



**A case study examination of the BBC News School  
Report project in Initial Teacher Education across  
three sites**

**for the**

**Training and Development Agency for Schools  
(TDA)**

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The ITTE evaluation team would like to dedicate this report to Tim Tarrant for his unwavering commitment to the BBC News School Report project in ITT, for understanding the value of such projects for trainee teachers and the role they can play in enhancing technology for learning.

## Contents

Contents.....	3
1 Executive summary.....	5
2 Introduction and context.....	6
2.1 Context: teacher training in England.....	6
2.2 Context: project outline.....	7
2.3 Context: TDA and provider engagement.....	7
2.4 Context: previous evaluations.....	7
2.5 Focus for report 2010/11.....	8
3 Methodology.....	9
3.1 Research approach: case studies.....	9
3.2 Sampling.....	10
3.3 Methods: questionnaire and interview.....	10
3.4 Areas of focus for questionnaires and interviews.....	11
3.5 Ethical considerations.....	12
4 Findings.....	13
4.1 Overview of case studies: Models of ITT and project implementation.....	13
4.1.1 School A.....	13
4.1.2 School B.....	13
4.1.3 School C.....	14
4.2 Themes.....	14
4.2.1 Interaction.....	14
4.2.2 Curriculum and subject knowledge.....	15
4.2.3 Professional practice.....	16
5 Discussion and Analysis.....	19
5.1 Themes.....	19
5.1.1 Interaction.....	19
5.1.2 Curriculum and subject knowledge.....	19
5.1.3 Professional practice.....	21
6 Conclusions.....	22
7 References.....	23
8 Appendix A: Questionnaire to trainees.....	24
9 Appendix B: Case Studies.....	26
9.1 School A.....	26
9.2 School B.....	29
9.3 School C.....	32

10	Appendix C: Training day vignette .....	36
11	Appendix D: Providers and sample selected for case studies.....	37
12	Appendix E: an example of a news report drawing on other subjects .....	38
13	Appendix F: ITTE evaluation of the BBC News School Report Project in ITE.....	40

## 1 Executive summary

- This is the third year in which ITTE have reported on ITT trainee involvement in the BBC News School Report project (BBC NSRP) and on its impact on their training.
- The previous two reports have been an evaluation based on data collected at TDA-hosted meetings. This report takes a case study approach with questionnaire interviews conducted in schools.
- The case study approach provided access to staff who would not otherwise have attended evaluation days and, hence, gave a more rounded picture of the impact on training.
- Involvement in the project developed trainees' understandings of their own subject knowledge, of cross-curricular ways of working, of project working and of working in non-timetabled informal sessions with pupils.
- The project allows for trainees to develop different, and more rounded, relationships with pupils. This has a positive impact on their teaching, particularly in respect of behaviour management.
- The project enhances trainees' professional identity in their own eyes, in the eyes of the department in which they are working and, in some cases, in the eyes of the wider school staff and leadership.
- There are a number of different models for involvement ranging from trainees assisting other staff to trainees leading the project autonomously. The assistant model had not been one that had been seen in previous evaluations.
- Project involvement, or leadership, continues to contribute directly to evidence of meeting QTS Standards, especially those around Professional Attributes.
- Project involvement, or leadership, also continues to be seen as important in career development and applications for NQT posts.
- The project provides authentic learning contexts both in-school and with the wider community.

## 2 Introduction and context

This is the third annual evaluation report on the aspects of the BBC School Project that are in the domain of initial teacher education and training<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation was carried out by members of the national association for IT in Teacher Education (ITTE) on behalf of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). It reports on the impact of the engagement in the BBC News School Report project by ITT providers and their trainees (also known as assistant teachers) and partner schools. This year's project was launched with providers in November 2010 and ran until March 2011, culminating in a Newsday on 24 March. The evaluation team were engaged from the launch, collected data through to April 2011 and reported in July 2011.

This report refers to a number of groups of people for whom specific nomenclature is used. This is to align with TDA usage and to avoid ambiguities.

- Provider – the institution or organisation that provides initial teacher training.
- Partnership – the provider and the schools in which trainees are placed for their teaching experience.
- Schools – this term encompasses those institutions that may be named as academies or colleges (excluding colleges of further education).
- Trainee – a student on an ITT programme.
- Pupil – a learner in a school.

### 2.1 Context: teacher training in England

The training of the teachers is undertaken in one of two modes, HEI-based or employment-based. In the former trainees attend a course of training with a provider, typically a university or other higher education institution (HEI). This is complemented by school experience, in which trainees experience placements in two schools that are in partnership with the HEI. In employment-based training, assistant teachers are contracted as supernumerary staff in a school and undertake their training mainly in that school, with some offsite sessions at a provider (typically an HEI or local consortium). In both modes of training, assistant teachers must work in at least two schools (TDA, 2008). The pattern of deployment to schools and centre-based training varies from provider to provider. This pattern is also referred to as the 'rhythm' of the training.

To qualify as a school teacher, trainees must pass whatever course they have enrolled on with a provider (typically a postgraduate certificate of education PGCE or, in the case of some HEI provision, a degree), meet the requirements for training (TDA, 2008), which cover such matters as length of course and placements and provide evidence that they have met the standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) (TDA, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report the term initial teacher training (ITT) will be used as this is in use by the TDA. Other readers may prefer initial teacher education (ITE) and this may be read synonymously with it throughout.

## 2.2 Context: project outline

The BBC News School Report aims to engage 11–14 year olds with news by helping them to set their own editorial agenda for a real audience. Resources, including lesson plans explaining the basics of journalism, are available on the School Report website<sup>2</sup>. Schools taking part worked towards a national deadline on the news day, 24 March 2011, when all the secondary schools involved became broadcasters and simultaneously published video, audio or text-based news on their school websites. In 2011 over 800 schools participated – this compares to 300 in 2008, the year before the first evaluation report. All BBC platforms – including online and national and regional radio and television – feature samples of pupils' work from around the country. This provides a sense of real audience for all of the pupils' work.

## 2.3 Context: TDA and provider engagement

The 2010/11 academic year was the fourth in which the TDA worked with the BBC on News School Report and provided funding to ITT providers to support their engagement with it. This funding was to enable working across the partnership and to provide access training by the BBC. This was necessary as the normal BBC project model was that a school would take part independently of other schools and HEIs. In doing so the BBC had a lead teacher named in the school.

For the ITE provider, however, engagement in the project meant there was a more complex interaction between stakeholders. Providers themselves liaised both with the BBC and with the schools in which participant trainees were placed. The lead teacher contact for the BBC in a school was, in some cases, the trainee teacher.

Eight providers engaged with the project in 2010/11. These included both HEI- and school-based provision. The total number of school mentors involved in the project through providers was 47, each of whom had at least one trainee.

## 2.4 Context: previous evaluations

This report focuses on the impact of trainee engagement in the BBC News School Report project on their professional development and progress towards qualified teacher status. In this respect this report builds on the earlier evaluations undertaken by ITTE (2009, 2010) which found that:

- The project enhanced the professional attributes and skills of trainee teachers engaged in the project, providing many opportunities to evidence meeting the QTS Standards (TDA, 2007). In particular those relating to the enhancement of trainees' subject knowledge and technical skills (Q14), working in cross-curricular and extra-curricular contexts (Q17 and Q23), personalisation (Q31), engagement with authentic tasks (Q8, Q10 and Q30) and professional development (Q7).
- Trainees showed high levels of confidence, and a willingness to take risks, in leading activities within the project including liaison across schools and with a wide range of teachers.
- The multi-disciplinary nature of the project provided opportunities for providers to look at innovations and change to their programme design and assessment.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport> - this BBC News School Report website links all the school sites together using an interactive map.

- The project provided opportunities for trainees to work in non-standard environments, increasing their understanding of learning beyond the classroom and in work-related contexts.
- The project had positive impact on trainees' learning in the fields of journalism, media, literacy and use of technology. Their confidence and maturity was enhanced.
- The project led to richer reflections on practice than other teaching the trainees had undertaken.
- The professional profile of trainees was enhanced, as was that of the school. The former led to increased perception of employability.

Passey and Gillen (2009) carried out an independent evaluation of the project for BBC News. This has been synthesised and incorporated into a report by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT, 2010). These reported on the project's impact on schools, teachers and pupils. Key findings included:

- Schools were supported in their involvement in the project by City Learning Centres (CLCs) and also by BBC mentors.
- The news produced by the pupils in schools was wide ranging.
- Pupils are unlikely to have been able to encounter this sort of experience through other channels.
- Educational gains were reported by teachers involved with the project.
- The project was highly inclusive and empowering for pupils.

