



# STUDENT TEACHER PLACEMENTS

within Initial Teacher Education

A report by HM Inspectors  
of Education

**KEY TO COVER MAP**

- ★ Teacher Education Institute (TEI)
- School located within 30 miles of a TEI
- School located between 30-50 miles from a TEI
- School located further than 50 miles from a TEI



# **STUDENT TEACHER PLACEMENTS**

**Within Initial Teacher Education**

**A report by HM Inspectors  
of Education**

---

© Crown copyright 2005

ISBN: 0 7053 1075 2

Communications Unit  
HM Inspectorate of Education  
Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston  
EH54 6GA

Tel: 01506 600 200

Fax: 01506 600 337

E-Mail: [enquiries@hmie.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@hmie.gov.uk)

Produced for HMIE by Astron B43351 10/05

Published by HMIE, October, 2005

This material may be copied without further permission by education authorities and education institutions in Scotland for use in school self-evaluation and planning.

The report may be produced in part, except for commercial purposes, or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Foreword</b>	v
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Remit	1
1.2 Objectives	1
1.3 Methodology	1
<b>2. Current practice</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Supply and demand of student teacher placements	3
2.2 Role of SEED	3
2.3 Role of TEs	4
2.4 Role of Schools	5
2.5 Role of EAs	6
2.6 Role of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)	7
2.7 The probationer year	7
<b>3. Key Issues</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Availability of student teacher placements	9
3.2 Liaison between TEs, EAs and schools	9
3.3 Quality of placements	11
<b>4. The way forward</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 In partnership, TEs, EAs, schools, SEED and GTCS should:	13
4.2 TEs should:	13
4.3 EAs should:	13
4.4 Schools should:	13
4.5 SEED should:	14
4.6 HMIE should:	14
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>15</b>
A Key features of effective practice in student teacher placements	15
B Supply and demand of student placements	17
C The views of TEs	20
D The views of students	21
E The views of schools	22
F The views of EAs	23
Sources of support	24



## FOREWORD

---

In September 2004, the Minister for Education and Young People asked HMIE to undertake a review of student teacher placements, report on good practice and make recommendations for improving the quality and provision of placements. This report is an outcome of that review. Its findings are based on fieldwork in schools and teacher education institutions (TEIs), discussions with the principal stakeholders in teacher education and an analysis of statistical data provided by the TEIs.

The importance of good quality student teacher placements is widely recognised as an essential part in developing the professional skills of new teachers. Courses of initial teacher education depend upon this element to enable students to reach the Standard for Initial Teacher Education. These learning experiences can only take place with the collaboration of teachers and with the effective organisation of placements. The provision of student teacher placements was highlighted for action in the Second Stage Review of Initial Teacher Education.

The report shows that the recent increased demand for more teachers has put a strain on the traditional arrangements for organising student teacher placements. Through the partnership arrangements between the teacher education institutions,

education authorities and schools, improvements were being made during the period of this review to secure more reliable provision of placements. However, further working in partnership is required by the principal stakeholders to ensure that all student teachers obtain suitable placements.

HMI found many examples of good practice in both primary and secondary schools. In these schools, student teachers were developing their professional skills alongside skilful, reflective teachers in a positive and supportive atmosphere; and headteachers and other managers ensured that good conditions had been established for learning to the benefit of all. However, not all students had high quality placements and positive experiences. This report identifies ways that the principal stakeholders can improve both the quality and provision of student teacher placements. These improvements are necessary in order to produce the number of skilled teachers we require in the future.

Graham Donaldson  
Her Majesty's Senior Chief Inspector  
HM Inspectorate of Education



# 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Remit

The Second Stage Review of Initial Teacher Education<sup>1</sup> was published in June 2005. It highlighted the increased number of students undertaking initial teacher education courses and the consequent increased demand for student placements. The Minister for Education and Young People asked HMIE, under the terms of Section 21 of the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998, to report on current good practice and make recommendations for improving the quality and provision of student teacher placements.

### 1.2 Objectives

The main objectives of the review were to:

- describe the demand for student teacher placements and relate this to the capacity of schools and education authorities to meet this demand;
- describe the current arrangements for organising student teacher placements;
- make recommendations to improve the provision of student teacher placements;
- describe the features of good quality placements from the perspectives of students, schools, education authorities (EAs) and teacher education institutions (TEIs);
- publicise good practice in student teacher placements through a report and an event for all stakeholders;

- make recommendations to improve the quality of student teacher placements; and
- engage with stakeholders to improve the quantity and quality of student teacher placements.

### 1.3 Methodology

The review took place in session 2004/05. Data was collected from the seven TEIs on the required number of student teacher placements for session 2004/2005. This information was then compared with the capacity of schools to provide placements.

