TEAN, 2013).

Advantages and disadvantages of the embedded programme swing backwards and forwards like a pendulum within the findings of this research. Student teachers did not think it worth going all that way (that is to say, travelling to the school which was much further than the university). There was evidence of some resentment from the student teachers that they were put in a school without consultation or even information. The student teachers' relationship with the tutor could flourish because they were together so much of the time, but there was no privacy for either party, and a feeling of an over-intense relationship. There were also hints suggesting that there were occasions when the student teachers felt they had no-one to turn to, despite the apparent 'community' created by the embedded programme. Student teachers spent a lot of time with their tutor, but time with the school staff was limited because of the segregated nature of the student teacher room. If the point was to mix with the school staff, it could be argued that something was lost here. Although there was immediate peer support, there is evidence to suggest that the one room got claustrophobic. Teachers could meet and work with the student teachers however, but this seemed to become more relevant for those who stayed on at the same school for their teaching practice placement, where an effective relationship could be cultivated earlier because they had a foundation on which to work.

In relation to observation of classes, although benefits were noted in this research, Hagger and McIntyre, in their work on school-based teacher education, refer to some of the problems noted by the school and university staff with respect to the value of observation: in their work on school-based teacher education:

> Trainee teachers do not know what they do not know and therefore they are unable to structure observations and ask questions of practising teachers that would help them to understand the teaching and learning process. They just see the surface elements of teaching and not the underlying principles. Conversely, experienced teachers do not know what they know; their pedagogical expertise has become so proceduralised that they take it for granted' (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006:78).

There were also disadvantages in purely practical terms, noted by school staff, of such a large cohort observing classes; this led to disruption of lesson plans, was unsettling for pupils and possibly detrimental to learning. The underlying importance of this is just what was the impact on pupils was. There were advantages in their

seeing a large number of MFL student teachers, many of whom were foreign nationals, as they could appreciate the importance of the subject from this exposure, but, as guinea pigs in this experiment, it was unclear as to whether any other benefits had accrued to them.

A significant advantage seems to have been the raising of the importance of the mentors in the school. We learn that mentors were currently undergoing a more focused form of mentor training with the university course tutor. Westrup (2009: 34) recommended that: 'Training and support for mentors in schools needs to be strengthened' and subsequent research by Jackson recommended findings solutions to improve the status of mentoring roles in schools (Jackson, 2010).

The Research Aims
Original aim: to investigate the extent to which this model of embedding a university programme in a school appears to result in:

- Confident NQTs

Interestingly, despite the acknowledgement by the participants that it was really too early to claim that any of the aims of the project had been met, the staff interview participants were ready to claim that the student teachers were 'noticeably' more confident. The language used by interview participants from school and university was very positive with respect to confidence. However there was no control group to gauge this against and it is therefore difficult to assert with any evidence. By the time of the second interviews the problems associated with claiming any increase in confidence seem to have become more pronounced; the uniqueness of this cohort, the fact that confidence within a group of their peers might not translate into confidence as NQTs. However, as all the participants were experienced teacher trainers, their conviction that they did seem more confident cannot perhaps be dismissed as mere speculation. There is some apparent 'evidence' of increased confidence given in that all wanted to apply for jobs, some student teachers had been successful at interview, they had benefited from extended time in school. There are, though, so many other factors that could have contributed. The point here perhaps is twofold; they did not seem to be less confident because of the embedded programme: but were there areas which a university –based course could have given them confidence in which are hidden? Future research to investigate just what lies behind such claims would be significant.

- Skills

This point is continued into the quest for skills. What are the skills that a student teacher should develop? School routines, classroom management, behaviour management and pedagogy are all mentioned but perhaps one of the main points could be seen to be that first hand, prolonged exposure to the school environment demonstrates the complexity of teaching – not so much a skill, as the realisation of the need to develop a wide range of skills over one's career as a teacher. There are two interesting claims here: firstly that the student teachers were gaining a wide understanding of school life; and secondly that they were 'behaving like teachers'. It must be noted that one could claim extensions to both these ideas: they were gaining an understanding of school culture, but, potentially of only one school culture and of only one way of 'how things are done round here'; they may have been

behaving like teachers, but which teachers, which identity, which form of professionalism?