## 2.5 Focus for report 2010/11

Following on from the reports of previous years the focus for 2010/11, as agreed with the TDA was trainee experiences rather than standards. There were two reasons for this. Firstly the impact of engagement with the project on trainees meeting standards had been demonstrated in the previous two years. To repeat this as a focus risked learning little that was new. Secondly the change of government and the White Paper, *Quality of Teaching*, prefaced the development of new standards for teaching<sup>3</sup>.

Within this general focus on trainee experience, a particular theme for investigation in the research for this report was the impact of engagement with BBC NSRP on trainees' subject knowledge. This theme was derived from TDA priorities, aligned with government policy.

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<sup>3</sup> New Standards for Teaching were launched by the Department for Education on 14 July 2011 (DfE, 2011).



### 3 Methodology

In previous ITTE reports on BBC NRSP and ITT the methodological approach was evaluative. In 2009 and 2010 providers were invited to 'evaluation days' organised by the TDA at which feedback was garnered against the impact foci that underpinned the agency's involvement. In 2011 a different stance was taken with case studies being prepared to elicit findings. This change in methodology was agreed with the TDA at the outset of the research. There were three reasons for the change:

- Repeating 2009 and 2010 approaches risked a very similar set of findings
- A case study approach allowed for greater depth of exploration and understanding of the trainee experience.
- A desire for greater objectivity led to the research being undertaken in schools, rather than at a TDA-hosted event. This meant that all stakeholders for a particular case could be respondents for the research. In previous years only those who had time out of school to attend the day had been included in the data collection (plus providers who had returned online surveys). By locating the research in the field, a more authentic voice could be heard. It also allowed for triangulation between the views of many stakeholders from the same school.

#### 3.1 Research approach: case studies

The research strategy employed was that of a multi-site case study. The case study approach is the most effective research strategy to use when the aim is to understand in-depth, complex environments or situations, or aspects of them and the interaction of people, events, structures and processes (Yin, 1994).

For this research, 'case study' is conceived as a research strategy (Denscombe, 2003), which incorporates a qualitative approach to data collection with a range of methods namely, school site visits, interviews (with trainees, mentors, project co-ordinators and technicians), alongside the use of documentary evidence and questionnaires, whereby the latter has a more quantitative element.

Denscombe (2003) identifies three key reasons for the adoption of the case study approach. First, a case study can offer an in-depth study, second, it enables a focus on relationships and processes and, it can provide multiple sources and multiple methods. The case study enables understanding of *relationships* and *social processes* that is denied to the survey approach. The real value of case study is that it offers the opportunity to explain why. In this case, why does the BBC NSRP project work so well in terms of trainees reported experiences? The research team wanted to understand why the BBC NSRP had such a big impact on trainees' professional development, in particular, trainees' knowledge of the curriculum, subject knowledge and professional identity.

## 3.2 Sampling

The sample of schools was chosen so as to cover both HEI-based and school-based routes. For the latter both GTP and SCITT provision was targeted. The intention here was to get a spread across different models of ITT given the findings from previous years that the model and rhythm of training influenced the way in which trainees engaged with the project.

The research team contacted all providers whose participation in the project had been funded by the TDA. The full list is provided in Appendix D. They were asked if they would be willing to take part in the research in 2010/11. The sampling, methodology and methods of data collection were outlined as part of this invitation to take part. This explanation was done by e-mail and at a training day held to launch the project. A member of the research team attended this meeting, an account of which is in Appendix C.

As a result of this process, four sites were identified for case study research. These were two with HEI-based PGCE trainees, and two school-based providers. Subsequently one of the two HEI providers was unable to take part due to staffing changes. The sample from each case study site included: all the trainees that were participating in the BBC NSRP from that school; the mentors of the trainees; the project co-ordinator; relevant others, which included, for example the ICT and Media technicians. Interviewing other staff who participated in the project provided an opportunity for the researchers to triangulate the data collected from the trainees. For example, where the trainees had reported an increase in the use of ICT skills, the researchers were able to ask the mentors and technicians for evidence of this. This enhanced the reliability and validity of the data collected.

The three sites and respondents for the research are shown in Table 1.

School	Model of ITT provision	Respondent type and number			
		Trainees	Mentors	Others	TOTAL
<b>A</b>	School-based	3	3	2 (Technicians)	<b>8</b>
<b>B</b>	HEI-based PGCE	2	1	1 (Lead teacher)	<b>4</b>
<b>C</b>	School-based	2	1	1 (Head of year)	<b>4</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>

Table 1. Three case study sites by model and number of respondents

## 3.3 Methods: questionnaire and interview

At each site questionnaires were sent to trainees prior to the culmination of the project on Newsday, 24 March 2011. The deadline for the return of the questionnaires was set for 15 March. The purpose of the questionnaire was to garner trainee perceptions of their experience in the project as it was still running. Previous ITTE reports had only gathered

data after the event. This would allow for any differences in perceptions before and after to be isolated.

After the Newsday visits were arranged to each of the sites. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using the same questions on the questionnaire. These questions were also put to other stakeholders. Thus any differences in trainee view could be analysed in the data collected before and after Newsday and this could be compared and triangulated with the views of other stakeholders.

The use of multiple sources of evidence is the first of Yin's (1994) three principles of data collection, which can help to deal with the problem of establishing construct validity and reliability of a case study. This principle was adhered to in the following way: the research design built in multi-site case studies, which allowed for evidence from more than one case to be collected namely, multiple examples of cases (BBC NSRP implementations across schools), and also multiple sources of evidence collected within each case study - from trainee interviews, mentor interviews, trainee questionnaires, and school documents. This allowed for a level of triangulation necessary for establishing validity and reliability.

The team devised a questionnaire for the trainees to complete before the 'live' day event. This provided the opportunity for the trainees to reflect on the project and what they had learnt in the period up to February 2011. The questionnaire also acted as a prompt for the kinds of things that the project may help the trainees develop and enhance as a result of participating.

The questions are provided in Appendix A. The ITTE research team also devised a template to act as a writing frame for the trainees to record their answers in for each question. The team then collated the responses from all the trainees across the case study sites.

This was followed up by a case study 'site visit' by the researchers and provided the opportunity to collect further in-depth data through interviews. The advantage of interviews is the ability to probe deeper into student responses. The same questions were used for the interviews to allow for analysis of changes between pre- and post-Newsday perceptions of trainees and for triangulation between the responses of trainees, mentors and others.

After the interviews had been conducted field notes were compared and emergent themes isolated. These themes were incorporated into a template for the reporting of the case studies. Completed templates for each site are provided in Appendix B. Findings from the completed templates are reported on and discussed in sections 4 and 5 of this report.

### 3.4 Areas of focus for questionnaires and interviews

The ITTE evaluation team was asked to consider the trainees' experiences of the project in relation to their **subject knowledge**.

The trainees were asked to consider this in the questionnaire that was sent to them prior to the 'live' day event and then again at interview. In particular, trainees were asked:

- How has your involvement in the project impacted on your **specialist subject knowledge**?
- If you are not an ICT trainee, how has your involvement in the project impacted on your **subject knowledge of ICT**?
- How has your involvement in the project impacted on your knowledge of the **curriculum as a whole** and of **cross-curricular opportunities**?

In addition to this focus on the project's impact on subject knowledge, ICT knowledge and cross-curricular understanding, the researchers also drew on findings from previous evaluations to help frame the questions used in questionnaires and interviews.

The researchers investigated how involvement in the project changed the way trainees were seen by pupils, teachers and school leadership. Having a focus on **pupil relationships** helped trainees to reflect on the unique opportunities the project offered in terms of developing relations beyond the traditional classroom interactions.

Also, the researchers investigated how the project might be useful to their **career development**. By asking trainees to reflect ahead on their career and to think about longer term professional aspirations and goals, we asked to what extent involvement in the project might be useful? These questions were then explicitly linked to the trainees 'career entry development profile' (CEDP), at the transition point 1 i.e. approaching qualified teacher status (QTS). It was pointed out to the trainees that the TDA website has examples of completed CEDP, using similar questions to the ones the ITTE team asked.