Through HMIE's district inspector (DI) network, each EA was asked about its strategies and policies on student teacher placements. HMI team members took a closer look at operational procedures in 13 education authorities by interviewing senior officers with a responsibility for student teacher placements, and student teacher placement co-ordinators. These interviews were followed up by visits to at least one primary school and one secondary school in each of these education authorities. Team members interviewed groups of primary and secondary probationer teachers on the induction scheme and asked them to reflect on their past experiences on placements as a student. HMI held discussions with the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) and visited two independent schools. In all schools visited, meetings and interviews were held with the headteacher and other senior managers with a specific responsibility for student teacher

<sup>1</sup> Review of Initial Teacher Education Stage 2: Report of the Review Group, SEED 2005

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

---

placements, with principal teachers, class teachers and students. Team members observed a sample of lessons taught by the students.

In each of the seven TEIs, interviews were arranged with the deans of the faculties of education/heads of schools of education and a number of course directors and tutors. Discussions also took place

with staff in the Teachers Division of the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) and the chief executive of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). Throughout this task, members of the HMIE team sought the views of stakeholders on what they considered to be good practice and on how current provision and practice could be improved.

# 2

## 2. CURRENT PRACTICE

During the nine-month duration of this review, TEs and education authorities were adjusting their procedures in order to address the current difficulties in finding a suitable number of student teacher placements. Practice has therefore evolved during this review and the descriptions which follow reflect the general pattern of provision in mid 2005.

### 2.1 Supply and demand of student teacher placements

The demand for more teachers in both primary and secondary sectors has resulted in a rapid expansion in the number of students in initial teacher education courses. Each course has a requirement for a number of placements in schools. The number is dependent on the structure of the course and the nature of the final award. The increase in demand for teachers has therefore led to a rapid increase in the required number of student teacher placements.

The expansion of numbers of students in training has been widely welcomed and education authorities and most schools, including independent schools, have responded positively to requests to provide additional placements. Nevertheless, TEs have found it increasingly difficult to find enough placements for all their students. Numerical data provided by the TEs on the demand of placements, and data on the supply of placements is given in Appendix B.

This data shows that on average each primary school needs to provide in excess of three student placements each year, and each secondary school needs to provide in excess of twelve student placements each year, in order to satisfy the demand for student teacher placements. However, not all schools can provide placements and as the

majority of TEs are located in the central belt, schools in this region need to provide more placements than the above figures suggest in order to meet the global demand.

### 2.2 Role of SEED

The annual cycle of student teacher recruitment begins with SEED estimating the number of teachers required in the future. This process begins each October before students are recruited for the next academic session. SEED use a complex statistical model to predict the number of teachers required. It takes account of the existing teaching force and the overall requirements of the Scottish Executive's policies on the demand for teachers over the next ten years. Annual adjustments of intakes to meet the demand are made mainly to the number of postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE) student places because these do not have the long lead-in time that are a feature of the four-year undergraduate courses, such as BEd and concurrent degree courses. This modelling process is carried out openly with the full collaboration of representatives of education authorities, the TEs, GTCS and other stakeholders. Thereafter, SEED advise the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), the funding body for TEs, on the number of students that are required to train as teachers that year and it in turn sets recruitment targets for each TEI and provides the necessary funding. These targets are generally given to the TEs in December prior to the recruitment of students for courses beginning in August of the following year.

Recognising the difficulties which TEs were facing in finding suitable placements, SEED provided some funding for education authorities in 2004/2005 to assist them to co-ordinate the provision of student teacher placements.

# 2

## CURRENT PRACTICE

There are few national statistics published on the numbers of students in TEIs and none on student teacher placements in schools. As a consequence it is difficult for stakeholders to have a clear view of the overall picture and the trends in this sector. A knowledge of this data would have helped schools and education authorities understand the change in demand for placements over the last few years.

### 2.3 Role of TEIs

Patterns of liaison between TEIs, education authorities and schools on the placement of students in training have seen significant change in recent years. Traditionally, TEIs seeking placements have tended to deal directly with schools. Usually, TEIs draw upon a list of schools with which they have formed good relationships and which have provided placements in the past. The location and ease of travel to the school are significant factors which affect their choice of schools. Whilst practices between the TEIs vary in detail, the general picture is one in which they ask schools what type of student teacher placement they would be prepared to provide. TEIs seek placements in primary and secondary schools for both postgraduate students and BEd year 1, 2, 3 or 4 students. In the past, schools usually dealt with a single university and offered student teacher placements to that institution alone. Now many schools deal with more than one university.

TEIs organise their student teacher placements in schools at different times of the year and each placement has a specific focus. The dates and foci for these placements have evolved with the development of each TEI's courses. TEIs are now taking steps to improve the timing of placement

dates. By synchronising dates for secondary placements, some of the TEIs have made it easier for secondary schools to plan joint programmes for students from different TEIs. For primary school placements, TEIs are beginning to avoid making requests for placements at the same stage at the same time of the year. This approach helps to circumvent the shortage, discussed later, of suitable nursery placements.

TEIs arrange for a pre-placement meeting for some courses. These meetings enable tutors, students and members of school staff to meet. They also furnish TEIs with an opportunity to explain their expectations of the placements to the schools. TEIs reported that sharing understandings of the Standard for Initial Teacher Education<sup>2</sup> (SITE) benchmark statements at such meetings had resulted in improvements in the ability of schools to contribute to the assessment of students on placements. However, not all relevant school staff were able to attend such meetings as a result of teaching commitments.

