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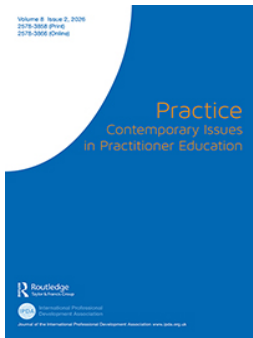
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Specific actions taken by school-based mentors to induct student teachers successfully at the beginning of a school placement

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on innovative research undertaken to understand the specific actions taken by school-based mentors, during the first few days of a placement, that contribute to the student teacher making a positive start to their school experience. Data were gathered via questionnaire from undergraduate and post-graduate primary student teachers and through a focus group with school-based mentors. Specific actions taken by school-based mentors during the early stages of a placement that were deemed to be valuable to the success of student teachers are summarised under four themes: planning carefully for the student teacher's first day at the school, including planning when, who and how the student teachers would be welcomed to the school; providing easy access to all school resources, including online policies and planning documents; supporting the student teacher's identity as a teacher, including through being provided with a school lanyards and fobs, to enable independent access around the school; supporting the student teacher's wellbeing through a clear focus on professional learning, including through the use of early and focused feedback on teaching and learning. The research team concludes that school-based mentors have agency to ensure that each student teacher makes a positive start to each school placement.

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Introduction and rationale

School placement, practice or experience is an integral aspect of student teachers' preparation in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes, both in the United Kingdom and internationally. Within such experiences, the role of the school-based mentor has, since at least the 1980s, been important to the success of student teacher placements (Hobson *et al.* 2009) and, in recent years, the expectations of those in the role in England have increased considerably (Department for Education DfE 2022).

Mentoring for student teachers has been recognised as both essential to support professional development and potentially challenging, with effective mentoring built

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around the development of authentic and collegiate relationships, professional dialogue and adaptability to respond to individual needs (Hobson *et al.* 2009, Lofthouse 2018).

This article reports on original research undertaken to understand the specific actions taken by school-based mentors, during the first few days of a placement, that contribute to the student teacher making a positive start to their school experience. The research, which addresses a clear gap in pre-existing literature, was undertaken during the 2024–25 academic year by academics at a university in the South-West of England, with the perspectives from undergraduate and postgraduate student teachers sought through a focused online questionnaire and with school-based mentors invited to share their views through an online focus group.

The objectives of this research were:

- To understand perceptions of ITE school-based mentors about specific actions and approaches they take that facilitate successful starts for students on their school placements
- To understand perceptions of ITE students about specific actions and approaches taken by ITE school-based mentors and other teaching staff that facilitate successful starts for their placements
- To identify principles and examples of effective practice in relation to inducting ITE students into their school placements.

Literature review

It is recognised that learning to teach is not easy (Forster and Eperjesi 2021, Lindqvist *et al.* 2023): not only is there a lot to learn about the curriculum, pedagogy, behaviour management and professionalism, but, as identified by Alves *et al.* (2019, p. 893), ‘becoming a teacher is a highly emotional path’. The emotional challenges of becoming a teacher are increased during school placements (Lindqvist *et al.* 2023), more so during the first few days of a new placement, when student teachers are unfamiliar with the people, place, procedures and policies of a new context and may be experiencing heightened emotional responses. In this context, this review explores existing research about the central role of school-based mentors in helping student teachers to begin their placements successfully, before identifying other factors identified in the published research that impact on student teacher placement success.

The role of the school-based mentor

Most of the literature related to student teacher placement success emphasises the central role of the school-based mentor, with Hobson *et al.* (2009, p. 209) identifying it as ‘perhaps the most effective form of supporting the professional development of beginning teachers’. Mackie (2018) recognises the complexity of the role of the mentor and identifies that the relationship between mentor and mentee is key to a student teacher’s success, with the mentor identified as both friend and counsellor.

Mackie (2018) also identifies that some particular personal qualities of the mentor are highly valued by student teachers, such as being approachable and positive, which is mirrored in research by Rippon and Martin (2006, p. 90):

It was evident the respondents valued personal traits (e.g. approachability, empathy) above professional traits (e.g. length of service, teaching credibility) in a mentoring relationship.

Certo (2005, pp. 3–4) identifies the need for a balance between the functions/processes of the school-based mentor that are seen as supportive, such as ‘listening, providing structure, expressing positive expectations, and serving as an advocate’ and providing challenge, through the:

mentoring activity of giving beginning teachers facts and observations, insights and perceptions, and theories and interpretations that raise questions about beginning teachers’ current views, inviting them to entertain alternatives.