### 3.5 Ethical considerations

The enquiry was situated in secondary schools - this posed both ethical and access issues. Access was negotiated through the TDA who provided a list of contacts. This was followed up on the initial training day (see Appendix C) where personal contact was made with providers. Where appropriate (i.e. in non school-based provision) the providers then contacted schools to negotiate access.

The research followed the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004). Thus

- all participants were asked to give their consent to the use of their responses, and to the use of audio recording of interviews, through an explanation of the research and the signing of a form to give such consent (see Appendix F);
- all participants were given the right to withdraw at any time;
- data is presented anonymously in this report; and
- electronic data was only kept for the purposes of the research and will be destroyed once the research is published.

## 4 Findings

In this section the findings from the questionnaires and interviews are presented. The section starts with a fuller description of the case study sites, developed from Table 1. This was only possible after visiting the sites and so is presented in 'Findings' rather than in the 'Methods' section above. Data is then presented from the questionnaires and interviews. This data is arranged under four emergent themes – interactions, curriculum, subject knowledge and professional practice. These themes emerged from an analysis of the data. Additionally the impact on 'Subject knowledge' was the focus provided for this report by the TDA.

### 4.1 Overview of case studies: Models of ITT and project implementation

Previous evaluations for the of ITT participation in the BBC NSRP identified differences in outcomes related to the model of provision (ITTE, 2009; 2010). In particular the timing of the Newsday meant that many trainees on non-school-based routes changed schools during the project causing some discontinuity. Thus the model of ITT is a significant descriptor for each case study site.

Similarly, it has been found that schools implement the project in different ways (ibid.). These differences are seen in the way in which it is embedded in a subject, or is more cross-curricular, the range of classes and pupils that participate and, crucially, the role played by trainees. This model of implementation is the second significant descriptor for each case study site.

Each site will now be described in respect of each of these models.

#### 4.1.1 School A

The ITT model at school A was an employment-based graduate teacher programme. Trainees were placed at the school for the majority of their training year. The project co-ordinator was a newly qualified teacher (NQT) who had been a GTP trainee the year before and participated in the BBC NSRP as a trainee. The NQT was an English teacher and she used her English class as the participants in the project this year. The pupils participating were one Year 9 English class who had three days off timetable for the project:

- Day 1 was a 'workshop' day. Three workshops were delivered by the trainees, focusing on the skills required for the live day.
- Day 2 was a 'practice' day, where the pupils rehearsed in preparation for the 'live' day event.
- Day 3 was the 'live' day event, with news reported live on the day and uploaded onto the website.

#### 4.1.2 School B

The ITT model at school B was trainees taking a PGCE qualification placed at the school by an HEI provider. This was their main placement and they had been in another school when the project was initially launched. The trainees were English specialists with

concomitant foci on English, drama and media as part of their training and their teaching practice. The project co-ordinator was the media studies lead teacher in the school, who also had a background in broadcast media.

The mentor had arranged for the trainees to take part in the BBC NSRP assisting the lead teacher in working with a small number of selected pupils. The project was focused on in depth work with a few year 9 pupils to produce high quality output. This was done as an extra-curricular activity.

### 4.1.3 School C

The ITT model at school A was school-based GTP. Trainees were placed at the school for the majority of their training year. The trainees were English specialists with concomitant foci on English, drama and media as part of their training year. The project co-ordinator had previously been a trainee at the school who had taken part in the BBC NRSP. This was a third year in which this 'cascade' model had operated with trainees from previous years being appointed and then co-ordinating the project with new trainees. The trainees had responsibility for leading the project.

The project was run as an extra-curricular activity with trainees and pupils working on it in school and in the adjacent City Learning Centre. One of the trainees had previous experience of working in the broadcast media. Trainees chose the class to work on the project and they had a whole day to prepare, extra curriculum time and then the live news day. Pupils involved in the project ranged from year 7 to year 9.

## 4.2 Themes

The themes presented in the section came from the initial analysis of data from the questionnaires returned by trainees and from the subsequent site visits and interviews. This analysis yielded three themes:

- Interactions – the way in which trainees interacted with and were seen by pupils and others in the school, and how this may have changed through participation in the BBC NRSP.
- Curriculum – the ways in which the project impacted on the trainees' knowledge of the curriculum, and of cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Professional practice – the way in which the project impacted on the trainees' developing professional identity, their self-perceptions of themselves as teachers and the perception of others. This is allied to 'interactions'.

A fourth theme, that of subject knowledge, is presented here in the section with curriculum. This was an explicit requirement for the report.

### 4.2.1 Interaction

The first theme to emerge from an analysis of the case studies and questionnaire responses was the way in which participation in the project impacted on the relationships between trainees and pupils. This manifested itself in reports of different relationships in the classroom and the wider school e.g. in social spaces.

**School A:** All the trainees reported that they noted an improvement in their relationship with pupils as a result of being involved in the project. This had already taken effect prior to the live day due to their involvement in the workshops. They attributed this to extracurricular nature of the project, the situation requiring a more open approach to the pupils and the pupils' positive response to the challenge of the demanding situation. They all reported an increased respect for the trainees from the pupils.

**School B:** Trainees reported that it was useful to work with pupils they didn't teach. This was reinforced by the mentor and lead teacher. The mentor also added that where there were pupils on the project who were also in classes taught by trainees it was useful for them to see each other in a different context. In particular, the mentor observed that pupils who were difficult in class responded better to the trainees as they had seen them in a different context. The case of a boy who shone in the project but was not easy to teach in the classroom was cited. *"He would see the trainees in a different light"*, the mentor said. Trainees, however, reported that they had not learnt anything about working with difficult pupils as they *"had them in their classes"*. Trainees had been in other schools before the project started and had been involved in other extra-curricular activities. They confirmed that this type of activity brings the benefit of working with a wider range of pupils.

**School C:** Trainees reported that the project gave them an opportunity to think about matching media resources to pupil needs in a way that was not dictated to by the formal curriculum. The mentor reported that there were different interactions with the pupils on the project than in normal classes. These were to do with working with small groups (which the LSA had previous experience of).

#### 4.2.2 Curriculum and subject knowledge

The second emergent theme was the impact of participation in the project on trainees' understanding of the nature of curriculum. This was seen in terms of subjects, extra-curricular work and cross-curricular working.

**School A:** It was reported that trainees developed knowledge in their own and other subject areas. In this school there were three trainees, each with a different subject specialism. The mathematics trainee reported appreciating how real life scenarios could be used to teach maths and also used a article and report format for maths homework. The Design Technology trainee went on to use video for pupils to create instructions for their D&T projects; you-tube style. The drama trainee learnt some ICT skills and about camera work, both the technology and the drama skills required; such as camera angles. She also learnt about different styles and genres, including comedy and naturalistic.

Extra sessions were set up by the project lead to develop article writing skills. The trainees also learnt from this. The technicians reported that they observed increases in technology skills and knowledge in the trainees throughout the project.

**School B:** The BBC NSRP at School B was firmly located in the English department. Run by the media studies lead teacher it was seen as having a very close fit with the National Curriculum for English. The aspects of script writing, analysis of genre, selection, précis and structuring for text identified as contributing to English. The use of technology and understanding of broadcast news contributed to media and performance and use of voice to drama. This close fit would encourage them to get involved in the project again as qualified teachers.



This relationship with the English curriculum was reinforced by the mentor who reported that there was a year 8 unit on 'news' but the trainees had not been on placement when this was covered. The project allowed for this gap to be filled. For the lead teacher the most powerful aspect of the project was the way in which it demonstrated to pupils that text is malleable and provisional. Writing for the news is constantly changing, is collaborative and is subject to editing and scrutiny by others. This makes it different from many other genres.

Links to other parts of the curriculum were seen by trainees but only serendipitously through the stories that 'made the news'. In this year's case a story about food and diet linked to healthy schools/PSHEE/food technology and one about the Japanese tsunami to science. Trainees reported that they perceived these links through their own understanding of the school curriculum from when they were pupils, rather than through any knowledge as trainees. The lead teacher also added that a story about the situation in North Africa allowed pupils with direct experience to contribute to voxpops. This showed the trainees a way of gaining authentic voice.

Trainees reported that they had developed some technical skills and capability on the day but had not gained any formal knowledge of the ICT or technology curricula.

**School C:** One trainee had been an LSA and was more confident with literature than media prior to working on the project. Subject knowledge of media aspects had increased as had confidence ways of using media resources in teaching and use of technology. The school runs BTEC media and so this subject knowledge would be useful for that. The project was seen as a creative opportunity for the use of technology and working with the CLC. One trainee felt that knowledge of ICT was enhanced.