Recruitment patterns for BEd and postgraduate courses of teacher education are different. As a result of the high demand for primary BEd and postgraduate primary courses, students are generally offered places by the December of the preceding academic year. Whereas the bulk of postgraduate secondary students are recruited after final university examinations in May or June and in some cases only days before starting the teacher education course in September. The short time between students being offered a place and starting a course has resulted in Disclosure Scotland not having enough time to provide the necessary

<sup>2</sup> The standard which student teachers are expected to reach after the first stage of teacher education

clearance for each student. It has also meant that the total numbers for each secondary course have not been finalised until a few weeks, or even a few days in some cases, before the first placement. This has exacerbated the difficulties in finding suitable placements for some students. This last-minute approach in the secondary sector has arisen as a result of the TEIs extending their recruitment deadlines to provide more opportunities for prospective students to apply for places in order to meet the demanding targets set by SHEFC.

All TEIs provide schools and students with booklets which state the aims of the placement and specify the tasks which the students have to complete during the placement. Each university has its own distinctive style of documentation and the content of each booklet is determined by the focus of the placement.

The increase in the number of students on courses of initial teacher education has led to a need for more tutors. This requirement has been met mainly by the appointment of full-time and part-time teaching fellows and associate tutors, many of whom are seconded from schools.

The views that TEI staff and student teachers expressed to HMI are summarised in Appendices C and D respectively.

## 2.4 Role of schools

Schools play a key role in initial teacher education. School experience and the placements involved are integral parts of the course. Many primary and secondary schools, including independent schools, have striven to accommodate increasing numbers of students, often at short notice. TEI requests for placements are made in the context of other increasing demands being placed upon schools, especially in the primary sector where a variety of placements are sought. Primary schools are

frequently asked for places for nursery nurses, school pupils seeking work shadowing and work experience, trainee social workers, and others. Whilst many schools respond positively to TEI requests for placements, a minority of primary schools and secondary departments do not provide any placements and a significant number only provide a few places. In addition, some primary schools are less prepared to take first-year BEd students whereas they would readily take a final-year student.

Headteachers prefer to allocate students to teachers who act as good role models. In primary schools, students are generally allocated to a specific class for most of their placement, working closely with the class teacher. Students are gradually given more responsibility for teaching the class as their skills develop and as they progress through their course. In secondary schools, students are allocated to a department and are generally given an opportunity to work with a number of teachers and classes. Class teachers and principal teachers play a major role in evaluating the quality of the students' work using TEIs' assessment schemes, which are each based on the SITE benchmarks.

In schools which work with more than one TEI, headteachers, other senior managers, principal teachers and class teachers have to come to terms with the different timings and purposes of placements, variety of assessment schemes and documentation from each of their partner TEIs. In some cases, schools have students from different TEIs at the same time and this adds to the complexity of their task.

Most senior managers regarded the part they played in the induction of student teachers into the teaching profession as an important responsibility. In some cases they organised induction programmes as well as providing ongoing

# 2

## CURRENT PRACTICE

professional support and encouragement. Many headteachers were highly committed to initial teacher education and regularly served on university selection panels which interviewed students for entry into teacher education. This level of commitment was valued by TEIs.

Some headteachers were looking at ways of developing further the mentoring skills within their staffs in order to develop the teaching skills of students, probationers and other teachers. A number were looking forward to a future role for chartered teachers in providing this type of support to both students and teachers.

The views that headteachers, other promoted staff and class teachers expressed to HMI are given in Appendix E.

### 2.5 Role of EAs

Education authorities recognised their important role in helping to train the teachers for the future and they were keen to play a greater part in providing good quality student teacher placements. This involvement was seen as the initial phase of teacher education which would be followed by further CPD activities. The introduction of the teacher induction scheme in 2002/2003 gave education authorities a greater role in the continuous professional development (CPD) of probationer teachers. Some authorities were considering ways of exploiting the synergy between inducting students and probationers into the work of an education authority. However, when this review began, no authority had a fully developed policy on supporting student teacher placements, but by mid 2005 most were clarifying their roles and developing their policies.

Traditionally, education authorities have encouraged schools to respond positively to

requests from TEIs for the provision of student teacher placements. As communication on organising placements has been directly between the TEIs and schools, EAs have not been fully aware of which schools were taking students and which were not. In addition, they were not aware of the quality of student teacher placements in their schools.

Most education authorities in the central belt were now making it clear that all of their schools should be offering high quality placements. Authorities in other areas were also keen to have students, one factor being that having placements in the more remote parts of Scotland would lead to some students seeking employment in these areas.

Some education authorities have taken an increasingly direct role in liaising with their schools and local TEIs to negotiate and arrange student teacher placements. The SEED funding for student teacher placement co-ordinators has facilitated this change and, where such appointments have been successful, they have led to improved liaison between all parties involved. In addition, these posts have helped education authorities to have a much clearer picture on where placements are being made. The increased use of teaching fellows and associate tutors has also contributed to improved communication and liaison between key partners. Although communication between education authorities, their schools and TEIs is improving, there is still a long way to go before education authorities have a clear picture of the uptake and quality of placements within their area.