- Reflective practitioners

Much has been written about reflection (Schön, 1983; 1987; Zeichner and Liston, 1987; 1996; Warwick, 2007) and its importance to the teaching profession. But where is reflection best learnt? This question pre-supposes the fact that reflection needs to be 'learnt' and that within its definition there is a depth which goes beyond a surface questioning of what is going on around you. This is not to disparage the 'buzz' attested to by the participants, who saw that the excitement of the 'real' environment was engaging the student teachers, as perhaps it cannot in the more remote university, to think about and engage with what was happening. Interestingly it was a school participant who questioned whether the 'very strong' training on reflection carried out in a more traditional course was lost somewhat. The balance achieved between everyday frenetic school life, and standing back to reflect with an evidence base and examples of research done in the area, is questionable. However examples were given by the participants of where they thought reflection showed: in the mock interviews because they had a more holistic view; someone commented that the student teachers on placement were 'very able to talk in general educational studies sessions about other issues around the school – special needs, bullying, child protection and those sort of issues, so they seem to have more ideas'. One person pointed out that in some cases increased confidence could be detrimental, 'reducing their reflective side' so they did not question practice in themselves and others.

- Understanding of wider aspects of school life
- Employability/ better knowledge of what is it like to work in a school

In terms of understanding of wider aspects of school life and better knowledge of what it is like to work in a school, the research suggests that there were benefits for the student teachers with respect to these aspects, particularly with respect to foreign nationals who saw the English education system first hand. However, it must be noted that this knowledge comes earlier in this kind of embedded programme than in a traditional programme; it may not necessarily be any better and, of course, the knowledge is focussed on one school, not a variety. Students seemed to enjoy the authentic experience and it seemed to have added to their self-confidence, and allowed them to engage with pupils from a very early stage of their journey to QTS (Qualified Teacher Status). Although the wider knowledge aspects of school life seemed to be a beneficial result of the embedded programme, it must be remembered that originally the purposes of the programme were not specifically these; senior management in the school saw the programme as an opportunity to enhance standards of achievement in languages, and consequently the school's profile as a language college, through the CPD which the programme would involve, and the university aimed to enhance its PGCE provision in response to national initiatives, through this innovative approach to teacher education. There are some limited indications that the programme might have contributed to employability: enhanced experience of the English system for foreign nationals; improved interview performance, due to their experience and also the mock interviews they underwent in the school.

- Retention

'Seeing it like it is' as a student teacher has advantages, but it is not the case that this did not, or does not, happen on the traditional programme too through placements. Did this embedded programme appear to affect retention? No-one had left the course since it started and all the student teachers appeared enthusiastic about applying for jobs. Those from abroad had retained their desire to find employment in the UK and these student teachers did find the experience valuable because of the immersion into the different culture of a school in England, rather than what they were used to. Perhaps one of the wisest comments from the student teacher interviews is that, to actually see what happens in a school 'from the word go' does open the eyes to what the daily routine is really like; this, of course with the caveats that it is only one school and not necessarily representative of some supposed 'norm', and that the nature of the experiment provided the experience of a community of student teachers working together, rather than of an individual alone in one school. The student teacher who had realised it was 'a lovely school' with 'lovely mentors' and that the situation could have been off-putting if that had not been the case, as well as the student teacher who had noticed the restrictions on teachers, the imposed tick box routines and the low expectations, indicate a welcome criticality and depth of thought from members of the student teacher cohort. One of the compelling endorsements of the course in terms of promoting retention is the recommendation by the student teachers, albeit a limited sample, of this kind of embedded course for other student teachers. Once again, it must be pointed out that this does not undermine traditional courses as this research shows no comparison, but in these circumstances it does not seem to have put them off.

7. Concluding thoughts and recommendations

By the end of the first year of this embedded programme (July, 2013), the Government had introduced School Direct as the way forward for teacher training: 'School Direct is a response to what schools have asked for: more influence and control over the way that teachers are trained. It is a way of ensuring that newly qualified teachers deliver great lessons in your school' (DfE, 2013). With the emphasis of teacher training moving to schools, it was decided by the university not to continue the embedded programme into its second year. The disappointment of this was evident in the interviews with the participants who, despite early misgivings and the difficulties that had to be surmounted, had nevertheless been keen to 'do it better' next year. In terms of this research project, the emphasis of its value has shifted. Originally it was hoped it would be possible to use the embedded programme as a model for others to copy; however, with a new government initiative, the value of the research has shifted; this report offers a commentary on partnership working between a particular school and a particular university, thereby presenting possibilities for new models of partnership which might arise from School Direct.