The mentor learnt from the trainees as their subject knowledge in media developed. There was no other media work at this level in the department. The project was outside the defined curriculum and allowed trainees to develop their subject knowledge from the point they were at. There was very different understanding of, and capability with, media between the two trainees. The project allowed for personalised responses in leading different groups of pupils through it.

One trainee worked closely with PE, and the onsite football academy. Again this led to links beyond the school. The other made close links with drama. In both cases this would not have happened easily without the project. The mentor said that these sort of links are normally ones that are made by more experienced teachers.

### 4.2.3 Professional practice

The third, and final, theme to emerge is the impact of participation in the project on the development of trainees' professional practice. This includes the development of their professional identity as perceived by peers, pupils and other staff in the schools.

**School A:** Trainees reported that they felt more confident in using a variety of approaches and teaching styles as a result of being involved in this project. They felt more free to take risks in their approach and have fun. The trainees reported that they became more relaxed and confident in their teaching as a result of their involvement with the project.



The drama trainee reported that she felt much more confident in taking pupils out of school when she observed the improvement in their behaviour on a trip out to the local BBC radio station. She felt much more able to trust the pupils, having been very under confident about how she would manage the pupils before they went.

The school mentors reported that the trainees "...gained confidence through peer observation, feedback and risk taking. Trainees see each other teaching and value what they see. This improves [trainees] confidence when hearing the feedback". [As a result of team teaching in the workshops] 'them' and 'us' barriers [between trainees and mentors] were broken down."

**School B:** The trainees in School B only had regular contact with one teacher (the lead). They also got to know a governor through the project but it did not involve any additional interactions with the school leadership. They saw that the experience would be seen positively on job applications/CVs and they would be willing to take a lead in it. They saw its importance in providing experience of learning in a project that was extra curricular, national, fun and had a product at the end.

*"Any school leadership team should look on a teachers' involvement in the project as a very positive thing"* (pre questionnaire).

The mentor concurred with this view, adding that through such extra-curricular experience, pupils see them in a different light. It was also seen as preparation for the trainees' involvement in other extra-curricular events – trips, open evening. This was seen as helping them to meet the standards for QTS. The mentor said that it *"Help[ed] us to view them as part of the department"* and that, as NQTs they will be able to *"take the lead in running"* the BBC NRSP.

Working on the project was seen as *"provid[ing] evidence that they have worked in wider school activities [and of] linking into wider world and other subjects"*. This was seen as crucial for the standards. It was also felt by the mentor that working on the project makes trainees feel valued and valuable to the department and school and that trainees often have more flexibility (if not more time) to take part in such projects than teachers.

**School C:** Links were made with the City Learning Centre and local media organisations. This was seen as both a benefit for the authentic learning in the project – the links were with real journalists and a video company – and also for the school itself as a stakeholder in the local community.

A trainee reported that the project gave the opportunity to "raise my profile" with these partners and, by extension, with colleagues in the department who saw her taking a lead and using her own initiative to make links outside of school. She had been given an opportunity for making these links and the responsibility for doing it. These opportunities were not ones that would have occurred without the project. Being involved in the project "put is [trainees] on the map" and was something that was noticed by the headteacher who reported their work to the whole school.

The mentor concurred that the project provided opportunities for trainees to "take control" rather than being handed tasks to do. It also allowed the trainee who had professional media experience to translate this to the school context. In talking about the project and the way in which trainees were perceived by the school leadership, the

mentor said that “the headteacher was more aware of who they were and their progress [than of other graduate trainees] because of it”. Trainees worked with “people they wouldn’t normally have [had] contact with” including ASTs and the leader of applied learning. A mathematics teacher used the material produced in a tutor period as it was so impressive.

The school has an activities fortnight at the end of the school year. Trainees would be able to bring the experiences of the project to helping plan and lead activities in the department and across the curriculum.

## 5 Discussion and Analysis

In this section the themes emerging from the findings are discussed and analysed. Trainees were sent a questionnaire before the Newsday and then interviewed after it. The intention was to look for differences in perception as a result of the Newsday itself. No such differences were seen. This may be because of the fairly intense involvement in the project which meant that the pressure of the day had been replicated in workshops, practice days and other involvement with students and staff before the day itself. The Newsday, in this respect, was not significantly different from other aspects of the trainees' engagement with the project.

### 5.1 Themes

#### 5.1.1 Interaction

Trainees reported an improvement in relationships with pupils in terms of the respect shown by them. This led to trainees being able to better handle challenging pupils in the classroom having worked with them in extra-curricular contexts. Pupils saw trainees in a different light due to their leading role in the project in two cases. It may be assumed that they were seen as more than just 'trainees'. This blurring of identity is matched by a blurring of the curriculum which framed the teaching and learning and hence the relationship. To some extent the BBC NRSP allows trainees and pupils to work as a team – the notion of project implying a project team. All were on the 'same side' not restricted by following a closely defined National Curriculum or pursuing evidence for the Standards for ITT. The latter, while not a prime objective of the project, was greatly enhanced by taking part in it (see ITTE, 2009, for a mapping of project involvement to Standards). This lack of dependence on a defined curriculum also meant that trainees had to think more about the resources they were going to use, as these may not have been developed in the same way as they might have been for a classroom-based unit of work. This led to explicit considerations of individual needs of pupils and personalising of learning to the groups of pupils involved in the project (see Underwood et al, 2008, for a discussion of the ways in which technology-based projects impact on personalising of learning).

This presence of this theme confirms findings in earlier evaluations by ITTE (2009; 2010) where it was reported that involvement in the project "*had, in positive ways, affected their relationships with the pupils and their ability to manage independent learning*" (ITTE, 2010:17) and "*the relationship between trainee and the pupils [was] different from that normally... [with] the project enabling trainees (and pupils) to take risks and teach in different situations*" (ITTE, 2009:9).

#### 5.1.2 Curriculum and subject knowledge

Involvement in the project impacted on trainees' understanding of the nature of curriculum. For some this was very much in terms of their own subject specialism combined with working in an extra-curricular context. For others there were also strong elements of cross-curricular activity. This last is seen most clearly where there were trainees from more than one subject area (School A, see also ITTE, 2010). Where there was a mix of specialisms in the trainees they reported learning from each other but also

seemed to show a greater propensity for working with subjects beyond their collective specialisms.

There were clearly identified benefits in the development of understanding in the curriculum areas that the project itself represents – primarily English/media and technology although this did not necessarily manifest in an understanding of the formal curriculum in these areas unless they were a specialism of the trainees already. Thus participation in the project gave trainees better knowledge and feel for aspects of writing and use of media technologies without concomitant exposure to the National Curriculum in these areas per se.

This last point is part of the multi-dimensionality of the notion of 'curriculum'. Increasingly this has become synonymous with 'National Curriculum'. Subject knowledge is defined in terms of the orders laid down by the Department for Education. It is wider than this however. There are three other components:

- the informal curriculum, both in general and in terms of a subject;
- the curriculum as manifested in cross-subject work: traditionally, if unhelpfully known as cross-curricular; and
- extra-curricular: this is a bit of misnomer if curriculum is taken to mean all that is taught and learnt, but it is usually taken to mean learning outside of the timetabled classroom sessions.

In this project, trainees develop all four aspects. They learn about their subject and how it interfaces with journalism, media and technology; they learn about the application of this in contexts outside of the classroom; they learn about cross-subject, cross-curriculum methods of teaching and learning and they learn about working with students outside of the formal timetable, in community contexts and offsite.

Where trainees have an English or technology specialism there is tighter synergy between these aspects than where they do not. Nevertheless the project is a very positive vehicle for developing cross-subject understandings irrespective of trainee specialism. This results from two sources. Firstly where trainees work with peers from other subjects mutual and reciprocal understanding is built up. Secondly the news stories themselves are often set in a particular context. Pupils may report on topics that draw on science, mathematics, PSHE, humanities etc. Trainees working with pupils on these stories come into close contact with teachers from other departments and, vicariously, gain insights into the curriculum of those other subjects. An example of a context for such learning is seen in Appendix F and in the vignettes in each case study in Appendix B. Such contexts also benefit learning as they are authentic (see for example Tombari and Barich, 1999).

Throughout it is observed that the skills of trainees to use technology for learning and teaching are enhanced by participation in the project. This then leads to greater confidence in its use in their own teaching of the more formal curriculum. There was a reported need for greater training in the use of media technology as part of the initial teacher training, although this is not now part of the standards for teaching (DfE, 2011).

