

Taking care

A teacher can now serve their NQT induction in certain British schools overseas. Ed Goodwin explains why this represents a beneficial opportunity for both parties and outlines the details of this relatively new initiative

Offering NQT induction is extremely valuable to both teachers and schools. The obvious beneficiaries are recently qualified teachers who hanker to work outside the UK, but these are not the only people welcoming the initiative. Around the world, there are many experienced teachers who did not undergo an induction period before going overseas: some of these are now seizing this new opportunity.

For some schools, attracting NQTs is part of a strategy to ensure that a range of staff ages and experience is maintained. For others, it simply increases the size of the market from which to recruit good staff. In some, however, the policy remains to recruit only experienced staff.

BSOs – what are they?

Before delving further into NQT induction, we need to define the term “British school overseas”. Unfortunately,

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the term is used differently across British Government agencies. The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS), in its international education strategy document, uses the term to cover virtually all schools overseas that have some component of British education – even where this is minor. The DfE, on the other hand, uses the term as originally envisaged. It is schools that meet the DfE definition that they are entitled to certain benefits: including the right to offer NQTs the opportunity to serve their induction overseas.

How should BSOs be described?

BSOs are schools that have been successfully inspected under the DfE-endorsed system, quality assured by Ofsted, and developed specifically for the inspection of British-style schools outside the UK.

The inspection framework was based on the ISI system, used to inspect most UK-based independent schools, but modified to meet the context of schools

within different educational jurisdictions. Judgements under ISI and BSO inspections are comparable, and so BSO schools rated, for example, as “outstanding” are said to be at a comparable standard to UK independent schools with the same grading.

Who inspects BSOs?

Initially, seven inspectorates were authorised to carry out BSO inspections. These are: Cambridge Education; CfBT Education Trust; G2G Education; ISI; Penta International, School Inspection Service and Tribal Inspections Service. A later addition is the Knowledge and Human Development Authority of the government of Dubai.

What benefits do BSOs gain?

Schools successfully inspected under the BSO regulations are accorded benefits which, it is anticipated, will increase over time. Currently, BSO schools:

- are listed on the DfE website with their inspection reports (the site is under reconstruction and the list is temporarily not visible except in the archived version);
- can (if BSO standards were met in the inspection) hire and induct UK NQTs;
- can (if inspection standards have been met) assist graduate teachers who do not have a teaching qualification to gain QTS through the Assessment Only route; and
- may attend an annual BSO conference.

The ability to offer induction to NQTs

The benefit with most current impact is probably the ability of BSOs to offer induction: to do this, a school must also be: “A member of an organisation which the DfE has determined may represent such schools” (2.1. Statutory Guidance on induction for newly qualified teachers (England) – December 2013).

Several organisations representing British schools primarily outside UK borders are included within this definition. These are:

- British Schools in the Middle East (BSME);
- Council of British International Schools (COBIS);
- Federation of British International Schools in Asia (FOBISIA); and
- National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS).

The Latin American Heads Conference (LAHC) is currently applying to join this group.

The appropriate body

A further requirement to offer induction is that the BSO must work with an "appropriate body". The Statutory Guidance sums up the role succinctly: "An appropriate body has the main quality assurance role within the induction process."

Schools may choose between several bodies: a local authority; a teaching school (subject to conditions) and the Independent Schools Teacher Induction Panel (ISTIP: for members primarily of ISC schools). All three routes are being followed around the world.

Where schools have a choice of which body to use, they should shop around; the cost per NQT varies. More importantly, schools should ensure they are happy with the support and service provided.

How does a school get ready?

Details of the process are best discussed (having read the Statutory Guidance), with the appropriate body: although, in planning your school timetable, be aware that an NQT should have, as a maximum, a teaching load of 90 per cent of that of a regular teacher.

One important non-mandatory action worth considering is the training of NQT mentors. As stated in the Statutory Guidance (2.35): "The headteacher/principal must identify a person to act as the NQT's induction tutor, to provide day-to-day monitoring and support, and co-ordination of assessment. The induction tutor must hold

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QTS and have the necessary skills and knowledge to work successfully in this role and should be able to provide effective coaching and mentoring. The induction tutor will need to be able to make rigorous and fair judgements about the NQT's progress in relation to the relevant standards."

Training on the go

The 80 or so BSME schools have now trained around 50 mentors and a further 22 were added in May 2014. These have been trained in the Middle East by The Learning Trust.

In the case of my own school, St Christopher's in Bahrain, we believe that NQTs deserve the best induction possible – and for us, this includes ensuring that mentors have been trained by a UK-based body.

How has it gone so far?

The first candidates completed their induction in Autumn 2012. These include Heidi Mohamed, from The English Academy, Kuwait and Kyoko Kaneta from the British School in Tokyo.

In terms of numbers, the situation is rapidly changing, as recruitment for September 2014 continues. In BSME schools, it is estimated that around 40 NQTs will start their induction in September 2014, compared with around 60 current and previous candidates who will have

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completed their induction by July 2014. The global total will be significantly in excess of this.

The results of a survey of the 218 schools within BSME, FOBISIA, LAHC and NABSS give an estimate of 13,000 or so British teachers employed in these schools. Around 1,100 are estimated to be NQTs (the great majority not in BSOs and therefore not currently undergoing induction overseas). The potential annual demand in these schools is estimated as 390 per year. Extrapolation of schools not within these organisations shows that the potential numbers for overseas NQT induction are large – especially as more schools become BSOs.

The wider significance of offering induction should be seen in the context of UK Government support given in other ways to BSOs. While this has increased over recent years, following lobbying, overseas schools organisations will continue to work towards bringing greater benefits and recognition for our schools.

Useful links

www.gov.uk/government/publications/induction-for-newly-qualified-teachers-nqts;
www.gov.uk/british-schools-overseas-inspection-scheme;
and
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140107122329/http://education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/bsob0077259/prebsoreports->

Ed Goodwin OBE is chairman of BSME and is principal of St Christopher's School, Bahrain. Ed can be contacted at principal.school@st-chris.net.