As far as partnership is concerned, the comment from one participant, that true partnership will be achieved 'when you can no longer tell which bit is school and which bit is university is telling'. It would seem to imply that close relationships which

allow for full participation and trust between the two are a worthy ideal towards which to strive. 'Making teaching more real' for student teachers seemed to be welcomed by all and it will be for both schools and universities to work together to really unpick the meaning of that phrase and its implications for the profession. The rush to get the programme underway had not allowed full participation of all parties in the planning stages and this is an important message for successful partnership; the need for everyone 'to be on board' and 'to be singing from the same hymn sheet'. The importance of good communication and good strategic planning were felt to be essential underpinnings of good partnership. Equal partnership, it was felt, does not just 'happen', it needs to be worked for. There is a potential culture clash when different institutional cultures, albeit working towards a common goal, come together, and this needs to be appreciated and minimised.

As far as School Direct is concerned, the embedded programme became, unwittingly, a good preparation for the school participants, some of whom felt more comfortable about the demands of School Direct because of the experience of having all the student teachers in the school. The perceived raising of the status of mentoring the student teachers within the school is a very important advantage of the programme, because, as teacher training is focused more on the school as base, it cannot be a hit and miss affair with inadequate mentoring arrangements in place. It seems as though the embedded programme, although it was felt to be different from School Direct, had in fact given the school participants more confidence to work out their own programme and take 'ownership'. Interestingly the school valued the university input and would have liked the opportunity for more of this, for themselves. Data from the student teachers is limited, but some important messages for School Direct did come through: the need for a broader experience than one school; the need to experience challenging schools; the benefit of peer support to promote confidence; the need to see a range of teaching styles and different pedagogies.

The research has, of course, raised many questions, some of which are suggested here:

- Was the programme really 'embedded'? Time in school was short, student teachers were still working in the university as well as the school, they were 'segregated' in the school and did not necessarily have their teaching practice placement in the school.
- Although the student teachers seemed better attuned to school life, were they as far forward on the academic side? Did they learn to critique practice? Did they learn to question?
- Who gained from this experience? Was it the university, the school, the student teachers, the pupils? It could be argued that if all parties did not gain, then it was perhaps not as successful as hoped.
- If student teachers in future, through the School Direct initiative, stay in one school for one year, despite any advantages, what will they lose?
- Wherein lies teacher professionalism? Does training in a school enhance professionalism? In other words what exactly is teacher professionalism and

how do student teachers begin to acquire it during their teacher education course?

Recommendations:

1. Within a constantly shifting landscape of teacher education, it is essential to maintain the values associated with good teacher education for children and young people. Although the embedded programme had to be abandoned because of new government initiatives, the research has value in suggesting the following imperatives for effective partnership between schools and universities:

    - The importance of involving all school and university stakeholders in planning from the outset;

    - the importance of establishing and maintaining effective lines of communication for everyone;

    - the importance of engaging in transparency in order to cultivate trust.

4. This study suggests that there is a constant need to continue to research teacher education; new 'experiments', 'initiatives', etc. are not necessarily well grounded or successful and it is recommended that all new ideas in education are piloted and thoroughly researched for their effectiveness.

5. This research involved school teachers, university tutors, student teachers and, by extension, children and young people; it is recommended that any initiative in teacher education be seen to benefit all stakeholders and, particularly children and young people. The views of participants in the research suggested ideas on what it is to be a teacher, and where teacher professionalism is to be found. It is recommended that these concepts be considered in depth when formulating any new initiative in teacher education

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Appendices
Appendix 1
XXXX School MFL Teacher Education Initiative

Research Project

Statement of Informed Consent
Stakeholders
Type of data to be collected from or about **students** on the course: observation of programme, naturally occurring data such as assignments; NQT survey tool; interviews; questionnaire; KAP scores; admission scores
Type of data to be collected from or about MFL school staff, Headteacher, university tutors: questionnaire; interviews; observation of programme; mentors' reports

Informed Consent

This research project forms the initial evaluation of the teacher education partnership between XXXX School and the University of XXXX Modern Foreign Languages Department in the Faculty of Education. It is intended that the data will be used in research reports and in publications for the wider higher education community.