Mackie (2018, p. 627) agrees, suggesting that effective mentors do more than just support student teachers, through focusing on the ‘professional dimension of learning to teach’, including through providing feedback on teaching and learning. Some authors, such as Oberholzer and Boyle (2024), have identified features of the role of the mentor that contribute to successful placements for student teachers, such as making expectations explicit, evaluating the needs of the student teacher and working together to set meaningful targets.

Connolly *et al.* (2020) identify the great significance of the ‘first meeting’ between the mentor and the student teacher and identified specific questions that might be used to maximise the development of a productive relationship at the start of the placement.

Features of successful school placements for student teachers

While most of the existing research focuses, understandably, on the central role of the school-based mentor, other features of successful placements for student teachers are identified. Hurley and Cammack (2014) identify that some student teachers value knowing where they are placed in good time before the first day of the placement, to give them time to plan logistical issues and to begin to ‘picture’ where they will be working; this eases some of their pre-placement anxiety.

Certo (2005) emphasises the importance for new teachers to understand the protocols and procedures within a school, as an important aspect of their preparation to teach effectively, while Ussher (2010, p. 103) identifies the need for utilising the ‘village’ of the whole school to provide guidance, advice and developmental opportunities for the student teachers. Rippon and Martin (2006, p. 91) found that new teachers wanted to be treated in an ‘equitable manner’ with all colleagues, as opposed to feeling that they were low in the ‘pecking order’.

Originality of the current study

While the existing research provides principles for effective induction of student teachers on school placement, no existing research was found that focuses on the specific actions that can be taken by school-based mentors in the first week of a placement to increase the chances of student teachers enjoying successful school placement, with the exception of the work by Connolly *et al.* (2020), which focused on the use of questions with certain groups of student teachers and their school-based mentors during their first meeting.

Research methods

Data for this qualitative study were gathered in the following two ways: the completion of online questionnaires by undergraduate and postgraduate student teachers and the engagement of school-based mentors in a focus group discussion. These methods are discussed more fully, below, along with explanations of the ethical approaches utilised to ensure that participants were safeguarded. The project was approved by the University's Research Ethics Committee.

Primary student teachers in the second year of a three-year undergraduate BED degree and those undertaking a primary PGCE were provided with full information about the research project by email and were given the opportunity to ask questions by email or in person. They were then invited to complete an anonymous online questionnaire immediately after their first week of a new placement in either the Spring or Summer term, 2025. The initial information provided to student teachers, and the online consent form, made it clear that participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous, and that participation or non-participation would not affect their progress on the course (British Educational Research Association BERA 2024). The student teachers were invited to see that the research was potentially beneficent, as it would help ITE providers understand and create the conditions for successful placements.

The questionnaire was very focused, in the hope that it would elicit focused responses from the student teachers: the students were given two, open-ended, opportunities to respond to this statement: 'Please identify one specific action taken by your mentor, class teacher or another colleague that you believe has supported you in making a positive start to your placement'. The aim was to avoid the student teachers responding with generalities, such as, 'The school mentor made me feel welcome' or 'The mentor was approachable'. The intention was to understand the specific actions that school-based mentors take that contribute to the student teachers' success, rather than bland generalities. Twenty-two student teachers completed the online questionnaire.

In the second part of the research, to provide additional data to triangulate with the student teacher perceptions, experienced school-based mentors were invited to contribute to an online focus group discussion about what they perceived to be effective practice in giving student teachers the best possible start to their placement experiences. Three experienced and engaged school-based mentors contributed to an online, 40-minute focus group discussion. Consent was sought from the focus group participants for a recording and transcript to be made of this discussion. Information and data derived from this study were anonymised and used solely to help to further the researchers' understanding of how to ensure student teachers make positive starts to their placements. The importance of participant confidentiality from the research focus group was established at the outset.

Drawing on the six-stage process identified by Braun and Clark (2006, p. 87), both sets of data were collated or transcribed to enable the research team to, firstly, familiarise themselves with the data, before an inductive analysis led to the identification of draft themes arising within it; these themes were discussed and tested and data coded to identify key points or examples within each theme.

Findings

Findings from the two elements of the research are presented here: first the responses from the student questionnaire are analysed, followed by the responses from the school-based mentor focus group.