To date education authorities have offered limited support to schools in providing student teacher placements and there has been little sharing of good practice within or among authorities. There is scope for education authorities to play a much

greater role in improving the quality of student teacher placements.

The views that education authority officials expressed to HMI are given in Appendix F.

## 2.6 Role of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)

As a regulating body, the GTCS maintains the Standard for Initial Teacher Education, which is the standard which student teachers must reach by the end of their course. This standard is the common backbone of the assessment schemes used by each university.

The GTCS also accredits each course of initial teacher education to ensure that it enables prospective teachers to reach this standard. A significant requirement of each course is that it must provide a specified minimum time of practical teaching experience in schools - at least 18 weeks in post-graduate primary and secondary courses. The accreditation process includes an evaluation of student teacher placements.

## 2.7 The probationer year

An outcome of the recent teachers' settlement outlined in *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century*<sup>3</sup> was the establishment of a guaranteed induction placement for every teacher after they have successfully completed their course in initial teacher education. During this induction period, schools and education authorities provide

professional support for probationer teachers. To acknowledge this support, SEED transfer an element of funding to education authorities. Most probationers are funded by SEED for 30% of their time and others are fully funded. In addition, SEED provides further resourcing of 0.1FTE per probationer to education authorities for mentoring and support. Many headteachers and education authority staff thought that the level of funding for the induction scheme was a significant factor in its success and said that additional resourcing should be available to support student teacher placements. It was not within the scope of this review to evaluate the resourcing of schools or the way in which they prioritise funding or allocate resources to supporting student placements. Nevertheless, visits to schools indicated that they varied in the amount of resource that they allocated to supporting students. In some cases mentors spent a considerable amount of time in supporting individuals and in running programmes with other staff to enable students to learn how a wide range of professionals met the needs of young people.

With the increase in the demand for new teachers there has been an increase in the number of probationers within schools. Despite the funding which is provided, some primary schools and secondary departments regarded it as difficult to support simultaneously probationer teachers and student teachers. Nevertheless, many other primary schools and secondary departments were able to prioritise the necessary staffing resource to provide good support to both probationers and students.

<sup>3</sup> A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: Agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report

# 2

---

## CURRENT PRACTICE

# 3

## 3. KEY ISSUES

### 3.1 Availability of student teacher placements

TEIs, education authorities and schools all drew attention to the difficulties encountered in obtaining sufficient student teacher placements in both primary and secondary schools to meet the increased demand for student teacher placements. These difficulties were most acute in:

- secondary English language and mathematics;
- pre-school education; and
- teaching in the medium of Gaelic.

The statistical data given in Appendix B confirms the high demand overall for student placements, especially in central Scotland.

Although securing placements in the more remote schools presents difficulties for students and TEIs, the overall shortage of placements is exacerbated by some schools not taking any students or not taking a sufficient number of students. Those consulted for this review cited a number of factors as contributing to the difficulty in providing a suitable number of student placements. Schools often gave TEIs the following reasons for not taking students:

- probationers already in the school or department;
- difficulties in the staffing of schools/departments;
- SQA examinations being prepared for in the Easter term or in progress;
- HMIE activities in the school;
- new staff recently appointed to the school or department;
- faculty heads of secondary department trained in different subjects from the student;

- staff on job-share arrangements; and
- temporary staff covering for maternity or other long-term leave.

It was clear from discussions with headteachers that there can be circumstances when it would be difficult to provide a good placement experience in schools, but these occasions are exceptional. The majority of schools were able to provide good placements, despite any flux in staffing. However, a minority of schools were not committed to taking students and gave excuses for not offering placements.

### 3.2 Liaison between TEIs, EAs and schools

Despite the improvements which have taken place recently, a number of issues remain to be resolved to improve liaison between TEIs, EAs and schools, particularly in the planning of student teacher placements and in communication between all parties.

The following issues relate to planning student teacher placements.

- There was a lack of clarification of the respective roles and responsibilities of education authorities, schools and TEIs in the planning, monitoring and quality assuring of student teacher placements. The planning roles of the stakeholders were set out in the developing policies of the education authority and TEI partners but they needed more time to become fully embedded. The quality assurance roles needed to be specified more clearly.
- Education authorities varied in the extent to which they had and implemented an authority-wide policy on the placement of student teachers.

