



## Creative Curriculum

Imaginative and innovative approaches  
in the Primary classroom

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# A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

By Nerys Howes  
and Heidi Taylor

Our first year as teacher training students has flown by; we've gained confidence, insightful understanding and gained a further appreciation for the teaching profession. With superb guidance from the lecturers at the university, we have achieved above and beyond what we originally thought we could and pushed ourselves to be the best teachers we can be. As there are so many fantastic elements of the course to choose from, we have selected the best points to mention in this edition of Intuition, alongside managing life at university and everything in between.

As a first-year student, I was thrilled to take the opportunity of getting involved in the Intuition newsletter focusing upon our time as first-year students. It really doesn't seem like that long ago, when I was starting university and so feel like I can truly relate to the questions and qualms that you may currently be experiencing. I have loved being involved in editing this magazine, compiling everyone's articles and seeing how great everyone's experiences of first year have been. I hope that this edition of Intuition will provide you with all the information you could possibly need, or at least point you in the right direction of where to find it. As a side note, I have been appointed as the Institute representative for Primary Initial Teacher Education. I am eager to ensure that everyone's voice is heard, and the Institute listens to our feedback as students.

My email address is [HOWN2\\_17@uni.worc.ac.uk](mailto:HOWN2_17@uni.worc.ac.uk). Please email me if you have any questions or feedback and I would love to help!

It has been incredible to collaborate with my course mates to construct this edition of Intuition, reflecting on the variety of experiences that everybody has had in comparison to my own. The friends I have made, the knowledge I have gained and the self-confidence I have built is only a snapshot of the incredible experience I have had whilst training to be a teacher. Hopefully the articles we have included can help to answer all of your burning questions and support you during times when you need guidance. Most of all I hope they encourage you to get stuck in; raise your hand up in lectures and answer that question, teach that lesson plan in school and reflect on what could be improved, and enjoy every second of your time here, as before you know it, you will be at the end of your first year and wondering where the time went!

My email is [TAYH1\\_17@uni.worc.ac.uk](mailto:TAYH1_17@uni.worc.ac.uk) if you have any questions, thoughts or simply need a chat!

# PREPARING YOURSELF FOR UNIVERSITY: The nerves, the distance and everything else in between

By Caitlin Mcilwraith Year 1 student

I will be the first to admit that I wasn't prepared for university at all. I was excited, but I spent most of the summer apprehensive about leaving my family and moving to Worcester. I arrived at university on move-in day with no cutlery or kitchen utensils, had missed out on group chats and felt overwhelmed with nerves.

However, this is normal and it soon faded with the support of my new friends and a trip to Wilkos! Therefore, take my experiences as advice; embrace every opportunity you can to immerse yourself into university life before you arrive. The jump to university is a scary one – this is a huge step in the direction of your chosen career. Whether you are coming from Sixth Form, college or even a gap year, it is quite possible that you don't feel prepared for what the next few years are going to bring you. However, people don't say that these are the best years of your life for no reason. Take their word for it!

The most daunting experience was the prospect of making new friends, as I am originally from Scotland and Worcester is very far away from my friends and family. I was nervous that I was going to find myself completely alone and cut off from people. However, the first few weeks of university is about settling in; everyone is in the same boat and everyone is nervous. I took every opportunity to make conversation and very quickly I found that there were other people who felt exactly the same that I felt, regardless of distance and age.

# Top 5 must reads

By Natasha Ellam Year 1 student

**Teresa Cremin and James Arthur - Learning to teach in the primary school.**

Recommended for the Professional Studies module, this is a must read. It goes through everything that teachers need to know about how children learn and behave. Also about how to plan, organise and assess and more.

**Derek Haylock and Ralph Manning - Mathematics explained for primary school teachers.**

A book that helps break down mathematics at a primary level. Giving insight into children's understanding of mathematics, methods to teach maths and how to plan for any misconceptions. It's an ideal book not just for trainees but for established teachers to revisit mathematics too.

**Jane Medwell et al. - Primary English. Knowledge and Understanding.**

English is a vital aspect within the primary classroom. It is a core subject on the National Curriculum and its essential that as teachers we also hold good subject knowledge but also understanding how to teach English. From reading and writing, to speaking and listening, even drama - this book has it all.

**Graham Peacock et al - Primary Science. Knowledge and Understanding.**

Helping teachers get to grips with science. This book provides comprehensive knowledge of the primary science required within the National Curriculum alongside learning theory and investigations in science.

**Kiera Sewell – Planning: The Primary National Curriculum (A guide for trainees and teachers) 2nd Edition.**

This book has helped me plan lesson after lesson, delving into the little details and key concepts that form each lesson plan you write. Covering all aspects of the National Curriculum, this book is a guide to all your planning needs for KS1 and KS2.

