

SPOTLIGHT ON: Early Career Teachers



In our new feature, we catch up with our Early Career Teachers (ECTs) as they progress through the early stages of their career with us!

First up, we catch up with Paula Ward, Classroom Teacher from Outwood Primary Academy Littleworth Grange!

What first made you want to become a teacher?

I have worked as a Teaching Assistant for around 8 years, and I really enjoyed it. I love making a difference to children's lives, and I knew I wanted to further my career in this sector.

How are you finding teaching so far?

I am loving learning and growing in my practice. It is hard work, but the rewards of making that difference and helping children to learn and grow are definitely worth it.

How has your teacher training set you up for your first year as a teacher?

My training was very thorough and it has helped me to be prepared in many ways. For example, considering children's cognitive load and chunking lesson content, adapting teaching to suit all learners, as well as being aware of ACEs that children may have experienced - or be experiencing now, which could impact their learning.

Being able to observe colleagues and see experience in action was fundamental to training, and still is now; these observations allow me to gain so much useful advice to take forward and consider as I develop my own practice.

What are your learnings so far?

Although the fundamentals of teaching are the same, every teacher has their own individual style and approaches, and I am developing my own. I am learning every day, and I am not yet an expert. Sometimes, I want to run before I can walk and want to know how to do everything like an expert. I am learning to enjoy the day to day of being in the classroom, and to consciously take note of the small victories that each day brings.

"You are on a wonderful journey of learning and growing yourself as you inspire children to do the same."

Could you share any tips/advice for other ECTs or trainee teachers?

You are not an expert - yet. You are on a wonderful journey of learning and growing yourself as you inspire children to do the same. Never underestimate how the small things can make such a difference to children's lives. Don't beat yourself up too much for not doing everything right the first time; you are human. Most of all, enjoy every minute.

How have you felt supported so far by the Outwood Family?

The level of support from the Outwood Family is outstanding. From day one, I have been made to feel like one of the family. Staff training and support is over and above, and I feel that the values and expectations Outwood strives to achieve, align with my own. I am confident in asking questions of anyone within the Trust and I know I will receive a supportive response.