### 5.1.3 Professional practice

The contextualisation of the project in the training year varies from case to case. In school B, for example, it was introduced as part of the teaching programme of the HEI and was a common feature for all trainees. In school C, it had become a tradition in the school, with previous years' trainees leading and 'cascading' their experience to trainees. In school A the project was undertaken by trainees from different disciplines, whereas in the other schools they were exclusively English specialists. This diversity of approach was also seen in the evaluations of previous years (ITTE, 2009, 1010).

Participation in the project develops trainees' confidence and moves them from being a trainee, with connotations of being a sub-ordinate, to being an autonomous teacher. Where trainees were given the opportunity to lead the project they, and/or mentors, reported that they developed:

- increased confidence to try out different teaching techniques;
- greater sense of collegiality;
- more receptiveness to feedback; and
- a higher profile with peers and school leadership.

Even in cases where they did not take the lead, they reported that they were more highly valued by colleagues and gained greater respect from pupils (see 5.1.1). In all cases they saw the project as contributing directly to enhanced CVs and employability prospects. It was felt that school leaders would look favourably on such participation.

The project also enhanced trainees' identities as teachers beyond the school. Whether it was working with the BBC or with local organisations and personalities, trainees were seen in the same way as other teachers in the school. This is perhaps more noticeable where they were given the lead and, as with other evaluations (see especially ITTE, 2009) where they were on GTP programmes and so were in the same school for a significant period of time.

## 6 Conclusions

This year's research is the third consecutive report of trainee, and TDA/ITT provider, involvement in the BBC NSRP. The findings of this year complement those from previous years with the important caveat that the case study approach adopted in 2011 allowed for triangulation of trainee views with those of mentors and other staff in schools. One of the issues from previous years had been the bias in response towards trainees and providers and the requirement to attend an evaluation day out of school, meaning that only a self-selecting sample was accessible. In contrast this year's visits to schools meant that the whole project team in a school could be interviewed, giving a richer picture of the way in which it impacted on ITT.

The key findings are that:

- trainees understanding of curriculum was enhanced;
- their sense of professional identity as 'teacher' is more sharply focused; and
- their interactions with pupils take on more diverse forms.

Curriculum here includes, significantly, their subject knowledge. Irrespective of the subject taught, trainees and mentors reported that the project enhanced their knowledge as they were forced to think about its application to contexts that were not prescribed by the National Curriculum or to existing schemes and units of work in the school in which they were training. Often training involves using other people's structures and resources for teaching as the trainee comes to terms with the generic issues of teaching. These include behaviour management, lesson planning, handling and development of resources, issues of equality, diversity and personalisation. What is actually to be taught, in contrast, is often laid down - either by national or local curricula or by the class teacher the trainee is working with. In the case of BBC NRSP, however, the trainee is forced to think about content from scratch. They approach their subject knowledge from the authentic context that the news reports are set in. While this does not guarantee exposure to any particular set of subject knowledge it provides a different framework for its development. Trainees have to think about what it is that defines their subject, albeit in an opportunistic way. While subject knowledge is enhanced, so is the trainees' sense of curriculum in terms of links between subjects and activities that take place in informal contexts beyond the normal timetable and school day.

A key feature of the standards for QTS is the development of professionalism. This project gives impetus to the transition from trainee to teacher in the eyes of trainees themselves, mentors, school leaders and pupils. This last group is pivotal as it is self-image in the classroom that perhaps defines the beginning teacher more than anything else. Through interactions with pupils in different contexts, beyond the constraints of the classroom, mutual respect is developed and trainees implicitly take on the mantle of teacher. This is most clearly seen where trainees lead on the project. In such cases they are also seen differently by school leadership. Where trainees do not lead on the project they may not be seen differently by the wider school staff but do come into contact with a greater range of colleagues and become more valuable to the department in which they work.

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## 8 Appendix A: Questionnaire to trainees

### **TRAINEE Questionnaire on BBC News School Report project.**

Please consider and respond to the following questions by 15 March, e-mail addresses are provided here or you can 'reply all' to the e-mail in which this was attached. The questions are presented all at once here, with a template for you to fill in on pages 2 and 3.

Karen Cameron (karen.cameron3@btinternet.com)

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#### **1. Interests**

- a. Which aspects of your involvement in the BBC News School Report project do you find most interesting and rewarding?
- b. In what ways, in your training, had you pursued these interests in before you were involved in the project?
- c. How would you like to develop these interests?

#### **2. Strengths and achievements**

- a. What do you consider to be your main strengths and achievements in your involvement in the project?
- b. Why do you think this?
- c. What examples do you have of your achievements in these areas?

#### **3. Subject knowledge**

- a. How has your involvement in the project impacted on your specialist subject knowledge?
- b. If you are not an ICT trainee, how has your involvement in the project impacted on your subject knowledge of ICT?
- c. How has your involvement in the project impacted on your knowledge of the curriculum as a whole and of cross-curricular opportunities?

4. Has involvement in the project changed the way you are seen by, and interact with, pupils, teachers and school leadership?

5. In which aspects of the things you have done in the project would you value further experience of in the future?

6. As you look ahead to your career in teaching, you may be thinking about your longer term professional aspirations and goals. Do you have any thoughts at this stage about how your involvement in the project might be useful to your career development?



*NB These questions may also be useful when completing the career entry and development profile (CEDP) at the transition point 1, approaching QTS. TDA website has examples of completed CEDP, using similar questions.*

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN BY 15 MARCH 2011 to the e-mail addresses on page 1. You should be as complete as you can in your answers, expanding the boxes to fit.

## 9 Appendix B: Case Studies

Case studies are presented here on a template devised following the first analysis of data. This revealed three themes, which have been used to structure the case study. The fourth theme in the report, 'subject knowledge' was provided by the TDA as a specific focus for the findings.

### 9.1 School A

#### **Profile of school**

This 11-18 academy is located in a city. It has between 700 and 750 pupils with high percentages of both free school meals and special educational needs. The majority of pupils are white British with very few being from minority ethnic backgrounds. Attendance is close to the national average, persistent absences low and declining. Exclusions are rare.

Despite a higher than average proportion of pupils having low attainment on admission, there is increasing attainment through key stage 3 to GCSE. GCSE results in 2010 showed 42 per cent of pupils achieving five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics with girls' attainment being significantly higher than boys.

It is an oversubscribed school with specialist status in Mathematics, Sport and Performing Arts. It holds the Silver Charter Mark for inclusion and the Artsmark Gold Award for arts provision.

Sources: School Mission Statement, Ofsted May 2011

#### **Model of ITE used in school**

The model of ITE in the school is GTP. All GTP trainees in the school were involved in the project. The three GTP trainees in the school were therefore working there full time and so were able to follow the project through from training in November to the live day the following March. As a result, the trainees were able to take key roles in the project which afforded the trainees opportunities to develop professionally throughout the project.

#### **Approach used for engagement with BBC NSRP**

The three GTP trainees were an engineer now teaching D&T, a Drama trainee and a Maths trainee.

The project was led by an NQT English teacher who had completed her GTP training within the school the previous year – 2009 / 10. She had been involved with the project as a trainee. Year 9 pupils predicted to gain grades C/D at GCSE were involved. This year the whole of the NQT's year 9 top set English class was used. This was in order to facilitate the collapsing of the timetable for workshops to be run in preparation for the project.

To prepare for the live event, there were two preparation days followed by the live day. On each occasion the timetable was collapsed for the day:

1. A skills day where each trainee prepared and ran a workshop, supported by the other trainees and staff. Peer observation and discussion was reported to be a key factor in the success of the project for the trainees by the trainees themselves and the school mentors.
2. A practice day.
3. The BBC News School Report live day where reports were prepared and uploaded to the BBC News School Report website.

### **Sample and data collection methods**

There were three GTP trainees involved with the project - one Drama specialist, one Maths specialist and one Design Technology specialist. These were the only trainees in the school at that time. The project was led by an English specialist NQT who had participated in the project as a trainee in the school the previous year. She had a role as school mentor to the trainees for the project. There were two other mentors, both Drama specialists with roles in the GTP programme and roles as part of the senior management team.

The trainees were supported by two technicians – one for IT and one for media who demonstrated and carried out much of the technology required for the project.

Three pre-Newsday questionnaires were returned, one from each trainee. The eight people above were interviewed: three trainees, three mentors and two technicians.