# 3

## KEY ISSUES

- The timing of requests for placements made by TEIs to schools and education authorities was not co-ordinated. This often resulted in multiple requests for placements being made over a prolonged period of time with resultant wasted effort in schools or education authorities. It often meant that schools had already made a commitment to accept students on placement before receiving further requests from another TEI. The lack of co-ordination and collaboration among the TEIs therefore led to inefficiency.
- Difficulties arose in providing placements as a result of delays in securing disclosure clearances for students, particularly for students from overseas.
- Education authorities did not have robust information on the supply, demand and uptake of student teacher placements in their schools. This affected their ability to respond effectively and efficiently to requests for assistance in planning the placement of students. A number of education authorities had recently taken action to address this situation by conducting meetings with schools to obtain detailed information on placements and identify issues impacting on future placements.
- The lack of notice in intimating numbers of students and their details to the receiving schools resulted in a lack of preparation by the receiving staff. Overall, the planning of student teacher placements needs to be carried out earlier than at present in order that suitable plans can be put in place by the receiving school and to allow students a longer period of notice to make appropriate personal arrangements.
- Insufficient co-ordination of start dates for placements amongst TEIs had led to duplicated

effort in some secondary school student teacher induction programmes when they offered placements to students from more than one TEI. It also led to an excessive demand at certain points in the year for placements at particular stages in primary schools.

The following issues relate to communication between TEIs, education authorities and schools.

- There was a lack of consistency in the nature of documentation provided by TEIs requesting placements of schools and education authorities. This inconsistency created difficulties for schools that took students from more than one TEI. Differences between TEIs' documentation brought unnecessary complication to the overall process, as did any inconsistency in to whom they write regarding placements. This varied from the headteacher or school regent to a principal teacher in a department receiving a student. At times, tutors from the same university adopted different practices, adding further complexities within the receiving school.
- Education authorities did not have robust information on the uptake and quality of student placements in their schools. This shortcoming constrained their management of both the number and quality of placements. The recently appointed student placement co-ordinators were improving the situation in many education authorities.
- Limited communication between schools and TEIs resulted in TEIs not knowing early enough when students were having difficulty on placement and for whom teaching appeared to be an inappropriate career choice.

### 3.3 Quality of placements

There was considerable variation in the quality of placements. In those schools where there was good practice:

- headteachers and senior managers were committed to providing a good learning experience for student teachers;
- class teachers generously gave their time to share their knowledge and professional skills; and
- discussions between students and teachers on learning and teaching provided a meaningful focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching to the benefit of the pupils.

In most schools, students were welcomed and supported by senior managers and other staff, but there were instances where they were not adequately supported or treated professionally. In the worst cases, students were grudgingly accepted

by schools as a favour to the university, and the schools made little effort to provide support and a positive learning experience for them.

There was universal agreement between the principal stakeholders on the desirable features of good quality placements<sup>4</sup>. Most TEs set out clearly their expectations of schools in handbooks and at meetings with school staff. The emerging education authority policies on student teacher placements similarly set out appropriate advice and direction for schools. However, although there was widespread agreement on the features of good placements, quality assurance mechanisms were underdeveloped, and where they existed, they rarely had the potential to accurately evaluate the placements and set in train procedures to improve them. Only a small minority of schools asked student teachers to evaluate their placement and then used these evaluations to improve future provision.

<sup>4</sup> Features of best practice are given in Appendix A.

# 3

---

## KEY ISSUES

# 4

## 4. THE WAY FORWARD

### 4.1 In partnership, TEIs, EAs, schools, SEED and GTCS should:

- 4.1.1 clarify their roles and responsibilities in relation to all aspects of student teacher placements;
- 4.1.2 plan student teacher placements with a longer time horizon;
- 4.1.3 build on the successes and lessons learned from the probationer teacher induction scheme and exploit synergies between CPD for probationers and student teachers on placements; and
- 4.1.4 work to implement improved and more consistent travelling and subsistence expenses arrangements for students to widen the range of schools which can take student placements.

### 4.2 TEIs should:

- 4.2.1 engage more with education authorities on the planning, management and evaluation of student placements;
- 4.2.2 through improved collaboration, achieve greater consistency across TEIs on the timing, purpose and procedures for secondary student teacher placements. In primary schools, organise placements on a stage basis so that the TEIs are not all seeking the same stage placement at the same time;
- 4.2.3 improve the standardisation of placement documentation and communication with schools and students;
- 4.2.4 review and standardise the nature of written reports required from teachers on student progress and performance;
- 4.2.5 take steps to improve the consistency between tutor evaluations and class teacher evaluations on student progress and performance;

- 4.2.6 provide timely feedback to education authorities and schools on the quality of student teacher placements within schools;
- 4.2.7 work with schools and education authorities to overcome some of the difficulties which teachers have in attending pre-placement meetings; and
- 4.2.8 provide more mentoring courses and introduce mentoring modules for teachers.

### 4.3 EAs should:

- 4.3.1 develop and implement a clear policy on student teacher placements;
- 4.3.2 set clear expectations that all schools and subject departments should be prepared to accept students on placement, unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- 4.3.3 monitor rigorously the number of schools and secondary departments receiving students;
- 4.3.4 evaluate the quality and effectiveness of placements and share good practice in student teacher placements;
- 4.3.5 encourage schools to deploy a range of staff, including principal teachers and chartered teachers as mentors and regents; and
- 4.3.6 encourage and support the flexible deployment and secondment of teaching staff to work with TEIs as tutors and teacher fellows.