# Read with Reach

By Natasha Ellam and Caitlin Mcilwraith  
Year 1 students

Reach is a programme for students at the University of Worcester. In a nutshell all first-year full-time, home and EU students paying full fees get a £100 Reach Bursary (you don't have to pay it back) to spend on textbooks, stationery, electronics and other learning materials at the John Smiths shop. In the first couple of weeks of starting at the University, you get an email asking you to create your account and then away you go. To find out more go to [www.worcester.ac.uk/reach](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/reach). However, it is important to shop around; Amazon and eBay were great for finding older edition books.

Whilst stationery and electronics are worthwhile investments, take a moment to consider books. There are so many teaching books and frankly they are all worth a read. Every author offers their perspective, tips and tricks on teaching and it's a culmination of this knowledge and your own experience which will help you develop into an outstanding teacher.

As teachers' time is in short supply, reading every teaching book ever is probably unrealistic. Instead, lecturers at the University of Worcester create 'reading lists' for each module, suggesting which books are a must read, you don't have to stick to these lists, but they're a great starting point.

To help make the decision on which books to buy and read easier, we've developed our top five list. These are the books we've found most useful to aid our understanding during the first year of PITE, but also books that are worth reading at any point in your teaching practice as they offer a range of explanations and tips.

# Top tips for first year students

By Rosie Platts Year 1 student

1. **Create a group chat** - This is very useful as you can share ideas for assignments and ask any questions about work or reading that you are confused on. It's also good if you forget what room your lecture is in!
2. **Do the extra reading** - This will be helpful throughout your whole degree. Whether to clarify anything you misunderstood, or even to deepen your knowledge on something that you are interested in. Extra reading can also give you good tips for future lesson ideas.
3. **Ask for help** - Remember that the lecturers are always there to help you and answer any questions that you have. So if you're ever stuck, email them your questions and they will reply quickly.
4. **Be organised** - Make sure that you have folders set up to file away any notes, handouts, and even group tasks. You will never know when you might need them.
5. **Visit the library** - The library is full of both excellent books to use when referencing for your assignments and excellent teaching resources. These resources range from props to costumes, lesson ideas and inspirational books. The Hive is also full of quiet study spaces.
6. **Enjoy yourself** - The most important thing is that you enjoy yourself and make the most of your first year at the University. Get involved with things outside of your course and have fun.

# TOP TIPS FOR ACADEMIC WRITING AND REFERENCING

By Emma Hollis, Bethan Bufton, Beth Higgins and Jess Davies Year 1 students

- Always reference as you go – this saves so much time later on!
- Write up quotes while looking through books so that you can gain ideas on how to structure your paragraphs.
- Do a detailed plan so that you can tick off as you write.
- Email 'ask a librarian' if ever you're struggling with referencing – they always give quick replies.
- Get a friend or family member to proof read your work – they always notice little things!
- Show tutors a brief plan of your assignment if you're feeling nervous.
- Get books for your assignment early from The Hive – this means that there will be a better selection for you!
- Try to include a range of text types – e.g. books, articles and websites (if they are from a reliable source) as this boosts the quality of your work.
- Always have your Harvard Referencing Guide close by – you will live by it.
- When you have finished your assignment, ALWAYS submit your assignment into Turnitin where your assignment will be checked for plagiarism.
- If you are still not sure on referencing, there is no need to worry, because Cite them right can check your references for you (<https://www.citethemrightonline.com/>)

**This will all be included in your Harvard Referencing guide from The Hive, but we thought it may be useful for you to have access to it early!**

**TOP TIPS:** Always reference as you go! Note down key pages in case you need to refer back to them and always use your referencing guide when referencing.

**BOOKS:** Authors surname, first initial. (date published) Name of the book. Edition number. Place it was published: Publishing company.

e.g. Rutledge, N. (2010) Primary Science Teaching the Tricky bits. Berkshire: Open University Press.

**CHAPTER IN AN EDITED BOOK:** Authors surname, first initial. (date published) Name of chapter, in name of book it was published in. Place it was published: name of publishing company. Chapter pages.

e.g. Wearmouth, J. (2014) 'Handling difficulties in social, emotional and behavioural development.', in Cremin, T. and Arthur, J. (3rd Edition) Learning to teach in the primary school. Oxon: Routledge. pp211.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** Authors surname, first initial. (date published) 'Name of article' Name of journal, pp. pages. Doi: number.

e.g. Walan, S. McEwen, B. and Gericke, N. (2015) 'Enhancing primary science: an exploration of teachers' own ideas of solutions to challenges in inquiry – and context-based teaching', pp. 81-92. Doi: 10.1080/03004279.2015.1092456.

