

*This paper considers three common questions, with some suggested answers.*

## **What should be my minimum expectations at the end of the first term?**

It is not possible to provide a template that will fit all trainee teachers because they are all different. However, we offer here some indication of what you should, as a minimum, expect a trainee teacher to be achieving by the end of the first term. If they are falling well short in several of these areas, there is a problem that you need to tackle together. The comments are structured in relation to the eight areas of the Teachers' Standards viz:

### **S1 Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils**

Trainee teachers should recognise the importance of high expectations for geography learning and always strive to achieve this in their plans and relationships with pupils. They should show some rapport with pupils and demonstrate that they can interest and engage them in geographical learning, although success may be greater in some lessons than others. They should show enthusiasm for teaching and be motivated by lessons that go well.

### **S2 Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils**

They should understand the importance of careful lesson planning to promote geographical learning and recognise their responsibility for pupils' progress. They are beginning to show understanding of how pupils learn geography and beginning to use their prior knowledge of pupils' achievements to influence their teaching.

### **S3 Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge**

Trainee teachers should demonstrate a generally sound geographical knowledge and be taking steps to eradicate any gaps. They willingly read about developments in teaching geography in journals to broaden their horizons. They are alert to their role in promoting literacy and the accurate use of geographical vocabulary. They seek ways to make topics motivating for pupils and look for any misunderstandings. They prepare the geographical content for their lessons thoroughly and can usually identify the appropriate geographical concepts and vocabulary for the pupils they are teaching and select suitable prompts for questions.

### **S4 Plan and teach well-structured lessons**

They are growing in confidence in teaching lessons and judging timing and pace. They generally teach acceptable lessons and some have good features. They are beginning to use their voice effectively with the right tone in different contexts. They are able to plan and structure lessons. They can identify learning objectives and are using varied activities to achieve them. They strive to promote geographical curiosity and motivate pupils, particularly through interesting starts to lessons. They recognise the importance of plenaries, discussions, and homework to consolidate and further learning. They are adapting available geography resources and are starting to develop their own. They are beginning to look beyond individual lessons and think about medium term planning.

### **S5 Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils**

They recognise the different needs of pupils and are beginning to work on ways to tailor their lessons to these needs

### **S6 Make accurate and productive use of assessment**

They mark work regularly, give feedback and keep records. They are beginning to explore assessment strategies and are exploring how to use questions effectively to find out what pupils know, understand and can do geographically, so that they can focus their teaching.

### **S7 Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment**

They are beginning to develop competent classroom skills. They carefully consider how to manage the classroom when they plan lessons, and recognise the importance of developing classroom rules and routines. They pay attention to planning transitions and the organisation of groups. They are beginning to learn how to use praise and sanctions to good effect. They observe experienced teachers closely to identify what works well in different classroom situations. They recognise that pupils will at times push the behavior boundaries, and usually respond reasonably, listening to and acting on advice from experienced teachers.

### **S8 Fulfill wider professional responsibilities**

They act professionally and are developing working relationships with geography colleagues and teaching assistants. They get involved in the wider life of the school and any geographical extra-curricular activities. They respond well to advice, act on it and reflect on what is and is not working for them and why. They think about their teaching, try to improve and respond positively to the targets they are set. They evaluate lessons regularly and review pupils' progress in their lessons. They are beginning to reflect on the impact they have had on pupils.

## **What should be the expectations for trainee teachers' lesson planning?**

Trainee teachers find lesson planning to be time consuming and demanding, but need to understand the importance of good planning if they are to teach well-structured lessons.

### **Key questions for a trainee teacher to ask when planning a geography lesson:**

- Where is the content of this lesson coming from and going to? (*prior and future geography learning*)
- What do I want the pupils to learn in this lesson? (*geography learning outcomes*)
- How will I get there? (*teaching strategies and geography learning experiences*)
- How will I know what geographical learning has been achieved (*evaluation method*)

➤ Refer to [Planning geography lessons](#) and [Implementation of lesson plans](#) to help you to guide trainee teachers in their lesson planning and to review their lesson plans.

### **When they first start planning lessons, trainee teachers often find it difficult to:**

- clearly identify the purpose of the lesson
- judge the amount of content to include
- pitch the content appropriately.