### 4.4 Schools should:

- 4.4.1 implement the education authority policy on student teacher placements;
- 4.4.2 offer student placements on a regular basis across all terms and across all secondary departments;

# 4

## THE WAY FORWARD

4.4.3 ensure that all students receive a warm welcome and are treated professionally by all school staff, and where possible assist student teachers with travel arrangements;

4.4.4 value all students equally, irrespective of their course of study, and be prepared to accept students in their first year of a BEd course as readily as those in their final year;

4.4.5 exploit opportunities to use the up-to-date knowledge and experiences of students on placement to enhance school staff development;

4.4.6 apply the guidance provided by the TEIs and improve their understanding of how to apply the SITE benchmark statements;

4.4.7 ensure that key staff involved with student teachers attend pre-placement meetings;

4.4.8 provide opportunities for students on placement in the school to discuss common issues;

4.4.9 give accurate feedback to students and TEIs on students' performance, especially when there are weaknesses; and

4.4.10 ask students to evaluate their placement and respond to these evaluations to improve future placements.

### **4.5 SEED should:**

4.5.1 facilitate planning by providing earlier notice to SHEFC and TEIs of the number of students required in following years;

4.5.2 consider further whether there is a case for additional funding for education authorities to support the management and support of student teacher placements; and

4.5.3 collect and publish detailed statistics on student placements to help inform future policy.

### **4.6 HMIE should:**

4.6.1 monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each stakeholder's response to this report; and

4.6.2 report the outcomes of the above monitoring and evaluation exercise to Scottish Ministers within one year of publication.

# Appendices

## APPENDIX A KEY FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN STUDENT TEACHER PLACEMENTS

### Key features of effective practice in student teacher placements

The fieldwork for this task revealed a variation in the quality of student teacher placements. Nevertheless there was good practice in many of the schools visited and there was widespread agreement among the principal stakeholders - students, teachers, headteachers, and education authority and university staffs - on what constituted good practice. The essential elements were:

- **Students are welcomed and valued by schools**  
In the best cases students are warmly welcomed by reception and all staff. They are valued by the headteacher, senior managers and teachers. Staff are supportive and encouraging.
- **Students are treated as professionals in training**  
Students are regarded as professionals and as such share the staff room and participate in school in-service training events. They also learn to work with a number of teachers and other staff in the school.
- **Students are placed with good role models**  
Working with a competent and reflective teacher is especially important in primary schools as students tend to spend most of their time with one class.
- **The student regent devises a broad induction programme.**  
Very effective induction programmes are offered in some primary and secondary schools. In the best practice in secondary schools, students visit associated primary schools, learn about the role of pupil support staff and other professionals and find out about learning and teaching approaches in a range of departments.
- **In secondary schools, students are given a good range of classes.**  
In best practice, students experience a variety of stages with a number of teachers and classes.

This enables them to sample different teaching and learning approaches and challenges them to develop a range of classroom skills.

- **Students work within a well-defined framework.**  
In the best placements, schools strike the right balance between providing a structured learning environment for students where there is a well-defined scheme of work and clear homework and discipline policies, and offering scope for them to introduce their own ideas into the context established by the class teacher.
- **Students are involved with wider aspects of school life.**  
Students should be introduced to the broader aspects of working as a teacher, for example, participation in relevant parents' evenings and extra-curricular activities.
- **Students are given a supportive learning environment.**  
Placements provide an important learning experience for students and it is important that they can experiment and learn from their mistakes in a supportive environment.
- **Students are given access to the school's resources**  
Frequently students bring innovative approaches and new ideas to schools. In the best placements, teachers encourage this creativity by providing access to the school's resources.
- **Students are given responsibility to teach the class on their own.**  
In the best practice, students and the teachers they are working with judge the optimum point at which the student teaches the class. Thereafter the student and class teacher work effectively together so that the confidence and skill of the student are progressively developed.

## APPENDIX A

- **Teachers give good feedback to students.**  
Teachers play an important role in mentoring, coaching and assessing students in the classroom. In the best practice they provide precise feedback to students on their classroom performance as well as on their planning, preparation, and marking.
- **Teachers know the expectations of TEs.**  
In the best placements, headteachers and staff have kept abreast of developments in teacher education and they are familiar with the key principles of the Standard for Initial Teacher Education. They know the expectations of TEs, provide the best learning environment for students and use the detailed assessment schemes in the light of their background knowledge of the SITE benchmarks.
- **Schools provide opportunities for students to meet and learn with other students.**  
Students find it helpful and supportive to have at least one other student in the school at the same time. In the best practice, secondary schools have timetabled seminars for students to meet and learn together about a wide range of issues. These seminars are successful when senior managers and other staff contribute their expertise and perspective to these meetings.
- **TEs arrange placements in a broad range of schools.**  
Students who have had placements in a varied range of schools, with differing sizes and catchment areas are in a better position to teach in their first post as a probationer teacher than those who have had a limited range of placements.

## APPENDIX B SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF STUDENT PLACEMENTS

### Supply and demand of student placements

There are variations in the pattern, duration and timing of placements throughout each academic year.