**WEBPAGE:** authors surname, first initial. (date) title. Available at: webpage link. (Accessed: date you used this webpage).

e.g. British Dyslexia Association (2018) About the British Dyslexia Association. Available at: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about> (Accessed: 5th May 2018)  
Government Publication: Name of department (date) title of publication. Available at: webpage address. (Accessed on: date)

e.g. Department for Education (2014) The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2 framework document  
Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/425601/PRIMARY\\_national\\_curriculum.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf) (Accessed: 3rd March 2018)

# Work- life balance

By Caitlin Mcilwraith Year 1 student

The fear of being snowed under by work is a common one associated with university. At some points, yes, you will have a lot of work. You get out what you put in. However, confining yourself to your laptop and books will not only hinder your university experience but also your mental health. For assignments, I always make a personal deadline of the day before it is due. Frantically writing a 2000 word essay an hour before it is due is not ideal for anyone, and is unlikely to get you the best grade. I try and keep weekends to myself, and do my work in the evenings during the week. That way, I know that I have designated time to do what I want and enjoy my time with my friends without the threat of work looming over my head.

I have folders for my individual modules, and organise my notes accordingly. Before university, organisation was definitely not my strong point. Now, I ensure that my notes are tidy – there are so many modules, it would be far too confusing not to!



# Let it be - Take time for mindfulness

By Natasha Ellam and Heidi Taylor Year 1 students

Starting university can be a stressful experience, it is a new environment, new people and there are new ways of doing just about everything. There are lots of tasks to complete and deadlines to meet, which can feel never ending. School experience placements can be a challenging time too, a non-stop juggling act of work and survival. Don't let this put you off though, it is manageable with the right mindset and completely worth it. However, to be able to give to others first we must give to ourselves, and mindfulness is a great way of doing this. The University offers many spaces and resources to allow this including (but not limited to): 'Fancy a cuppa' at Firstpoint, a chance to have a free cup of tea and biscuits and have a chat about absolutely anything; Counselling and Mental health services, just pop along to Firstpoint where you will be provided with a range of useful opportunities including with impartial counselling and advice; Mental health awareness week, with a range of activities to promote awareness; Meditation and Mindfulness sessions, everyone is welcome, and it is free.

As teachers it is important find ways to have a break and take time to reflect. Utilising mindfulness has so many benefits for us, not just our pupils. And by practising mindfulness, we develop understanding of the technique and how to help others, understand the principles of the practice. Integrating this daily can be tricky but it's well worth finding those 10 minutes to look after your mental wellbeing. 'Headspace', a fantastic meditation app that I use, provides the first few sessions for free, however after this there is a charge. There are many free apps though that do the same thing, it is in part about finding what works for you.

Many schools are promoting mindfulness in the classroom. Benefits include, relaxation, better concentration and improvement in pupil mental and emotional wellbeing. All these benefits, in effect help us as teachers meet our goal - to help children learn and develop. There are so many mindfulness programmes aimed towards children such as:

- Headspace for kids
- Mind Yeti
- Class Dojo
- Comic kids Zen Den.

To put it into perspective, the idea is to look after yourself, so you can be the best you can be. In the classroom teaching, it can be intense being in front of the children by yourself. Taking 10 minutes out of your day to focus on breathing can prove to be effective when in these stressful situations. Another positive activity to practice as often as possible is to dwell on the positive things that happened that day. It is so easy to slip into a negative mindset and criticise ourselves with all the mistakes we made. Just like we say to the children, learning happens when we make mistakes and we should be proud of ourselves for getting through the day and reflecting on everything right that happened. Not only will this boost your confidence, but it will maintain a clear head and focused mindset which is why mindfulness is so important to a healthy lifestyle.

Personalise the way you practice mindfulness to your lifestyle and the way you feel, because everybody deals with life in different ways and we need to learn to look after ourselves and feel good.