Findings from questionnaire of student teachers

According to one student teacher, effective induction on placement ‘sets the tone for a positive placement as it made me feel that they [the school] were invested in me and my success right from the start’.

The following themes were identified from an analysis of the responses of both groups of students as contributing positively to a successful start to a placement:

- Being treated as a teacher.
- Being welcomed by all staff.
- Communication and access.
- School mentors’ knowledge of the requirements.
- Checks on the student teacher’s wellbeing and professional progress.
- Effective planning of time.

Being treated as a teacher

Student teachers valued feeling, from early in the placement, like a fully integrated member of the school team. Examples given of specific actions that contributed to this integration included being provided with a school laptop, inclusion in staff emails, being provided with their own staff name badge and fobs for gates (which negated the need for them to wear a ‘visitor’ lanyard), and being able to sign in and out of school as a member of staff. This was further reinforced where the student teacher was introduced to the children as a ‘teacher’ and not as a ‘student teacher’.

Being welcomed by all staff

Student teachers identified the importance of the role of all staff in making them feel welcome on placement, with one identifying that the teaching assistant had ‘taken more time to get to know me’ and another that members of staff had stopped to talk to them in the corridor. Some identified the significance of the Headteacher taking specific actions in the early stages of the placement: ‘The Head mentioned me in assembly which made me feel really welcome’; ‘Head made a point of introducing me in the staff meeting so everyone knew who I was’.

Communication and access

The importance of communication between school and student teacher was highlighted by participants who commented how important it felt to be included in

staff emails or that having access to the school's shared drive and documentation 'made my life much easier', and some valued the fact that communication with the school began even before the start of the placement. Some students reported that their school had created their own bespoke folders for student teachers containing 'all the important information in one place', including school policies and routines.

Participants also indicated the importance of gaining an early understanding and knowledge of the building: 'a meeting and tour of the school helping me find things in the school like resources'.

School-based mentors' knowledge of the placement requirements

Student teachers appreciated school-based mentors who had familiarised themselves with the expectations and requirements of the placement: 'they read the handbook before I got to the school so they had an idea of what we would be doing'. Some student teachers reported the use of a three-way meeting between mentor, class teacher and student teacher, to ensure they were all 'on the same page'. Student teachers valued an early discussion of the university's placement handbook with a school-based mentor who demonstrated a knowledge of the requirements and expectations of student teachers.

Checks on the student teacher's wellbeing and professional progress

Attention by the school mentors to the student teacher's wellbeing was valued by the participants. The provision of support, reassurance, and 'checking my understanding' led to the students feeling that their wellbeing 'was always at the forefront of the [mentor] meetings'. The student teachers also identified the importance of professional progress and guidance in securing their wellbeing. Some students appreciated mentors who were willing to extend them in their classroom practice by 'pushing me and throwing me at the deep end with my teaching'. The provision of 'immediate feedback' at the conclusion of an observed session, particularly during the early stages of placement, was described as 'so positive' and 'very reassuring'.

Effective planning of time

Being supported in the planning of their time was an important element of induction for many of the participants. Having a clear, diarised schedule for when mentor meetings would take place enabled students to feel secure that they would have opportunities to discuss their 'progress and next steps to improve and build upon'. Student teachers appreciated mentors taking time to plan the week ahead and even 'the whole timetable for next term' and 'until the end of my placement' in advance. This provided the students with a clarity which reduced levels of stress and anxiety and enabled them to allocate more time to the development of their classroom practice. Planning the specifics of the subjects a student teacher would plan/teach during placement as part of induction meant students 'left [the] first week knowing what lessons I will be teaching from the beginning to the end of term'.

School-based mentor focus group findings

The following themes were identified from an analysis of the data from the school-based mentor focus group:

- Preparing themselves for the placement.
- Preparing the class teacher, children and parents.
- Preparing student teachers in advance of placement.
- Key points for first conversations, the non-negotiables for your setting.
- Defining the school-based mentor role with the student teacher.
- Tailoring the induction.