### **Findings: theme 1: Interaction**

All the trainees reported that they noted an improvement in their relationship with pupils as a result of being involved in the project. This had already taken effect prior to the live day due to their involvement in the workshops. They attributed this to extracurricular nature of the project, the situation requiring a more open approach to the pupils and the pupils' positive response to the challenge of the demanding situation. They all reported an increased respect for the trainees from the pupils.

### **Findings: theme 2: Curriculum**

It was reported that trainees developed knowledge in their own and other subject areas.

The D&T trainee reported appreciating how real life scenarios could be used to teach maths and how drama could also be used.

The mathematics trainee reported that she developed new approaches to teaching mathematics following the project and went on to use a report, and publishing software as a means for pupils to complete homework.

The drama trainee learnt some ICT skills and about camera work, both the technology and the drama skills required; such as camera angles. She also learnt about different styles and genres, including comedy and naturalistic.

Extra sessions were set up by the project lead to develop article writing skills. The trainees also learnt from this.

The technicians reported that they observed increases in technology skills and knowledge in the trainees throughout the project.

### **Findings: theme 3: Professional practice**

Trainees reported that they felt more confident in using a variety of approaches and teaching styles as a result of being involved in this project. They felt more free to take risks in their approach and have fun. The trainees reported that they became more relaxed and confident in their teaching as a result of their involvement with the project.

The school mentors reported that the trainees "...gained confidence through peer observation, feedback and risk taking. Trainees see each other teaching and value what they see. This improves [trainees] confidence when hearing the feedback". [As a result of team teaching in the workshops] 'them' and 'us' barriers [between trainees and mentors] were broken down."

### **Vignettes**

**1. Mathematics** – The maths trainee was set the task of finding a story to report on that could easily involve the use of mathematics as a part of reporting that story. The budget was being delivered at that time and this trainee recognised that the increase in fuel tax would affect most households and therefore was relevant to the pupils.

She researched car use and how the increase in fuel tax would affect a family. She also broadened this to include all the costs of running a car for a year.

The trainee then set up several lessons for pupils to research and discover the costs of running a car for a year and then the increase that the fuel tax would make together with the impact that would have on a household income.

The trainee was surprised and pleased at the motivating effect this had on pupils. She reported that they were extremely enthusiastic in both lessons and in the quality of homework that this stimulated.

She felt that she had developed professionally and now understood not only the importance of context in teaching but the possibilities within mathematics.

**2. Drama** – The drama trainee took the pupils involved in the project to the local radio station for a trip arranged as a result of their involvement in the BBC News School Report project. At the outset she felt under confident and concerned that she would be unable to manage the pupils' behaviour. However, she reported that the pupils were motivated and interested during the visit.

This raised her confidence and she appreciated the positive effect the visit had on the pupils' behaviour and on her relationship with those pupils. She also increased her subject knowledge regarding different genres from the professionals she met during the visit.

### **3. D&T – the use of video in D&T for giving instructions – you tube model**

The Design Technology trainee developed her information and media technology knowledge. As a result of learning to use the flip cameras with the pupils and recognising the way that the pupils responded to these activities and the quality of work

they then produced, she went on to use the cameras for the pupils to record the development process in their D&T projects and to produce instructions using a you tube type model.

The trainee felt that not only did her confidence in her IT skills increase; she also felt able to be more creative in her approach to her subject. This would include the effective use of IT in teaching and learning.

### **Outputs**

The school website has links to a number of reports the pupils produced during the BBC News School Report project. This included articles, pictures and photographs as well as a media clip of the report produced on the live day.

The project improved public relations within the community and raised the profile of the school. This was much valued, especially by the head teacher. The profile of the trainees was raised across the school, the senior leadership team and the local community.

The maths GTP trainee used the current budget and fuel tax debate to stimulate an investigation into the effect of these tax increases on a family budget. Not only were the pupils highly motivated by this exercise, relating the topic to the financial effect on their own families. They also continued the research, looking at the cost of running a car for themselves in the future, with reference to varied car types. The trainee gained a valuable insight into the effectiveness of learning in context. This also indicates pupils' authentic learning occurring which facilitates deep learning (Dewey, 1933).

### **Any other thoughts to be carried into the discussion section of the ITTE report that are not covered above**

There appears to be no real difference between pre and post questionnaires. However, this is probably mainly to do with the questionnaire going out quite late into the process. The workshops had already been completed and many of the benefits begin there. This was all as a consequence of the difficulty in getting names of schools where trainees and mentors were prepared to give interviews.

## **9.2 School B**

### **Profile of school**

School B is an 11-18 school in an urban setting with a specialism in performing arts. It is in the top 5% of schools nationally for value added measures. It has just under 700 pupils of which nearly 100 are in the sixth form. The intake is very diverse.

It has a number of partnerships which it uses "exceptionally well" including with the local community and schools around the world. For the latter it has been designated an International School. All pupils have at least two five-day residential trips while at the school. Extra-curricular activities thus feature strongly in the school's provision.

While attainment in English was low in 2009, it improved in 2010 to be near the national average. It is a partner school for PGCE English trainees, who took part in the BBC

NSRP. Elements of media studies are taught throughout the school and technology is well used.

Sources: Ofsted, school website

### **Model of ITE used in school**

The school takes pupils from an HEI as part of PGCE provision. It was their second longer placement, started in March: gave them very little time to get into the project.

They have a mentor in the department, in this case English, and a co-ordinator who is a member of the school leadership team. Trainees in the school will have other placements during the course of their training, or professional, year.

### **Approach used for engagement with BBC NSRP**

All PGCE English trainees with this HEI take part in the project. There is at day in-university for BBC training.

This was the second year that the school had been involved but the first to involve trainees.

The BBC NSRP is led by a teacher of media studies, who also has a background in broadcast journalism. The approach taken is that all year 8s have 'News report' lessons and then a few take part in a weekly after school club. The day was seen positively for the way it puts pupils (and trainees) in an authentic situation and frees them up from being classroom based. Trainees reported that the mix of pupils in the club was different than in a classroom with some high ability and some challenging. This provided a different context for interaction.

Trainees assisted the lead teacher in the project rather than leading it themselves. They commented that they had "*been more like extra pairs of hands*" (trainees). Their involvement and focus on the curriculum "*freed me up to focus on technical issues*" (lead teacher).

Pupils researched stories on Newsday and took them from Internet – authentic. These were complemented by voxpops with authenticity a key objective.

### **Sample and data collection methods**

There were two trainees, both in the English department. Only one returned a pre-interview questionnaire, the other was on sick leave for much of the period prior to Newsday.

Three interviews were carried out - with the trainees (they gave the interview together), mentor and lead teacher.

### **Findings: theme 1: Interaction**

Trainees reported that it was useful to work with pupils they didn't teach. This was reinforced by the mentor and lead teacher. The mentor also added that where there were pupils on the project who were also in classes taught by trainees it was useful for them to see each other in a different context. In particular, the mentor observed that pupils who were difficult in class responded better to the trainees as they had seen them

in a different context. The case of a boy who shone in the project but was not easy to teach in the classroom was cited. *"He would see the trainees in a different light"*, the mentor said. Trainees, however, reported that they had not learnt anything about working with difficult pupils as they *"had them in their classes"*.

Trainees had been in other schools before the project started and had been involved in other extra-curricular activities. They confirmed that this type of activity brings the benefit of working with a wider range of pupils.

### **Findings: theme 2: Curriculum**

The BBC NSRP at School B was firmly located in the English department. Run by the media studies lead teacher it was seen as having a very close fit with the National Curriculum for English. The aspects of script writing, analysis of genre, selection, précis and structuring for text identified as contributing to English. The use of technology and understanding of broadcast news contributed to media and performance and use of voice to drama. This close fit would encourage them to get involved in the project again as qualified teachers.

This relationship with the English curriculum was reinforced by the mentor who reported that there was a year 8 unit on 'news' but the trainees had not been on placement when this was covered. The project allowed for this gap to be filled. For the lead teacher the most powerful aspect of the project was the way in which it demonstrated to pupils that text is malleable and provisional. Writing for the news is constantly changing, is collaborative and is subject to editing and scrutiny by others. This makes it different from many other genres.