# Things to do on campus as a commuter

By Beth Bufton and Jess Davies Year 1 students

- **Canteen:** this is the perfect place to spend your free time, its often quieter than Peirson if you are looking for a place to study and also has great lunch facilities! Our personal favourites are the jacket potatoes!
- **Peirson:** this is a good place to study during the longer frees as you have access to computers as well as large amounts of table space! It's also handy if you still want to be able to have a chat with your friends although silent spaces are available if you want to fully concentrate.
- **Students' Union:** this is another great place to get lunch or hang out during the day as there is plenty of space. As well as this the food isn't too expensive either!
- **The Hive:** this is another great place to go to as it is within walking distance of university (20 minutes) and has a great café for a cup of tea once you get there! This means you can be productive and take out any books that you need for your assignment so that you can make the most of your time when you're not at university and save petrol money!
- **Town:** having time in the middle of the day is never nice when you don't have any work to do. The 20 minute walk to the town centre would help pass the time away, you can either go shopping or have some lunch with your friends. There is plenty to do in town including shops, bars, restaurants and a cinema.
- **Societies:** societies are another way of meeting new people who may not be on the same course as you. Being a commuter, you may feel like you're not getting the full student lifestyle but by becoming part of a society; you are mixing with all types of students on a variety of courses.
- **Additionality:** the University offers many opportunities for students to get involved in alongside your studies. The Worcester Award is something every student should be doing as you are getting extra experience beyond the teaching of your course. The final stage of the Worcester Award is a useful preparation for interviews you would have at the end of university as you go through an interview process to complete the Gold Award. Another additionality opportunity you should complete is the Intervention Initiative Group where you look into domestic violence. All the students found this group useful and very interesting.

## ADDITIONALITY:

By Nerys Howes Year 1 student

Here are some examples of extra things that you can get involved in.

- Working in Partnership projects
- Student representation
- Signalong
- Worcester Award
- French lessons
- Helping with interviews and open days
- University of Worcester India project
- Mini me yoga

All these things look great towards your professional development. We will all graduate with the same degree and so its important to get involved in things that will make you stand out from the crowd. **What will you get involved in?**





# The Education Enhancement Society

Rosie Platts Year 1 student

The Education Enhancement Society was created for students with an interest in education or for those who want to further their knowledge within the topic of education. It aims to equip individuals with valuable skills linked to a career in education, through running workshops and also setting up communication links between students who can offer advice to anyone who needs it. The committee for the next academic year has been decided and the chair of the society is Ellie Bixby. I had the opportunity to speak to her and find out some more information about what will be happening in the education enhancement society next academic year.

## What events are you planning for the society?

One of the main events that we are planning for the society next year is to run a series of mental health workshops for students to attend. These workshops will cover aspects such as supporting SEND children, supporting teachers, dealing with children who have been bereaved, safeguarding and child protection. Mental health in schools is a major topic at the moment so we felt it was very important to run a series of workshops to provide people with more information about mental health in primary schools. As well as these main workshops we will also be running smaller workshops in between these such as teaching handwriting, talks about working in state/boardings schools and how animal therapy in schools could benefit children. Around Christmas time we are planning on having a charity day supporting a charity of our choice. This charity day will include lots of stalls and events all in aid of raising money for our charity. As well as the academic side of events we will also be holding a range of social events, including student night on a Wednesday and possibly some evenings we will organise to go on a trip to the cinema or go bowling. These social events help everyone in the society to get to know each other and build friendships.

## Why should first years get involved?

I think first year is the best year to get involved with extra-curricular activities because firstly this is when you have the most time to join and get involved with all the activities. The society has also allowed us to make lots of friends who are doing the same course but I have also made friends with people from other courses. Those friends in the year above have been able to help me with any assignment queries I had and were just there as another support system if I ever needed any advice. As well as this you receive a certificate for any workshop you attend, these certificates are really useful to talk about in job interviews in the future and to also put in your reflective portfolio on school experience. Joining the society has been really beneficial to my university experience and I would love to see lots of first years joining the society next year.

The cost to join the society for the whole year and to be able to attend all these amazing workshops that they will put on is only £15 so join the education enhancement society and develop your knowledge about education even further.

# Ladies football

By Emma Hollis Year 1 student

During college, I gave up playing football to concentrate on my A-levels. I really struggled with this, as football was a stress relief for me and gave me the time away I needed from studying, as well as allowing me to keep a good social life. When I started at the University, I was given an opportunity to play again and therefore, I decided I would make it work around my studies. I signed up for a trial within my first week, and I was welcomed into the squad with around 50 other ladies. It was a huge society that allowed me to socialise outside of my university course and make new friends. Although sometimes it was difficult to fit football around my studies, the coaches, Matt and Simon, were very understanding about needing to miss a session if you let them know in advance. Alternatively, it was often a much-needed way to relax away from studying, as I found it difficult to stop working and have a break if I stayed in. Wednesday evenings are social nights, where all the sports societies get together and go out. There are often theme nights to dress up as and even as a commuter, I was still able to enjoy the social sides of university within my society. If you are thinking about joining any of the societies the University of Worcester has to offer, you must do it. I have noticed a huge difference in my wellbeing and happiness and cannot recommend them enough.