- TEs define a placement as a block of one week or more in the same school. The duration of placements for students undertaking BEd, BSc or BA programmes will vary across the four years of study whereas students undertaking the one-year PGDE programme will normally experience three core school experience placements of a similar duration. In the BEd programme the number of placements is five or six depending on course structure, the number of schools involved and the stages to which students are assigned.
- In some situations, linked periods in a school count as one placement. This includes preparatory visits by students to familiarise themselves with the school and to meet with

teaching staff. However, in other situations, a student may carry out a number of placements at different stages in the same school. In each case, the individual aspects of the placement still need to be planned, co-ordinated and managed since it will involve the input of a range of teachers within primary schools or secondary departments who will be responsible for supporting students.

School experience placements must be found on an annual basis to ensure that all students satisfy the requirements of their course of study. Current figures highlight the extent of the difficulties facing TEs and schools given the current number of student teachers on courses and the corresponding number of placements to be organised. The following tables illustrate the number of students in each TEI and the overall number of placements of three weeks or more.

Primary BEd and PGDE Placements 2004 - 2005		
University	Total number of students	Overall number of school experience placements <sup>5</sup> of three weeks duration or more
Edinburgh	807	1391
Glasgow	754	1497
Paisley	447	924
Aberdeen	222	573
Stirling	0	0
Strathclyde	946	1761
Dundee	399	1044
<b>Total</b>	<b>3575</b>	<b>7190</b>

<sup>5</sup> A student may undertake more than one placement in the same school.

## APPENDIX B

Secondary BEd, BSc, BA and PGDE Placements 2004 - 2005		
University	Total number of students	Overall number of school experience placements <sup>5</sup> of three weeks duration or more
Edinburgh	677	1301
Glasgow	513	983
Paisley	81	243
Aberdeen	224	672
Stirling	320	297
Strathclyde	607	1870
Dundee	31	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>2453</b>	<b>5459</b>

The challenge of providing sufficient placements is highlighted in the following table which demonstrates that the total number of school experience placements of three weeks or more significantly exceeds the number of primary and secondary schools across Scotland.

	Number of education authority schools	Number of independent schools	Total number of schools by sector	Total number of students undertaking courses	Overall number of school experience placements to be planned and agreed
<b>Primary</b>	2217	63	<b>2280</b>	3575	<b>7190</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	386	55	<b>441</b>	2453	<b>5459</b>

## APPENDIX B

The situation in both the primary and secondary sectors is acute. In each sector, the total number of students and the overall number of placements is far in excess of the number of schools.

Overall, on average approximately three primary placements are required for each primary school and approximately 12 secondary placements are required for each secondary school.

To compound matters, the number of schools available for placements is less than the total number of primary and secondary schools since:

- five TEIs are located in the central belt of Scotland and they place the majority of their students within the central belt;
- many schools do not currently offer placement opportunities for students;
- a significant number of schools in remote areas are not accessible to students because of their geographical location or they are not served by bus, train or ferry links;
- travel time to and from school placements must be of a reasonable duration; and
- a number of FE colleges organise placements for students on HNC and HND courses on Childcare Studies with primary schools.

## APPENDIX C THE VIEWS OF TEIs

In carrying out this task interviews were held with a wide range of university staff from each of the seven TEIs. The following summarises the concerns they expressed on student teacher placements.

- The most pressing challenge was the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient number of suitable student teacher placements in both the primary and secondary sectors. This was especially difficult for secondary English and mathematics students, where there had been a large increase in the numbers of students. There were also difficulties in obtaining a suitable number of pre-school education placements.
- TEIs found it difficult to recruit sufficient high quality tutors to meet the increasing number of students on courses of initial teacher education. Some TEIs had attempted to address this issue through the appointment of part-time tutors although it was recognised that this created additional difficulties in maintaining consistency and quality amongst tutors.
- In the light of the increased recruitment targets for initial teacher education courses, TEIs found it difficult to attract a sufficient number of high quality applicants, especially for some secondary subjects and teaching in Gaelic.
- Some schools did not give a high priority to supporting students on placement compared with supporting probationer teachers.
- A number of schools and departments did not recognise the value to be gained by both existing staff and pupils in supporting a student on placement, not least in terms of new ideas and increased awareness of up-to-date developments in learning and teaching.
- Some schools were often reluctant to alert TEIs to those students experiencing difficulties on their placement or to 'fail' a student.

## APPENDIX D THE VIEWS OF STUDENTS

Students were interviewed in schools and at a sample of TELs. The following summarises the concerns they expressed on student placements.

