

SPOTLIGHT ON: Early Career Teachers



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

This time, we catch up with Lucy Ridgeway, Teacher of Science at Outwood Academy City!

What first made you want to become a teacher?

I always wanted to help other people and see them thrive. I also have a massive love for all things science and how the world works, so teaching seemed like a fantastic option to combine the two and educate the next generation.

“I love seeing students learn something new or grasp a new concept.”

How are you finding teaching so far?

The honest answer is that it is challenging at times, particularly with behaviour and that can be extremely draining. However, I love the lessons I am teaching - I love seeing students learn something new or grasp a new concept. Then seeing them remember that new information and do well on a test is incredible because I remind myself that I was part of enabling that to happen and that is one of the reasons I am doing this. My favourite part so far has definitely been the relationships I've built, not only with students but also with the staff in my department and the school.

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

I've started my career in the school where I did my second placement during my ITT year (Outwood Academy City), so having that continuity has been invaluable to ensure my confidence and progress during the first part of my ECT year. Having time to really plan, think and reflect about your teaching practice as a trainee helped me to develop a strong base, which has been crucial because the pace as an ECT is much faster than as a trainee. Whilst there is still some time for CPD and reflective practice, knowing how to quickly reflect on a lesson or interaction to make changes is incredibly important.

What are your learnings so far?

Time management is key - not only having a plan for your lesson but outside of that. Plan time for yourself and make a routine. I have also learnt to use people around me to help, whether that is to get a lesson plan from them or to talk to them after a bad day, they have been incredibly supportive. Finally, I've learnt that not every day or every lesson will be perfect and that's okay.

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

My top tips would be:

- Do not work on a Friday once you have left school and one day of the weekend.
- Make a set time of the week for ECT trainee or reading and do one section each week.
- Plan to mark one set of books each week at and assign a certain time for that marking session.
- Avoid taking books home, and ensure work that you want to mark is completed on worksheets that are easier for you to take home.

“I have felt nothing but support from the Outwood Family”

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

I have felt incredibly supported, since I set foot in the OIE in September last year I have felt nothing but support from the Outwood Family, whether that be helping me secure a job or listening when I had concerns.