Once they get the basics in place, they often find the aspects listed below to be the most challenging in relation to lesson planning.

- Writing precise learning objectives/outcomes that give lessons clear direction

- Identifying an appropriate lesson purpose or key question for a topic in which they have insufficient subject knowledge
- Linking the learning objectives, activities and outcomes to give lessons coherence
- Showing where a lesson is leading and how it is connected with prior learning
- Catering for the range of needs in a class
- Planning for geographical enquiries
- Stating how they will assess learning and how they will know when learning has been achieved.

➤ Refer to [Reviewing lesson plans](#).

## **Managing geography classrooms: A common concern for a trainee teacher?**

Classroom control and behaviour management are concerns for every trainee teacher. In the early part of a teacher's career it can be particularly disheartening if pupils' behaviour presents significant challenges. Indeed, national surveys of newly qualified teachers show that the management of pupil behaviour is a very common worry. There are, of course, no 'easy answers' to solve the behaviour problems that may be faced in every classroom, as every experienced teacher knows; but this does not stop trainee teachers worrying when they face difficulties!

Classroom control and behaviour management are usually part of the generic aspects of initial training for all trainee teachers. This will probably be led by the ITE coordinator in a school. They will introduce the trainee teachers to the behaviour policy and common routines in the school and advise them on how to manage difficult behaviour. Your role, as a geography educator, is to help your trainee teacher if they face problems in the geography classroom.

### **Helping trainee teachers with class management**

Make it clear to trainee teachers that the solution for many behaviour problems is to teach good, interesting geography lessons. Few, if any, classroom management issues arise when pupils are actively engaged in learning geography. Therefore trainee teachers need to focus on planning lessons well, sharing what will be taught in the lesson with the pupils, using different strategies to actively engage pupils in the lesson and using stimulating resources. So the first solution for trainee teachers if they meet behaviour problems is to ensure they plan good lessons.

Secondly, trainee teachers must approach teaching positively and have high expectations of the pupils. When a teacher is well organised and makes their expectations clear, applies rules fairly and respects pupils, they are far more likely to be able to establish their authority as a teacher in the classroom and manage learning in a purposeful and controlled way.

Provide trainee teachers with a good role model. They should observe the mentor's lessons and those of other teachers and ask these questions:

- How do you organise a classroom?
- How do you manage a whole lesson involving a range of activities?
- How do you manage different pupil behaviours?

Encourage trainee teachers to have a confident appearance; they can be very nervous but must not show it! Sometimes trainee teachers find it difficult to balance the need to be firm with the need to make good relationships with pupils and err on the side of being too strict or too friendly. Your role is to help them to find the right balance and deal with any misbehaviour promptly and firmly. Video can be useful to help trainee teachers to observe their own performance. Most learn a good deal from this.

## **Using planning and evaluation**

It is a crucial skill for trainee teachers to think carefully as they plan lessons about how they will manage and organize the classroom. Reinforce this when you discuss their lesson plans by asking questions such as; how are you going to hand out resources? What do you need to consider in the transition to working in groups? Poorly organized lessons are a hotbed for behaviour problems.

Trainee teachers should be encouraged to analyse their lessons and reflect on the causes of any classroom misbehaviour, considering in particular the lesson content and whether it interested and engaged the pupils and how well organized and structured the lesson was. Key questions to pose themselves are Did I:

- engage all the pupils with activities that fired their curiosity and provided challenge?
- manage the learning activities effectively so that they were clear about what they were meant to be doing and what they were expected to achieve?
- create a positive classroom climate in which enjoyable learning could take place?

## **Common targets for trainee teachers as they develop their classroom management strategies are:**

- think carefully about calming strategies
- consider how to maintain pace throughout the lesson
- think carefully about the nature of activities
- insist on silence when you are talking
- insist on silence during Q & A
- use pupil names
- aim for higher impact at the beginning of the lesson
- focus more on pupil learning
- scan the room when talking to individuals
- provide more structure for pupil activities
- minimise low level disruption
- monitor pupil work more closely
- wait for silence before talking to the group
- speed up transitions between activities
- think more carefully about pupil movement.

➤ See [Teachers' standards 7](#) to find out more about assessing the Teachers' Standards in this area.

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