** EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM:**

**CREATING A WORLD CLASS TEACHING SYSTEM**

 **‘University Schools’: A collaborative approach to school development through the integration of ITE and CPD.**

Amanda Smith, Head of STEM Education Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University

*February 2018*

'University Schools' is a pilot Initial Teacher Education (ITE) project at Manchester Metropolitan University.This briefing paper outlines the University Schools model and how it is being extended into Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and wider school development work. The paper goes on to identify the key points that have emerged from evaluations and observations to date. The work is taking place in a range of secondary science departments located in schools facing challenging circumstances, at the invitation of the schools and in close collaboration with their senior teams.

The policy driven shift to 'school partnership' models of ITE in the 1990s produced tensions and difficulties around the practice of ITE and more broadly around the CPD of teachers and, ultimately, the role of research and theory within education and training.  Since, we have seen the growth in the number of School-Centred Initial Teacher Training networks (SCITTs) and the introduction of Teaching Schools and of School Direct, continuing the shift toward the school setting. Within this framework HEIs continue to be high volume providers of ITE. These shifts have created new connections between schools and higher education with fresh approaches to practice and the development of schooling being sought. The University Schools model is an example of that reconceptualisation in action.

 The 'University Schools' pilot is based on a Finnish ITE model and was initially launched within secondary mathematics education where work has taken place over the last 6 years within 10 schools.  The pilot has been evaluated from the perspective of the student teacher, the teacher and the university tutor.  The findings and conclusions with respect to ITE are available in Cockerham and Timlin (2014).  The main themes reported on are those of student teacher placement, the integration of theory and practice and the quality of training. There has been sector and public interest with articles appearing in the Independent newspaper and the Times Educational Supplement. Over the last two years STEM Education Manchester at the University has extended the University Schools approach into secondary science ITE and has further explored how the collaboration might extend from ITE into CPD for serving teachers and on into wider school development and improvement themes. This work is currently underway in four secondary schools facing challenging circumstances, with some early indications it is worthy of further investigation.

The mainstream model of ITE in partnership with schools involves small numbers of students being placed in schools for practice blocks. Funding to support the trainees is transferred from the University to the school to enable the school to mentor and assess elements of the student’s progress. The role of the university tutor becomes one focused on mentor training and quality assurance, with them making short visits to many different school contexts to carry out these functions.

In contrast, the University Schools model places larger numbers of students in each school with the numbers concentrated in those subject departments the school wishes to focus on developing.  A relatively modest rebalancing of the transferred resource enables university tutors to spend much larger blocks of time working with the students, mentors and teachers within the school in a collaborative and focused way. This longer-term collaborative working enables the university tutor to become familiar with the individual school context and its development needs and to focus the training and development of students and teachers on those needs. It also enables the specific development needs of teachers and teams to be identified and met in ways that directly feed into the school development and improvement plan and on into the pupil experience itself. The promise of relatively rapid impact on pupil experience, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and learning and subject knowledge, may be of particular interest to schools and departments facing particular challenges. It enables the senior leadership of schools to draw on the resource and energy of the ITE process and partnerships in a tailored way to help drive towards improvement in their school.

The key outcomes of evaluations and observations that have taken place to date in the ITE and extended models are as follows:

**ITE**

* Schools commission the University Schools model, producing a more consistently positive learning climate for ITE within the school.
* The shortage of suitable training placements in subjects like mathematics and science is a major issue for ITE. The model generates more placements in a single school and the quality of those placements can be better assured.
* The mentor and university tutor develop distinct but overlapping roles with better opportunities to integrate theory into practice through collaborative planning and demonstration lessons.
* The student teachers have more opportunity to collaboratively evaluate, reflect on progress and set progress targets. The emphasis is on the quality of professional learning and becoming accomplished at improving one’s own practice. It also demonstrates how collaborative working can produce better outcomes for pupils. It breaks the isolation teachers can experience, especially when working in challenging circumstances.
* The increased number of specialist adults in the classroom allows for more innovative approaches to be tried and for more individual support to be offered to pupils.
* During their ITE student teachers can directly contribute to the development needs of the department and school and see the impact of their efforts. An obvious example is support for revision.
* A number of NQTs who experience this model are more confident and interested in working in schools in challenging circumstances.

**CPD and School Development**

* The university tutor spending blocks of time in school enables them to develop a good understanding of the school context, to build trust and to understand the development needs of the department.
* Direct engagement with the school’s senior leadership team develops a relationship to the school vision and ethos, thereby producing a strong collaborative relationship between the school and the University.
* The model enables easier access for teachers to CPD.
* Collaborative development of targeted CPD, engaged with over a sustained period of time produces a more reliable impact on practice and pupil outcomes.
* Collaborative evaluation of impact produces an ongoing dialogue around development needs that influences the learning culture within the department.
* The work lays the foundations for future possibilities with respect to collaborative research and accreditation.
* The model enables departments who might otherwise feel too stretched to take larger numbers of ITE students on placement because of the additional support form HE tutors.
* Schools in challenging circumstances more often find it difficult to appoint and retain high quality science and mathematics teachers. They may be excluded from becoming Teaching Schools closing off another avenue to recruitment. The University Schools model offers an alternative route to ‘growing their own' future teachers.
* The network connections of university tutors have the potential to help the pilot schools source and appoint subject leaders and to broker curriculum support from external partners, such as STEM Ambassador Hubs, the Stimulating Physics Network and other learned bodies. The University Schools model also has the potential to support curriculum development. For example, a project that has proved of great interest to schools facing challenging circumstances seeks to raise aspirations of pupils by developing a positive and engaging culture of science within their schools.

Cockerham, F & Timlin, R 2014, ‘University Schools: A Collaborative Approach to ITT in Secondary Mathematics’, in S Pope (ed.), Proceedings of the 8th British Congress of Mathematics