- The time and cost of travel to placement schools were a major concern for students. Most students recognised that TELs attempted to minimise student travel to reduce costs and time spent travelling. Most welcomed this, not least from the financial point of view but also as it allowed them more time to prepare their lessons for the following day and to deal with family and other commitments. HMI noted variations in arrangements across TELs for supporting students having to travel lengthy distances for their placements. In addition, students expressed concern about the difficulties in making arrangements to travel to and from placements in remote schools. However, these concerns were often allayed when students took up their placement and shared their journey with staff.
- The overall lack of awareness receiving schools had about the background of the students being placed with them.
- Some headteachers and principal teachers used the student teacher placement inappropriately and unprofessionally as a means of “supporting” a weak member of staff, as a cover teacher for an absent member of staff or to cover “McCrone time”.
- A number of class teachers and principal teachers had a limited understanding of what was expected of them during the placement of a student in their school or department.
- In some schools there were limited opportunities for students on placement in the same school to come together and share experiences and discuss issues. A number of students thought that technology could be used to establish an online forum for them on placement to allow them to “chat” about common issues and problems.
- There was considerable variation in the extent to which teachers made use of the SITE benchmark statements in evaluating student progress and performance. Students noted that more recently qualified teachers and chartered teachers generally made greater use of these benchmark statements.
- Some teaching staff were reluctant to engage in discussion with students about teaching methodology, and to see the placement as a professional development opportunity and as a means of updating the experience and practice of existing, sometimes long-serving, teaching staff.
- The quality of support and standards of assessment provided by university tutors varied considerably.

## APPENDIX E THE VIEWS OF SCHOOLS

When undertaking fieldwork for this task headteachers, depute headteachers, principal teachers and class teachers were interviewed in 16 primary schools and 18 secondary schools from a wide range of rural and urban education authorities. The following summarises the concerns they expressed on student teacher placements.

- Many headteachers thought that TEs in some areas appeared to be competing with each other in securing student teacher placements. Schools felt this arose as a result of TEs having larger and more diverse student populations. For example, Glasgow University was placing an increasing proportion of its students into non-denominational schools and a greater proportion of its students were non-Catholics. Paisley University, which traditionally placed the majority of its students in Ayrshire, was placing its increased number of students over a broader geographical area and both Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities were placing more students in Ayrshire. However, it was also noted by schools that TEs wished to maintain traditional links with particular schools and education authorities when placing students. They felt that TEs generally did not welcome other TEs securing student teacher placements within their 'traditional' areas of operation.
- Staff pointed out the dangers of increasing demands on schools in relation to student teacher placements without ensuring that sufficient resources were in place to support their placement. School staff felt generally that demands on mentors in schools to support students and probationer teachers had increased in recent years and that such demands needed to be set at manageable and sustainable levels. In the secondary sector in particular, headteachers and principal teachers made a case for increased finance to support the mentoring of students on placement.
- Some staff thought that the assessment schemes and written reports requested by TEs on student progress and performance were increasingly onerous and time-consuming.
- Headteachers and other staff indicated that there were significant inconsistencies in feedback on progress and performance given to some students between teachers in the school and university tutors.
- The recent change by some TEs from the grading of student performance on a scale with several levels to one of pass/fail was not fully understood. This, it was felt, led to a disincentive for students to have high expectations and perform at the highest level possible in class.

## APPENDIX F THE VIEWS OF EAs

All 32 education authorities completed a questionnaire. These were followed up with detailed discussions with officials from 13 of them. The following summarises the concerns they expressed on student teacher placements.

- A number of education authority officials thought that TEIs were reluctant to use schools in remote areas for student teacher placements. This led to some schools that were willing to take students not having the opportunity to do so. Education authorities recognised the need for additional resources to adequately facilitate student teacher placements in remoter areas.
- Many education authority officials thought that there was a lack of synergy between student teacher placement and the probationer teacher scheme. Overall, it was felt that many lessons learned from the success of the probationer teacher scheme could be applied usefully to supporting student teachers on placement, particularly in how the scheme might be supported financially. Education authorities perceived the success of the probationer teacher scheme to be directly related to its significant resourcing, and considered that the lack of additional resources for student placements was a key reason why some schools now looked negatively on supporting student teacher placements.
- The more complex and demanding context in which schools work, with increased expectations of pupil attainment, implementation of inclusion policies and support for weaker pupils, was seen by some education authority staff as being an impediment by some school staff in taking student teacher placements.
- A number of education authority officials in the west of Scotland thought that there were significant denominational and non-denominational considerations which complicated student teacher placement.
- Primary schools were under pressure to accommodate placements for nursery nurses and social workers in training.
- The dearth of schemes to facilitate the training of appropriately qualified classroom assistants as teachers was raised by a number of education authority officials.

---

## SOURCES OF SUPPORT

A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: Agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/tp21a-00.asp>

General Teaching Council for Scotland, [www.gtcs.org.uk](http://www.gtcs.org.uk)

Guidelines for Courses of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland, Scottish Office, 1998 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-w3/git-00.htm>

HM Inspectorate of Education in Scotland, [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)

Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Courses of Teacher Education in Scotland, SEED, 2002, [www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/erct-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/erct-00.asp)

Review of Initial Teacher Education Stage 2: Report of the Review Group, Scottish Executive, 2005 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/920/0012210.pdf>

Scottish Executive, [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

Standard for Initial Teacher Education, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/itescot.pdf>

Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998, Part I, Chapter III, Section 21

Teaching in Scotland, [www.teachinginScotland.com](http://www.teachinginScotland.com)

The Scottish Council of Independent Schools, [www.scis.org.uk](http://www.scis.org.uk)

[www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)

Astron B43351 10/05

ISBN 0-7053-1075-2



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