# Zumba Society

By Caitlin Mcilwraith Year 1 student

I first started the Zumba society because it was something that I had wanted to try before starting university. In the beginning, it was just a source of exercise that I could fit in around lectures (Monday lunchtimes and Thursday evenings). However, I started attending social nights on a Wednesday and got to speak to other people who attended Zumba. I have made some of the greatest friends from being part of a society!

I find that Zumba is a casual form of exercise with a low amount of commitment; it doesn't matter if you miss a couple. However, I have also found that exercise is a great way to take a break from studying and doing coursework. Having an hour of intensive cardio does wonders for your mood and brain!

# Dance society

By Rosie Platts Year 1 student

I joined the dance society at the beginning of first year and I am so glad that I did. I have been dancing since I was 3 years old so it's something I love doing and it helps me in so many ways. It provides me with an escape from school/university work allowing me to just forget about anything stressful and be focused on the dance. Joining the dance society has provided me with so many new experiences, we took part in a competition in Nottingham and competed in Varsity against Gloucester University. Both experiences were so much fun, and I felt part of a team which is such a good feeling. The dance society has also allowed me to make lots of new friends and it's so nice to have a big group of friends at university. I highly recommend joining either a sport or society during your first year as it makes you feel part of a team and more involved within the university. It is also so important to have a break from work and joining a society is a good way to spend your breaks.

# Creative Writing Society

By Heidi Taylor Year 1 student

The creative writing society was something I discovered only after the second semester at university. I have been creatively writing for many years since I was in primary school, after realising I had a passion for English and reading. After speaking with my English lecturer, she suggested I look online at the Worcester Students' Union page at all the societies available, to see if there was a society I could join that would cater for my passion for writing. When I write stories, poems, articles and many other creative pieces, I am the best I can be, and it gives me time to be myself and let my thoughts go crazy through my writing. I got in contact with the chair of the society, who invited me along to a meet up. Everybody welcomed me with open arms, and soon enough we were reading each other's writing and discussing ideas for improvements. I have been a member of the society now for a month or so and already feel my writing is better, and my confidence has grown. As of the next academic year (2018-2019) I will be on the society committee as the inclusion officer and will be doing everything I can to promote the society, which has been running now for 2 years and is growing every year. You don't have to be an avid reader or budding author to join us; we meet every Monday evening for a few hours to catch up and check out what other people have written over the last week. I feel I can express myself tremendously through writing something down, whether it be a funny poem or a serious piece about emotional events. Everyone is welcome to come next year for some fun activities, and the chance to be a part of an incredible group of people who I consider to be true friends.

Upon asking some of the current members what they have gained whilst being a part of the society, they answered with "confidence in themselves and their work", "freedom to a creative licence" and "exploration of new and exciting ways to write and enjoy writing". The society is currently made up of creative writing students, film students, teachers, business students and archaeologists, who all agree the society has been a pleasant break from their courses. You can write for you, and not stress about writing assignments and exams! We have so much planned for next year, and we look forward to seeing you there!







# Phonics – A is for... AAAGGGHHH!!

By Heidi Taylor Year 1 student

You have come to university to learn how to teach children the wonderful language of English, and you hear the term “phonics”. Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write, helping children hear, identify and use different sounds that distinguish one word from another in the English language. It is consistent throughout KS1 and ends with a phonics screening test at the end of year 2. Throughout your training, you will become familiar with a range of terminology when teaching phonics, most of which is consistent throughout all the phonics schemes you may teach. The jargon buster will help you familiarise yourself with the terms you will come across and what they mean when teaching phonics. I will talk you through three main phonics schemes that are seen in schools across the country and are the most likely schemes you will be asked to teach in school.

**Letters and Sounds** - Letters and Sounds is a phonics scheme and published resource created by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007. It aims to build children’s speaking and listening skills, as well as preparing children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven. The scheme is split into 6 phases, that gradually introduce a new set of phonemes and the corresponding graphemes to develop a child’s vocabulary and word bank. Available online to use in teaching, this scheme has been a great resource for planning, teaching and assessing progress in phonics lessons. It also provides advice on types of activities and resources to use, as well as the recommended structure of a phonics lesson as they are advised to be 20 minutes.

**Read Write Inc:** This is a scheme developed by Ruth Miskin, who asks teachers and educators to pay for her scheme and contributing resources. Miskin has developed a phonics programme, alongside grammar, spelling, handwriting and other programmes involved in developing literacy skills. The phonics lessons are recommended to be an hour long and focus very heavily on reading and comprehension. Similar to other schemes, children firstly learn one way to read the 40+ sounds and blend these sounds into words, then they learn to read the same sounds with alternative graphemes.