We only want you to participate if you are happy to give your 'informed consent' for the information collected during the project to be used for this purpose. Therefore, in signing this document, you are agreeing with the following statements:

- I understand that my participation in the project is entirely voluntary
- I understand that strict confidentiality will be preserved throughout the research project, that my identity will be protected at all times, and that my contributions will be anonymous.
- I understand that I am taking part in this project of my own free will, and that I can withdraw from the project any time until the data is merged during data analysis, without giving a reason, and that there will be no negative consequences if I do so.
- I understand that, if I participate in any interviews, they will be recorded and transcribed and that once an interview has been transcribed, the researcher will check the transcription with me for accuracy, to ensure that I agree with it and to give me an opportunity to make changes if necessary.
- In accordance with the procedures for confidentiality, anonymity and the freedom to withdraw outlined above, I consent to my contributions being used in the writing of research reports and for any further publications and presentations in journal articles or educational conference.
- I understand that all data will be anonymised, securely locked away and destroyed at the end of 5 years and that the identity of all participants will not be revealed.
- I understand that I will be given access to the findings of the research report.

I consent to participate in the XXXX School MFL Teacher Education Initiative
at the University of XXXX

Appendix 2

XXXX School MFL teacher education initiative – research project
Information sheet for participants

Research academic lead: Dr Alison Jackson, University of Cumbria
Research assistant: Mary Ashworth, University of Cumbria

The Teaching Agency (2012) advises that teaching languages requires creativity to find ways to bring a language and culture to life and to engage and inspire students. The government Implementation Plan 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers' (2011:8) suggests that 'we will … require university ITT providers to involve schools fully in their provision'. The University of XXXX has highly successful MFL PGCE provision and is developing an enhanced partnership with XXXX School to deliver school-embedded teacher education for University of XXXX MFL PGCE students. Many partnership models currently operate in English teacher education, however, the proposed XXXX model is potentially innovative in that it intends to embed a University programme in a school. It is therefore fitting that research is undertaken on the initial stages to capture the challenges and opportunities that the model gives.

This proposed research inquiry will investigate this unique experiment and has been devised by the University of XXXX in close collaboration with XXXX School. It is envisaged as a two stage project with the first stage focusing on project evaluation and the second stage developing more extensive research. During the academic year 2012 -13 we will carry out the first stage only and will follow the early stages of the model. It is envisaged that will benefit the wider teacher education community.

The aims of this research proposal are: to investigate the extent to which the XXXX model appears to result in:
- Confident NQTs
- Skills
- Reflective practitioners
- Understanding of wider aspects of school life
- Employability/better knowledge of what it is like to work in a school
- Student retention

The methods employed will be
- Questionnaire / interview with MFL staff and University tutor (interviews with key staff at beginning and end of programme)
- Observation of programme & naturally occurring data such as students' assignments
- NQT survey tool with PGCE students on completion – *not used*
- Interviews with sample of students on completion
- School-based mentors' (or equivalent) final reports – *not used*
- Student evaluation questionnaires

- KAP scores compared with admission scores – *not used*

Outcomes of the research will be:

- Internal dissemination of outcomes to XXXX School and the University of XXXX, including potential impact for partnership and design of PGCE programmes
- Journal article
- Presentation at external conferences
- Each participant in the research will receive a summary of the overall report in September/October 2013.

Confidentiality

Care will be taken at all steps of the research to ensure that participants' identities are anonymised:

- All questionnaires will be completed using Bristol Online Surveys and will not require the person to identify themselves. All participants that will have the right to refuse to complete a questionnaire. The online survey data stored on a password protected computer and destroyed after 5 years in line with university policy.

- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. At the stage of transcribing, the actual identity of the respondent will be anonymised and not made available to the professional transcriber of the interviews. The recordings will be confidential, kept on a password protected computer and destroyed after five years in accordance with university policy. Participants can withdraw consent for the recording to be used at any time up to the point at which the interview material has been analysed and incorporated with other data. Any data that would be useful for future groups of students and other staff will only be used with specific permissions from the owning student/staff member.

- All naturalistic data (e.g. course evaluations/ students' course work, recordings of tutor discussion) will be anonymised when used for research purposes and kept secure at all times in a locked cabinet.

- Notes from the observation of the programme will be anonymised and stored in electronic form on a password protected computer; any hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet.

- The names of XXXX School and the University of XXXX

- will be used for internal communications only. The names of the school and university will be anonymised for any external publications.