Preparing themselves for the placement

Prior to hosting the placement, all mentors ensured they prepared themselves for their role. All mentors accessed placement information in advance via the university website, in accordance with the DfE (2016, p. 8) expectation: ‘A mentor should understand the course structure and the requirement of trainees to meet the Teachers’ Standards’. For one mentor, drawing up a checklist of key information to pass on at induction was valuable preparation. Mentors spoke about thinking back to when they had been a student, what they needed and the level of support that they wished they had had. One mentor observed that a recent experience had led them to review their assumptions about what the current generation of young student teachers might or might not know and to be very explicit in the expectations that are shared. Another mentor said they made sure they are ‘that person that they can rely on to be able to come to’, regardless of the situation.

Preparing the class teacher, children and parents

Another key theme to emerge from discussions with school-based mentors was the importance of preparing different members of the school community in readiness for facilitating a student teacher placement.

Mentors recognised that communicating with class teachers, children and parents about the arrival of a student teacher was a valuable aspect of successful induction, with parents and school staff appreciating this information being shared in advance or at the very beginning of a placement. Home/school communication systems such as Class Dojo were often utilised by mentors and class teachers to introduce the student teacher to parents and to inform them of key details such as the length of placement and who that student teacher would be working with. As part of this stakeholder preparation, there was an emphasis on the student teacher being viewed similarly to other staff, as a member of the school community. One mentor shared that, ‘When the teacher arrives, they’re introduced as a fellow member of staff that’s working in that class for that length of time and we found that parents and staff, the staff members and TAs and support staff have been really receptive to that system’.

Linked to this preparation of staff, there was some discussion among mentors regarding how and when to introduce student teachers to the wider staff body during induction. While they recognised that there might be some ‘incidental’ introductions to various staff members throughout induction, most mentors waited for a whole staff meeting or scheduled briefing to more formally introduce the student teacher. This formal introduction was also to make sure the student teacher felt integrated as ‘part of the staff team for that period of time’.

Mentors also recognised that it was crucial to prepare class teachers to understand the expectations and practicalities of placement, as well as their role working in the classroom with the student teacher, stating that this was particularly important for those class teachers who had not experienced hosting a school experience placement previously: ‘if you’re new to the role of being a class mentor, I think you underestimate how intense that relationship actually is’.

To support this preparation, mentors discussed how they utilised the university briefing meetings and university handbook, often sitting with the class teacher to work through these materials and to field any questions the teacher might have. They stated that class teachers need to ‘understand how their placement kind of progresses and builds up over time and all the different elements of the placement, like how the school-based tasks link into the curriculum, which link into the mentor meetings’. This was a common theme among participants, with mentors sharing how it was important to prepare class teachers for the nature of the student teacher/class teacher relationship, as well as the administrative aspects of the role.

Preparing students teachers in advance of placement

School-based mentors identified that preparing student teachers in advance of placements was a key consideration, and that doing this helped to set expectations and ease the transition into the school environment.

All school-based mentors reported that the initial contact with student teachers was typically made via email, usually following an initial email sent from the University which included essential student details. This email communication with student teachers was seen as a way of ‘making them feel at ease of what to expect on that first day’ and there may be a ‘couple of back and forths with a couple of questions’. In some cases, student teachers initiated the contact first, particularly those described by one mentor as being ‘very, very keen’.

The initial emails provided an opportunity for school-based mentors to introduce themselves and provide a brief overview of the school structure and their own role within it. The introductory messages commonly included practical details such as school start times, dress codes, parking arrangements, and general expectations for the first day: ‘I email them first of all to introduce myself and just sort of basics for the first day. So the times and sort of parking and what to wear, that type of thing’. One school-based mentor commented that they usually shared more detailed information on the first day in an induction pack, but in reflecting on their current practices during the focus group, they suggested that sending the student induction pack in advance might be more beneficial as it would give students time to digest the material and come prepared with questions.

Key points for first conversations, the non-negotiables for your setting

Establishing clear expectations at the start of a placement was seen by the school-based mentors as fundamental to the student teacher understanding the new context. Mentors reported very similar practices, with a planned ‘meet and greet’ at the start of the first day. For one mentor this included a ‘chat about 10–15 minutes, then do a tour of the school, drop them off with their teacher, and then agree to meet them after school that first day and go through any kind of logistics or policies’.