**Jolly Phonics:** This is a scheme produced by the company ‘Jolly Learning’ and is available to review and use in schools online. There are many free downloadable resources to use with the scheme, as well as guidance which is very flexible in contrast with other schemes. Jolly phonics utilises the use of mnemonics which are songs, rhymes and phrases to help children remember certain phonemes or graphemes. This scheme has many sensory benefits in the classroom, utilising the strengths of all learners and being adaptable for SEN and EAL provision.

## Applying this knowledge on your school placement...

My first year placements were both in year 2, which identifies the end of the phonics scheme and marks the arrival of SATS and the phonics screening test. I was eager to apply my phonics knowledge whilst on placement, using what I had learnt through the Letters and Sounds guidance online and the resources given to me in lectures. However, the schools I was teaching at both used the phonics scheme Read Write Inc. It was difficult to access the resources, however once I was in school I immediately asked my teacher for the guidance book. The book explains exactly what to teach and implement in a particular phonics lesson, in the order that the sounds should be taught. At the time, I found it to be

quite limiting and lacking in freedom to add my own creative input. You will be told that phonics lessons should be multi-sensory and interactive to keep the children engaged and make the learning memorable. However, you are advised to follow the school’s guidance and preferences; the scheme they have invested in will be very important to the development of their school data and style of teaching, so you need to be adaptable. On the other hand, my second placement worked with me to include my own lesson plans within their Read Write Inc guidance. I was able to teach inclusive, interactive lessons that still followed the framework but addressed the principles of phonic work from other schemes.

Always try to find out which phonics scheme you will be asked to follow before you arrive. It will usually be on the school’s website, or you could email them and ask for some preparation work before you start to plan. If you are teaching phonics using the Letters and Sounds government scheme, make the most of the online resources and guidance! It can be implemented across the whole of KS1, and adapted in collaboration with other schemes. Whatever scheme you teach, your class teacher will be more than happy to support you, and you can always email your English tutors for more guidance!

## Guidance on the year 1 phonics assignment...

In year 1, there will be an assignment based upon the phonics knowledge you have learnt. This will include looking at the different phonics schemes seen in schools, the effectiveness of the teaching and changes in phonics teaching over time. The recommended useful resources in this article will support you in covering all aspects of high quality phonic work, and it will be really helpful to you to utilise your wider reading that is given to you in lectures. Don’t forget to add in your own experience as this is crucial for reflecting upon your own teaching skills and implantation of phonics in schools. Plan your assignment well beforehand to ensure you cover everything that the lectures will be looking for, and don’t panic! Everyone will be exploring the subject at the same time, and very often it is a new concept for most people. Phonics really isn’t rocket science!



## JARGON BUSTER:

**Phoneme** - The smallest unit of sounds in a word represented by letters or groups of letters.

**Grapheme** – A way of writing down a phoneme e.g. 's', 'a', 'ch', 'igh'. Graphemes can be made up from one letter 'p', two letters 'sh', three letters 'tch in match' or four letters 'ough in though'

**GPC** (grapheme phoneme correspondence) – This is when a phoneme and grapheme can be matched.

**Digraph** – Contains two letters that make one sound e.g. 'th'.

**Trigraph** – Contains three letters that make one sound e.g. 'igh'.

**Split digraph** – Two vowels, split, making one sound, e.g. a\_e as in make or i\_e in site.

**CVC words** – A consonant sound, then a vowel sound then a consonant sound such as "hot" and "bed".

**Phase** – The level or stage at which children learn a set of particular sounds.

**Letters and Sounds** – A systematic synthetic phonics scheme produced by the government, available online.

**Read Write Inc** – A systematic synthetic phonics scheme produced by Ruth Miskin. Schools must pay into the scheme to gain access to the resources.

**Jolly Phonics** – A phonics scheme available online that makes use of mnemonics to help children remember phonemes and graphemes.

**Decoding** – To read a word by saying the sounds then joining, or blending, those sounds together to form the word.

**Encoding** – Encoding involves listening for the phonemes/sounds and deciding which letters represent those phonemes/sounds. Also known as spelling!

**Blending** – Hearing the individual phonemes in a word and blending together to read.

**Segmenting** – To break down a word into its individual phonemes (sounds) and learn to write it using the correct graphemes to represent these sounds.

**Prefix** – A prefix is a group of letters placed before the root of a word. For example, the word "unhappy" consists of the prefix "un-"

**Suffix** – A suffix is a group of letters placed after the root of a word. For example, the word "kindness" consists of the suffix "-ness"

**High frequency (common) words** – These are the words that occur most commonly in the English language. Some are 'decodable' like much (see above) whilst others are 'tricky' like the (see below).