Links to other parts of the curriculum were seen by trainees but only serendipitously through the stories that 'made the news'. In this year's case a story about food and diet linked to healthy schools/PSHEE/food technology and one about the Japanese tsunami to science. Trainees reported that they perceived these links through their own understanding of the school curriculum from when they were pupils, rather than through any knowledge as trainees. The lead teacher also added that a story about the situation in North Africa allowed pupils with direct experience to contribute to voxpops. This showed the trainees a way of gaining authentic voice.

Trainees reported that they had developed some technical skills and capability on the day but had not gained any formal knowledge of the ICT or technology curricula.

### **Findings: theme 3: Professional practice**

The trainees in School B only had regular contact with one teacher (the lead). They also got to know a governor through the project but it did not involve any additional interactions with the school leadership. They saw that the experience would be seen positively on job applications/CVs and they would be willing to take a lead in it. They saw its importance in providing experience of learning in a project that was extra curricular, national, fun and had a product at the end.

*"Any school leadership team should look on a teachers' involvement in the project as a very positive thing"* (pre questionnaire).

The mentor concurred with this view, adding that through such extra-curricular experience, pupils see them in a different light. It was also seen as preparation for the trainees' involvement in other extra-curricular events – trips, open evening. This was seen as helping them to meet the standards for QTS. The mentor said that it "*Help[ed] us to view them as part of the department*" and that, as NQTs they will be able to "*take the lead in running*" the BBC NSRP.

Working on the project was seen as "*provid[ing] evidence that they have worked in wider school activities [and of] linking into wider world and other subjects*". This was seen as crucial for the standards. It was also felt by the mentor that working on the project makes trainees feel valued and valuable to the department and school and that trainees often have more flexibility (if not more time) to take part in such projects than teachers.

### **Vignettes**

1. All year 8 pupils have BBC NSRP lessons and then those that want to opt to attend after-school sessions on a Monday. Trainees perceive a pay-off here between the commitment to stay after school and the day off timetable they have on Newsday itself, which is "*a day for the pupils to take control of what they're doing, not a day for teachers to be in charge*" (from pre questionnaire). On the day the objective is to produce one film which is studio-based with inserts from voxpops and other video shot around the school. This included the use of a range of technology including green screen for a weather forecast.

2. The stories were sourced from the Internet on Newsday itself. The day was structured to produce a news bulletin based on breaking news that day. This news was researched online and then reports written, edited, compiled and broadcast. The complementary voxpops, recorded around the school, allowed authentic comments to be included. Examples of these included science teachers explaining detail on the Japanese tsunami story and pupils, who had first-hand experience of the context, commenting on developments in the Middle East and North Africa.

### **Outputs**

There is a focus on participation by a few pupils with high production values. The output from School B is one piece in-studio with inserts, modelling a news bulletin.

Output was placed on the school website, BBC website and Youtube channel. Trainees' involvement cannot be tracked.

### **Any other thoughts to be carried into the Discussion section of the ITTE report that are not covered above**

The lead teacher felt that more training was needed in English PGCE on media technology e.g. flip cameras – this is more crucial than literacy and numeracy.

## **9.3 School C**

### **Profile of school**

School C is an 11-18 school in a suburban setting. It is in the top 10% of schools nationally for value-added measures with 92% of its pupils gaining 5\* A-C (49% with



English and mathematics). It is a specialist school for applied learning and has two subject specialisms. It has an Artsmark for excellence and has a community section and City Learning Centre on the same campus. There are approximately 1300 pupils on roll, with over 200 in the sixth form.

### **Model of ITE used in school**

School C is an employment-based provider of teacher training – a training school. Pupils are on GTP. They have two weeks at another school, which coincided with the Newsday. This did not cause issues but was not ideal.

### **Approach used for engagement with BBC NSRP**

The BBC NSRP project is hosted in the English department with trainees in that subject taking a lead role. Participation in the project was not strictly mandatory for trainees but there were perceived benefits in meeting the standards and a tradition of involvement.

The school has been able to use a 'cascade' model over the last three years with trainees from one year gaining NQT positions for the next and leading the project. Thus lessons learnt from one year as trainees have been implemented the following year. Additionally this year one of the trainees has been a learning support assistant, with English specialism, who had had two years experience in supporting pupils who were involved in the project.

This trainee selected a year 7 class to be involved in the project as the previous year she had experienced difficulties with some pupils who found the freedoms of the day difficult. She also selected newspapers as sources for Newsday in the light of experience the previous year (fewer broadsheets were used for readability).

### **Sample and data collection methods**

There were two trainees involved in the project. One had previously been an LSA as above. The other had experience working as a journalist.

Both trainees were interviewed for the report, only one had returned a pre-Newsday questionnaire. Interviews were also carried out with the lead teacher (who had been a trainee involved in the project in 2010) and the head of sixth form who was the mentor of the trainees.

### **Findings: theme 1: Interaction**

Trainees reported that the project gave them an opportunity to think about matching media resources to pupil needs in a way that was not dictated to by the formal curriculum. The mentor reported that there were different interactions with the pupils on the project than in normal classes. These were to do with working with small groups (which the LSA had previous experience of).

### **Findings: theme 2: Curriculum**

The trainee who had been an LSA had been more confident with literature than media prior to working on the project. Subject knowledge of media aspects had increased as had confidence in ways of using media resources in teaching and use of technology. The school runs BTEC media and so this subject knowledge would be useful for that. The

project was seen as a creative opportunity for the use of technology and working with the CLC. One trainee felt that knowledge of ICT was enhanced.

The mentor learnt from the trainees as their subject knowledge in media developed. There was no other media work at this level in the department. The project was outside the defined curriculum and allowed trainees to develop their subject knowledge from the point they were at. There was very different understanding of, and capability with, media between the two trainees. The project allowed for personalised responses in leading different groups of pupils through it.

One trainee worked closely with PE, and the onsite football academy. Again this led to links beyond the school. The other made close links with drama. In both cases this would not have happened easily without the project. The mentor said that these sorts of links are normally ones that are made by more experienced teachers.

### **Findings: theme 3: Professional practice**

Links were made with the City Learning Centre and local media organisations. This was seen as both a benefit for the authentic learning in the project – the links were with real journalists and a video company – and also for the school itself as a stakeholder in the local community.

A trainee reported that the project gave the opportunity to “raise my profile” with these partners and, by extension, with colleagues in the department who saw her taking a lead and using her own initiative to make links outside of school. She had been given an opportunity for making these links and the responsibility for doing it. These opportunities were not ones that would have occurred without the project. Being involved in the project “put its [trainees] on the map” and was something that was noticed by the headteacher who reported their work to the whole school.

The mentor concurred that the project provided opportunities for trainees to “take control” rather than being handed tasks to do. It also allowed the trainee who had the professional media skills to translate these to the school context. In talking about the project and the way in which trainees were perceived by the school leadership, the mentor said that “the headteacher was more aware of who they were and their progress [than of other graduate trainees] because of it”. Trainees worked with “people they wouldn’t normally have [had] contact with” including ASTs and the leader of applied learning. A mathematics teacher used the material produced in a tutor period as it was so impressive.

The school has an activities fortnight at the end of the school year. Trainees would be able to bring the experiences of the project to helping plan and lead activities in the department and across the curriculum.

### **Vignettes**

**Football academy.** The school has a girls’ football academy onsite. This is a partnership with a premier league club. A BBC NSRP team of year 7 pupils filmed a documentary-style piece about the academy focussing on the girls that belong to it – they attend the school’s sixth form – the coaches that come from the football club three times a week and the PE staff. This involved on-location filming and interviews, which then had to be edited together. The trainee led the production of this film and was included in liaison

with the PE department and the academy staff. The latter involved her in links outside of the school. In both cases, working with another department and with a community organisation; these were things that would not have been part of the trainee's experience if she had not been part of the BBC NSRP.

**Languages.** The school has over 70 languages spoken by its pupils. This is seen as an opportunity for learning from each other and benefit is derived from the cultural diversity it represents (Ofsted report). For the project, year 8 pupils recorded an overview piece and then two were part of a question and answer panel with the trainee leading the production. This is an unusual approach as the pupils were interviewees rather than interviewers. It gave them an insight to this side of news and provided a clear opportunity for them to think about the issues of the many languages at the school and the benefits and challenges this presents.

**Olympic launch.** This piece was developed as a text-plus-images article for the BBC website. The school uploaded a number of other textual pieces to their own website. Here pupils learnt about writing for the web in a news genre complementing the work on writing for video. As part of the preparation for the article pupils interviewed senior figures associated with the Olympic Games in London 2012 and looked at how the games are more than just sport in terms of what they bring to a host city and country.