One mentor explained that they usually asked the student teachers to delay their start on the first day and to arrive at school for 9:15am. Although the ‘usual’ expectation was that student teachers should arrive by 8:15am, the delayed arrival time meant that this mentor had time to settle their own class first and organise cover to release them. Having an ‘hour in the morning so I can go through the induction and just have that time covered in my class is really helpful’. As a result, the student teacher was under the mentor’s direction as soon as they arrived at school and had their undivided attention for the first hour. The mentor also noted that asking student teachers to arrive after the early morning rush was over meant the school was calmer, the school office is less busy for the signing in process, and things generally feel less ‘fraught’ on first arrival. For this mentor, who was also a busy classroom teacher, this protected time meant they felt confident they were able to cover all the induction information at the start and avoided the feeling of needing to be in two places at one time.

School-based mentors provided an introduction for the student teachers to key school policies and practices, including safeguarding and behaviour management, as well as discussing expectations. One mentor supported their induction meeting with an induction handbook provided to the student teacher to read afterwards. This ensured no information was left out and provided a means for the student teacher to revisit and check expectations throughout the placement.

School-based mentors also stated that they provided student teachers with clear information about ‘non-negotiables’ for their school, such as setting expectations of arrival and departure times, workload expectations, confidentiality, professional behaviours when communicating with parents and carers, and being a positive role model for the children. An expectation to understand the school community, and induction to a school’s safeguarding measures, were stressed by one school-based mentor at a school with a high proportion of vulnerable children and families. Although acknowledged as a potentially ‘sobering conversation’ for some student teachers, it was felt to be as vital to induction as another school-based mentor prioritising a conversation about the ‘school’s vision, values and behaviour expectations for the children’.

Every school community develops unwritten habits and protocols, and school-based mentors highlighted some of these (for example, which cups to use in the staffroom) to the students, particularly to ease student teachers into building professional relationships with staff in the school.

All the mentors spoke about the importance of taking the student teachers to their classroom, and arranging a catch up later in the day, either at break time or after the school day.

Defining the school-based mentor role with the student teacher

All school-based mentors made time either in the induction meeting or very early in the placement to talk through what their role would look like to the student teacher. This included clarification of times they were available, the format of the weekly mentor meeting, and how they would support the student teacher. Making regular time available for check-ins and having an open-door policy were essential to being approachable and supportive, particularly when the mentor was not based in the same classroom as the student teacher. Mentors were very aware that student teachers could find the placement experience overwhelming and of the importance of having someone to talk to. Equally, some student teachers (and experienced staff) could be very good at appearing to be coping and managing the role. Counselling student teachers to understand that teaching is a job that relies on support from colleagues and empowering student teachers to learn to talk to those around them was seen as an important part of the mentor role.

One mentor spoke about the importance of creating a plan for the first week together with the student teacher, to further clarify roles and delineate who would do what and why across the week. This included the timings of teaching observations and scheduling of the required placement activities. This mentor commented on the importance of undertaking joint observations of the student teacher in their first week so that both the class teacher and mentor were 'on the same page' in relation to expectations, strengths and areas for development. This format created an opportunity for the mentor to share expertise, undertake mentoring and quality assurance of the other school colleague involved in the placement.

Tailoring the induction

Mentors emphasised the importance of tailoring the induction processes to meet the varying needs of student teachers, particularly in relation to their stage of training. One mentor commented that: 'When I've had first-year students, the induction has looked quite different. Whereas for the PGs and often once they've been on placements, they've got an idea of what it's like to be in school, the professionalism and things'. The mentor went on to describe how induction for first-year undergraduate student teachers often involved modelling expected behaviours more closely and covering foundational professional expectations, such as the appropriate use of mobile phones and dress code. Mentors acknowledged the value of maintaining firm and consistent standards regardless of experience.

Mentors reflected on the cognitive and emotional demands placed on student teachers, particularly those early on in their training. The volume of new information, the pressure of teaching and understanding university expectations regarding paperwork, alongside the emotional toll of being in an unfamiliar environment, were acknowledged as contributing to student teacher exhaustion. One mentor reflected that it is easy to forget that what experienced teachers might do instinctively in their classroom practice, inexperienced student teachers will need to apply much thought to, which is inherently tiring, while another stated: 'that's made me really reflect that I shouldn't make the assumption that they, they know: I need to be quite explicit with it'. They went onto

emphasise the need to explain this to colleagues, to normalise these feelings with student teachers, and to integrate them into a supportive school culture.

Implications for effective induction on placement

The analysis of both sets of data leads to some key contributions to existing knowledge about how to ensure student teachers enjoy positive starts to their school placements, related to four inter-related areas of action for school-based mentors:

- Plan carefully for the first day of the placement.
- Establish access to school resources.
- Support the student teacher's identity as a teacher.
- Support the student teacher's wellbeing.