**Mnemonics** - Memory joggers such as a rhyme, a phrase or a shape. For example, seeing a dinosaur in the shape of a letter d to help your child to associate the dinosaur with the letter and sound d.

## USEFUL DOCUMENTS:

**Simple view of reading** – This can be found online or in the recommended English books below. It is guidance for understanding the process children go through when learning to read.

**Blackboard** – The University's own portal is excellent for resources, power points and other helpful documents you will need. Perfect for 24/7 guidance!

**Letters and Sounds Guidance** – This guidance online is great for planning phonics lessons and understanding the different phases.

**Department for Education and Skills (2007) Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics - Notes of Guidance for Practitioners and Teachers.** Available at: <http://www.schoolslinks.co.uk/LettersAndSounds.pdf>

**Jolly Phonics Guidance** - This website offers easy guidance for the programme and offers many free resources.  
<https://www.jollylearning.co.uk/free-parent-teacher-resources/>

**The Rose Report** – This report outlines the principles of high quality phonic work.

Rose, J. (2006) Independent review of the teaching of early reading. Available at: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5551/2/report.pdf>

**Primary English Books** – There are two books that you will find extremely helpful with your studies and applying your knowledge in schools.

Medwell, J. et al. (2017) Primary English: Teaching Theory and Practice. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Eighth Edition.

Medwell, J. (2017) Primary English: Knowledge and Understanding. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Eighth Edition.

**Mr Thorne Network (YouTube)** – This YouTube channel is great for working through the sets of sounds; how to introduce them and how they should be pronounced. Lots of interesting videos to also show the children.

# School experience - What to expect

By Carrie Eaton and Nerys Howes, Year 1 students

School experience is always everyone's biggest question when starting the degree; I remember, I had so many! How many days? Do I need to organise it? How far away will the school be? And although it may sound silly, will I have to teach straight away? Although these questions will be answered along the first-year journey, it is nice to feel prepared and know what to expect. The biggest thing to remember is that you are never alone, and it is likely that everyone feels the same when it comes to pre-school experience nerves.

In first year, you will have a two-week block at the end of the first term, around November/ December. At this stage, there are no requirements to teach whole class lessons, it is whatever you and your class teacher feel comfortable with doing. However, I decided that I would like to challenge myself and so I chose to teach a whole class science lesson. My class teacher was there supporting me the whole way through and we sat and planned the lesson together. Throughout the two-week placement, you are required to complete professional enquiry tasks. A lot of these are based around your observations of the class teacher and the general ethos of the school. These come in handy when it comes to writing your assignments throughout the year. For example, one task involved us observing a phonics lesson and then teaching a phonics lesson ourselves. Reflection of this was necessary for our English assignment.

By May, we were all itching to get back into schools. We knew that we had learnt so much through taught university sessions, and we couldn't wait to put this into practice. At the end of May, you will have a four-and-a-half-week block. Although it is not definite, it is likely that you will return to the same school that you were placed in, in November. This is great because it means that you

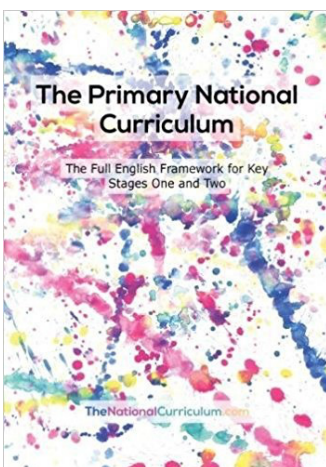
settle in quickly and can get on with meeting the requirements of this block placement straight away. It is important to note that the expectations gradually increase; I have never felt as though I have been thrown in the deep end, with little support. By the end of this placement, you are expected to teach two lessons a day, with at least one of these being whole class. Although this seems daunting now, I can promise that you will feel ready for it when the time comes.

On school experience you are allocated a mentor that is a member of staff at the school, and a School experience tutor that is a member of staff from the University. There is always someone to turn to who can provide advice, answer questions and offer general support. The University are in charge of organising placements, so that we have one less thing to worry about. You will be asked to complete a form, with your address, whether you have a driving licence, a car. All of this information will be used to find a placement that is best for you. They will ensure that the school is accessible by public transport if you do not drive.

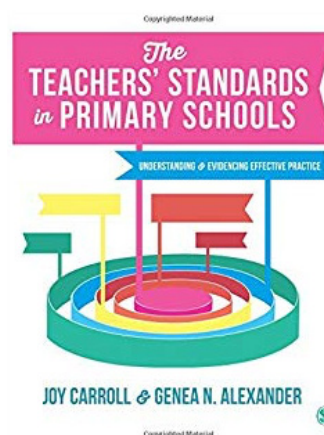
The greatest advice I can give is to just have fun. You will get out of it, what you put in. Taught sessions at university will require you to build up a great bank of resources that are so useful in school.