### **Outputs**

Due to the media experience of one of the trainees a high quality product was planned and executed. The other trainee was able to personalise the project for pupils of different abilities because of her LSA experience.

News reports were put on the BBC and school websites and reported in local newspaper. Outputs included video and text-based reports.

The project spread over more than just the Newsday with activities being developed to internal deadlines as well.

### **Any other thoughts to be carried into the discussion section of the ITTE report that are not covered above**

Support from BBC and CLC was amazing. Pupils had BBC lanyards which made them feel special too.

Other teachers and the headteacher reported on the quality of the work produced and the way in which the trainees led it.

## 10 Appendix C: Training day vignette

In October 2010 the BBC and TDA ran a training day for ITE providers in order to encourage them to in turn encourage trainees to take part in the BBC News School Report. This was held at BBC Television Centre in London and Karen Cameron attended on behalf of the ITTE research team.

The day involved an interesting tour around television centre which included information about the way the news is gathered and broadcast. There was a wide range of participants, all responsible in some way for providing and supporting teacher trainees.

The participants were addressed by Helen Shreeve, the BBC editor for School Report and by Tim Tarrant and Claire Moore from the TDA. Karen Cameron, a researcher employed by TDA to evaluate the impact of the BBC News School Report Project (BBC NSRP) on trainee teachers' experiences, also explained the purpose of the evaluation report which was to investigate the impact of BBC NSRP on involved teacher trainees. Karen also explained the value of providers' and trainees' feedback of their experiences of the project, which fed into the evaluation.

During the afternoon the participants had journalistic training, similar to that which school representatives signing up to the BBC NSRP receives from the BBC. In teams we were given a breaking news story which was updated every two minutes. It was our task to evaluate the information, its' validity and relevance in order to write a 30 second report to be read out on the news.

This was a challenging task under pressure and underlined the key concepts; the evaluation of sources, identification of the key facts and concise reporting under pressure for pupils on the live day.

The providers present felt this was a valuable and informative day which enabled them to recognise the value of the project to their trainees;

- Gaining experience of a cross – curricular project with a high profile, motivational partner – the BBC.
- The opportunity to work with these motivated pupils outside of the traditional classroom setting which would enhance trainee – pupil relationships.
- The value of the reporting skills that pupils and trainees would acquire through the project.

## 11 Appendix D: Providers and sample selected for case studies

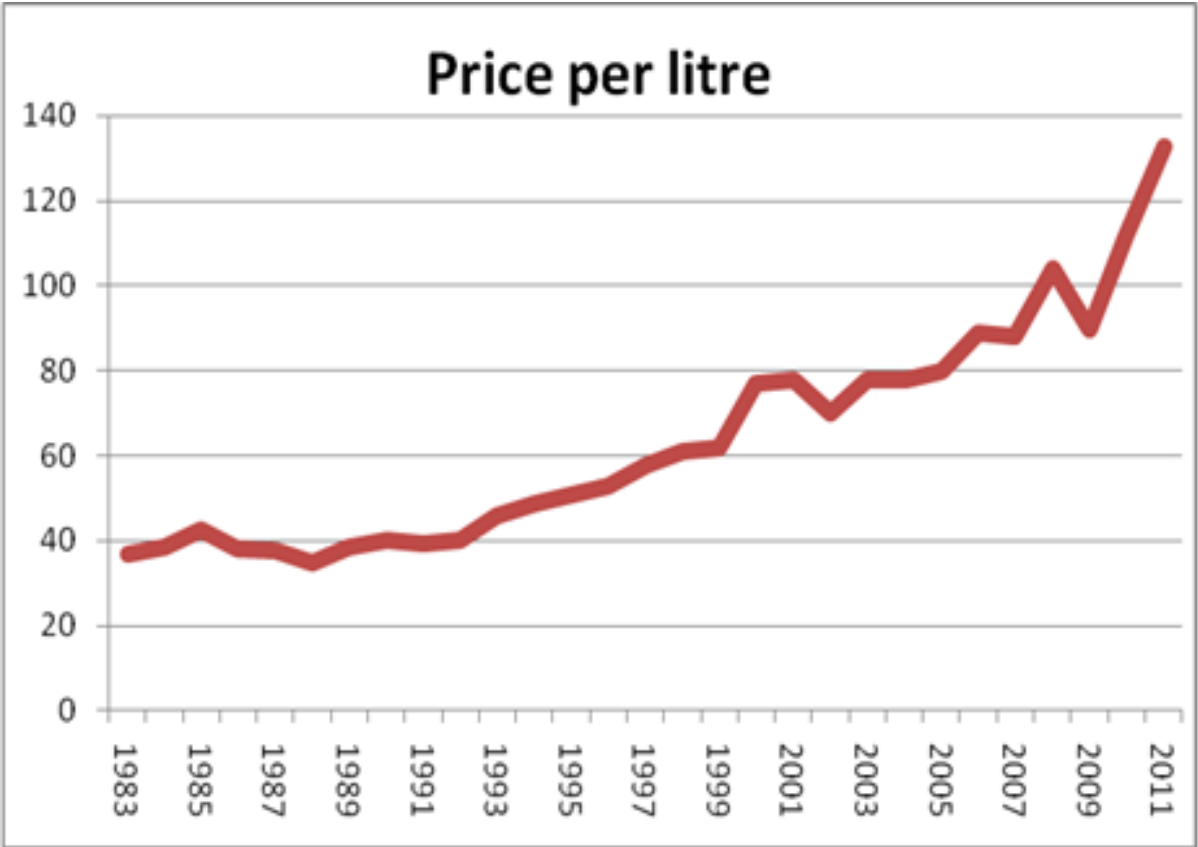
Provider type	Trainees	Mentors	Sample?
HEI (PG)	6	5	
HEI (PG)	12	9	Yes
HEI (PG)	6	4	
HEI (UG/PG)	7	2+	
SCITT GTP (PG)	2	1	Yes
HEI (UG/PG)	20	?	
HEI (PG)	10	10	
SCITT/HEI partnership (UG)	11	6	
HEI (PG)	9	5	
SCITT GTP (PG)	2	1	
SCITT GTP (PG)	3	3	Yes
HEI (PG)	6	1	*

1. This provider was selected for sampling but suitable arrangements could not be made to contact pupils.

## 12 Appendix E: an example of a news report drawing on other subjects

A news story was developed by pupils on the impact of fuel prices. This developed pupils' understanding of economic issues (PSHEE) and mathematics (data handling).

- **Fuel prices flow overboard**
- The fuel debate has been a regular feature in the news over the past couple of years. It was announced in the Government's budget that the Chancellor of the Exchequer; George Osborne, has lowered the cost of fuel by 1p per litre. However, the general public may argue that this decrease in petrol prices will not affect their day to day lives as fuel prices have gone up too much already!
- A 40p per litre increase in prices over the past two years (see graph above) has resulted in many businesses struggling to keep their companies profitable. A local taxi driver said "I spend £30 a week more on diesel than I did this time last year". Hopefully the 1p per litre decrease will help the struggling businesses in the long run.
- Calculations based on the average mileage of the average family car result in an extra £500 being spent on fuel this year compared with 2009. Fuel was 40p less per litre in 2009 which is a massive difference to the 1p cut in the budget. We asked many families how they would spend the £500 if petrol prices had not increased. One businessman said "I have a young family and I would spend it on a climbing frame for my kids." What would you spend £500 on?
- The rise in the cost of fuel is having a detrimental effect on the lives of average people. Until more sustainable sources of fuel are developed and become available, this issue will continue to be a subject of debate.



## 13 Appendix F: ITTE evaluation of the BBC News School Report Project in ITE

**We thank you for taking part in the ITTE evaluation of the BBC News School Report Project. As part of this we may be using a voice recorder to record the data you provide. We may wish to use your recorded voice and / or quotes from your interview, or acknowledge your contribution on the ITTE website or in the final report. Please name and sign the form where you are willing for us to use your name.**

I \_\_\_\_\_ give permission for ITTE, BBC News Report Evaluation team to record my voice during the discussions and to use quotes or recordings on the ITTE website and in the final report and subsequent research papers, if any .

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

I also give permission for the ITTE evaluation team to contact me on / at (*please give preferred method of contact and contact details*)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

I give my permission for my name to be used in the final report.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Please understand that by giving your permission for your name to be used, this does not guarantee that your name will be used. However, we thank you in advance should we use it.