Plan carefully for the first day of the placement

Research by Alves *et al.* (2019), Lindqvist *et al.* (2023), Oberholzer and Boyle (2024) identify that learning to teach is an emotionally demanding journey, and that the beginning of new school placements often heightens feelings of anxiety for student teachers. In this context, our research identified some specific actions that reduced the anxiety for student teachers and, as a result, contributed to a successful start to the placement from day one.

It was seen as beneficial to invite student teachers to arrive at school once the initial morning rush was over, to allow the school-based mentor uninterrupted time to welcome them to the school and to avoid the student teachers feeling as though they were 'in the way' during the busy start of the school day.

In keeping with the emphasis placed on the 'first meeting' by Connolly *et al.* (2020), school-based mentors gave great thought to the content and feel of their welcome meeting with the student teachers, during which they shared key information, including about the 'non-negotiable' expectations related to their settings, and in which it was seen as beneficial if they clearly defined their own role in relation to the student teacher. A school-specific induction handbook was seen as helpful to provide student teachers with all relevant information without overloading them in the first hour of the placement.

Student teachers valued being given a tour of the school and an introduction to the headteacher as part of their first morning, as well as a carefully managed introduction to their class, and the opportunity to 'check-in' with the school-based mentor again later in the day.

Establish access to school resources

Certo (2004) identifies the importance for new teachers to understand the protocols and procedures within a school. The school-specific induction handbook referred to above was seen as a valuable way to give student teachers access to relevant information about school policies and essential routines, and they valued knowing where to find specific resources and being introduced to key members of staff who would be able to help them with specific queries.

Student teachers particularly valued being given access to school-based online resources, such as planning documents, assessment information and tools to enable regular communication with parents.

Support the student teacher's identity as a teacher

School-based mentors identified that, even before the placement started, it was important to lay the foundations for success by preparing colleagues, particularly those new to working with student teachers, by collaboratively engaging with university documentation and clarifying expectations. This ensured a shared understanding of roles and helped to create a consistent and supportive environment. Similarly, it was seen as important to share information with parents and children about the arrival of the new teacher who would be working with them.

Student teachers particularly valued being introduced to the children as 'teachers' rather than 'students' or 'student teachers', and also valued being given staff lanyards, badges or swipe cards so that they could conduct themselves as full members of the teaching team, in keeping with the findings of Rippon and Martin (2006) that new teachers want to be treated in an equitable way to established members of staff.

Support the student teacher's wellbeing

Student teachers felt reassured and well supported when the school-based mentor and other colleagues demonstrated a secure knowledge of the placement requirements; school-based mentor identified the importance of tailoring their support to the individual students.

While student teachers valued being included and supported in the 'village' of the school community (Ussher 2010, p. 103), through feeling welcome in the staffroom and spoken to by colleagues in the corridor, they placed more emphasis on feeling as though they were making progress professionally, as a way to reduce their stress levels and feel positive about their placement. Specific actions that were valued included being provided with early and planned feedback on their teaching, engaging in planned and structured meetings focusing on their professional progress and having early discussions about planning their own teaching commitments, so that they knew what and when they were going to teach. As identified by Mackie (2018), this focus on the student teacher's professional learning as a teacher is central to effective mentoring.

School-based mentors saw it as important to normalise asking for help and provided informal 'check-in' opportunities for student teachers within their school. Encouraging openness about challenges, and promoting teaching as a collaborative, supportive profession were seen as key to early professional development, as identified by Oberholzer and Boyle (2024, p. 27) that school-based mentors should seek to understand the 'internal challenges' of the novice teacher.

Conclusion

The findings of the study have wide applicability for student teacher school placements across the UK and internationally. The study shows that school-based mentors have

agency to ensure that student teachers make a positive start to each school placement, with some specific actions identified that school-based mentors may take to successfully induct student teachers at the beginning of their placements, related to preparing carefully for the first day of the placement, establishing access for the student teacher to the range of school resources, supporting the student teacher's identity as a teacher within the school, and supporting the student teacher's wellbeing while on placement, with a particular focus on supporting their professional progress as a teacher.

Further research might be undertaken to test the findings of this research across a variety of placement types and school placement age-ranges, and to explore further with school-based mentors what highly effective practice might look like to ensure that student teachers enjoy the best possible starts to each of their placements.

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