## Books that are really valuable on placement

Carrie Eaton, Year 1 student



**The Primary National Curriculum in England: Key Stage 1 and 2 Framework** is so useful to have to hand whilst planning lessons and also to have a good understanding of where the children have come from and where they are heading. Although you can obviously access this for free online I used the hard copy in both my lectures and on school experience.



### Teaching Standards

When gathering evidence for your RP, it can sometimes be confusing knowing what documents to put in and how you can go about ensuring that you are meeting that particular Teaching Standard. This book breaks down the Teachers Standards, pulls them apart to give you a greater understanding and then shows a range of evidence that could be included.

# SPOTLIGHT ON NEW MEMBER OF STAFF

## – Ben Shakespeare

By Emma Hollis and Beth Higgins, Year 1 student

### What was the most challenging experience of your career so far?

Probably one of the most challenging experiences for me was when I was supporting a partner junior school with teaching and learning in mathematics, following a series of challenging Ofsted inspections. We worked hard as a team to improve the learning experiences for the children – changes needed to be made and then significant time had to be spent to support people with those changes through the use of extensive CPD. Ultimately, the hard work paid off and significant improvements were noted by Ofsted, Local Authority and, most importantly, the staff and children. Also, my new role within the University of Worcester is the beginning of an exciting new challenge! This is my first experience of working within a Higher Education environment and I'm really looking forward to using my experience from schools to help support and develop new teachers.

### Where were you working before you came to this job?

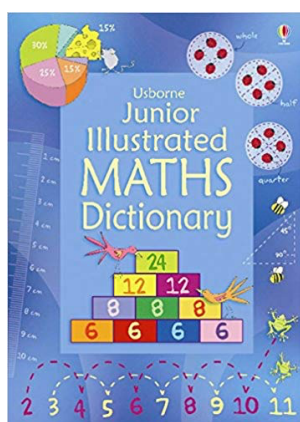
For the past 10 years I have been working in Gloucestershire schools as a Primary Teacher. I've spent the majority of that time teaching infant children and have loved the exciting challenge of working with younger children – and the fun that they bring to the job! During my career, I have taken on a variety of additional roles within school such as Maths Subject Leader, T.A Team leader and for the last 6 years, I have worked as part of Senior Leadership Teams as KS1/Infant Lead

### Aside from your specialist subject, which subject do you enjoy teaching and why?

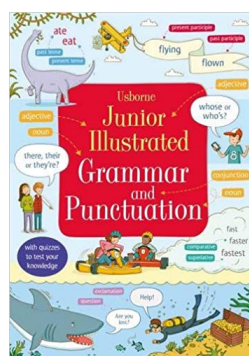
Alongside Mathematics, I have always really enjoyed teaching Science. Originally, this was my chosen specialist subject as part of my BEd degree and I think Science is a fantastic subject to learn about with children. Children love asking questions and finding out things through exploring, so Science lessons fit with this perfectly.

### What advice/tips would you give to trainee teachers?

For me, teaching is a lot to do with relationships. Try and form strong, positive working relationships with everyone you work with (obviously this includes the children!). I think it is important to try and be friendly to everyone – it makes coming to work far more enjoyable and also people are more willing to give up their time to help you if (when) you need it.



**Junior Illustrated Maths Dictionary by Tori Large** This handy little book is perfect to take into school with you. It is perfect for refreshing your memory and double-checking facts if you are in doubt and I felt very well prepared with this around.



Another valuable tool to have is **Junior Illustrated Grammar and Punctuation by Jane Bingham**. It gives concise and clear explanations of grammatical and punctuation features. For weaker areas of your subject knowledge, this kind of book can act as a 'security blanket' so that you don't feel flustered if a child asks you a question that you aren't sure of the answer! You can't know the answer to everything!

# Abbreviations

Natasha Ellam, Year 1 student

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
	<b>TEACHING SPECIFIC</b>
AfL	Assessment for Learning
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DfE	Department for Education
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Educational Health Care Plan
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
KS	Key Stage
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SATs	Student Assessment Tasks
SENCo	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TA	Teaching Assistant
TS	Teachers Standards
	<b>UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC</b>
BB	BlackBoard
BY	Binyon Building
BN	Binyon North
EE	Edward Elgar
RP	Reflective Portfolio
SE	School Experience
SKLP	Skills and Knowledge Learning Profile
SU	Students' Union
PAcT	Personal Academic Tutor
PET	Professional Enquiry Task
PITE	Primary Initial Teacher Education





# INTUITION

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