

PROJECT AIMS

The aim of this project is to develop and deepen partnership with schools by building on current effective practice, at the same time increasing both the capacity and quality of school placements.

BACKGROUND

Since 1994 the MFL department at St Martin's has adopted a different approach to other subject areas to the placement of trainees in schools. The exact nature of this is outlined below.

We currently differ from other subject areas because we place trainees in departments either in groups of 4 or in pairs for the A placement and wherever possible in pairs for the B placement. The exact nature of the pairings depends partly on the size of the school, on the number of other trainees from other subject areas in the school and also whether the department is being trained up to become a key training school (i.e. one of our A schools training 2-4 trainees each). There are many distinct advantages in having this pattern which are outlined below but the most significant is that we work with a smaller number of schools. This in turn has a significant number of important advantages, for example enabling us to spend considerably more time in any one school. Last year we had 43 trainees on the course placed in 17 'A' schools - in other subject areas we could have been working with 43 schools!

Because we work with fewer schools at any one time this means not only that we are able to develop a very close working relationship / partnership with our schools but also that the MFL partnership is not working to maximum capacity all of the time. It also means that schools can have a rest from being a training school and just have trainees for the B practice whilst we can also train schools up to be training schools by using them as B schools in the first instance. There is therefore a changing picture which allows for flexibility and changes within schools from one year to the next.

RATIONALE

The following comments are summarised from feedback from both trainees and mentors across the partnership.

<p>This document can be freely copied and amended if used for educational purposes. It must not be used for commercial gain. The author(s) and web source must be acknowledged whether used as it stands or whether adapted in any way.</p>

From the trainees' perspective the benefits of being placed in pairs are unquantifiable:

- Mutual support
- Peer observation and discussion
- Sharing of ideas and learning from each other
- The opportunity to work collaboratively / team teach
- Not feeling isolated
- More support and training from both mentors and tutors (trainees co-observe their partner with their mentor/tutor and take part in all the feedback)
- Quicker progress and development (because of the joint observation / feedback mentioned above) than would otherwise would be the case. This is particularly noticeable when one trainee 'drops out' and his/her partner is left on their own in school.

From the schools' perspective the benefits are:

- The professional development agenda (not just within the department but across the school)
- The extra help brought in by having more than one trainee within the department
- Greater contact with college and therefore greater feeling of partnership
- Joint observation of classes - more feedback for the trainees - steeper learning curve which is more beneficial to pupils
- Trainees settle in to the department more quickly and are able to make more contribution to the department
- Less reliance on teachers for ideas etc. - greater mutual support
- Collaborative planning - sharing of ideas - team teaching
- More discussion when doing weekly mentoring session
- Sharing experience / learning
- Having the confidence to contribute / organize extra-curricular activities
- Mentor judgements of trainees' progress have a wider context

This document can be freely copied and amended if used for educational purposes. It must not be used for commercial gain. The author(s) and web source must be acknowledged whether used as it stands or whether adapted in any way.

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

When faced with the suggestion of having more than one trainee in a department, schools initially may have a number of concerns about, in particular, the impact on the timetable and on pupils as well as the impact on a mentor's workload. An example of how this model can work in practice is outlined in the Case Study below.

EXEMPLAR CASE STUDY

School : mixed comprehensive - 800 on roll

Languages : French and German

Department : 4 full time staff

Trainees : 4 on A placement : 2 x French, 2 x German

Impact on timetable:

Trainees start off with a reduced teaching commitment which essentially means that two trainees' impact on the timetable is equivalent to one trainee under the conventional system in School A.

Ways of doing this: each trainee has an 'adopted' KS3 class and a shared KS4 class (with the other trainee) until Christmas. This is staged so that they pick up the KS3 class first and then gradually take on the KS4 class. They observe / assist each other at all times as well as observing other teachers and working with small groups of year 11 pupils / SEN pupils. In January they pick up another class (so that their timetable increases in preparation for their B placement) by splitting a large set in half (another alternative would be to team teach this large group). This means that this particular pair of trainees throughout their A placement is planning collaboratively and team teaching (KS4), observing and assisting (KS3 adopted class) and planning collaboratively (extra KS3 class). In addition each trainee is involved in up to twice the amount of feedback s/he would normally receive if placed alone.

In School B trainees end up with 60% of an NQT's timetable but this is initially made up of a combination of whole class teaching, 6th form and small Year 11 groups + SEN support (not necessarily in the same subject area). This gives them the opportunity to continue to observe and reflect while at the same time ensuring adequate contact. As they become more confident

<p>This document can be freely copied and amended if used for educational purposes. It must not be used for commercial gain. The author(s) and web source must be acknowledged whether used as it stands or whether adapted in any way.</p>

and competent then they can take on extra classes e.g. splitting large groups (especially after year 11 study leave when there will be rooms available); team teaching etc.... Again this means a staged teaching programme which builds up during School B. The advantages of being 'creative' with classes is that the pupils benefit considerably, for example being taught in groups of 15 instead of 30 for a period of time.

Impact on the mentors' workload:

The school in question has 4 full-time MFL teachers, two of whom have been mentors for several years, and one of whom has just been trained. Each of the more experienced mentors takes responsibility for a pair of trainees (one for German and one for French) while the younger mentor has two of the trainees teaching his KS4 class. All three mentors do regular observation of the trainees' teaching and give both written and verbal feedback. One mentor (this is rotated) runs the weekly mentoring session on a particular, specified issue or theme for all four trainees.

In addition to the advantages outlined above, the mentors themselves have provided the following arguments for having multiple students within the department:

- It is as easy to deliver the weekly mentoring session to two or more trainees as to one, and there is greater and often deeper discussion.
- In terms of observation and feedback, trainees observe and assist in each other's lessons and are therefore involved in joint observation and feedback. Therefore their learning is significantly greater and possibly quicker because they learn from their partner as well as from their own teaching. They also learn to give feedback to their partner so their powers of observation, analysis and reflection are greater.
- Trainees are more independent of their mentor - they can help each other with planning / ideas/ resources / finding out answers and therefore make fewer demands on mentors' time.
- There are several trained mentors within the department

We can legitimately train up multiple mentors within departments. This helps to a) spread the load; b) provide good professional development across the departments and c) ensures better quality and consistency across the department particularly in placement B where trainees have classes across

This document can be freely copied and amended if used for educational purposes. It must not be used for commercial gain. The author(s) and web source must be acknowledged whether used as it stands or whether adapted in any way.

more members of the department. Because we are working with fewer schools we can cater more easily for unforeseen circumstances e.g. maternity leave / staffing changes and can also plan for years off.

PROPOSAL

We now seek to share effective practice and trial the MFL model in other subject areas by:

- Setting up a 'pilot' scheme within the partnership;
- Exploring and developing other 'models' and ways of working with schools to deepen the partnership still further;
- Writing up a series of evaluative case studies exemplifying how the model can work (hopefully successfully) across:
 - different types / sizes of schools
 - a range of department sizes
 - a range of subjects

METHODOLOGY

We plan to do this by:

- building on the groundwork put in place at the professional mentors' away day last year
- planning with MFL mentors / ASTs to put forward the model in departments
- working with professional mentors within clusters
- working with colleagues from other subjects and mentors from schools
- promoting the model within clusters of schools / individual schools
- providing schools / departments with a clear, workable model
- monitoring, supporting and evaluating this trial
- writing up further case studies in the light of this.

<p>This document can be freely copied and amended if used for educational purposes. It must not be used for commercial gain. The author(s) and web source must be acknowledged whether used as it stands or whether adapted in any way.</p>
