

# Induction and Mentoring Pilot Programme: Secondary

*Partnerships for Sustainable Learning and Growth*

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## Executive summary

### Background and methodology

A research project has run alongside the work that facilitators have undertaken in the six secondary schools involved in the secondary induction and mentoring pilot programme. The aim of this research was to collect evidence about the way the pilot programme was shaped by the context and needs of each school, the success of the pilot, any barriers to effective induction and mentoring, and participants' perceptions of the New Zealand Teachers Council (the Council) *Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand (Draft Guidelines)* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2009) and the *Registered Teacher Criteria* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2010). Data were gathered from four key groups: the facilitators themselves, the mentor teachers, the Specialist Classroom Teachers (SCTs) and Provisionally Registered Teacher (PRT) Coordinators, and the PRTs.

Survey and interview data were collected during 2010. The research findings were supported by information provided in Massey University's milestone reports to the Council. The analysis of these data illustrated the process the six pilot schools had been through to develop effective induction and mentoring plans.

### The findings summarised

The mentoring teams believed the secondary induction and mentoring pilot programme to be effective. They were proud of their achievements over the two-year pilot. However, schools felt that a third year of support from the facilitators would have been useful.

## Mentor development

Through the pilot programme, the mentors increased their mentoring knowledge and skills. Mentors also had access to other opportunities to extend their skill development and participate in conferences. Prior to the pilot, very few mentors had any professional development or training in mentoring. There was a lack of consistency in the delivery of induction and mentoring. There were few guidelines for mentors, for the selection of mentors, or for what an induction and mentoring programme should look like. There was also a shortage of willing and experienced mentors.

## Components of the pilot programme

The research found that in-school visits and the relationship with facilitators was the most important component in developing a successful induction and mentoring programme. The wiki was the least successful component—there were too many technical, skill, or time barriers to its use. It was primarily used as a resource bank by the mentoring teams.

There was difficulty in maintaining relationships with partner schools, except when enabled by facilitators. The partnership between the schools was structured in the first year. The emphasis in the second year was more on individual schools.

## Impact of the pilot programme

The project had implications beyond the mentoring of PRTs. Not only did effective mentoring have a beneficial impact on the whole school, but also the learning from the pilot for those involved extended well beyond mentoring skills to personal learning and learning as a teacher. The pilot had an impact on school culture and encouraged mentors to shape policies and appraisal systems in their schools. Schools used the *Registered Teacher Criteria*, through the Self-Assessment Tool (SAT), to shape the registration (and re-registration) process for all teachers.

## Success factors

The relationship between mentors and PRTs was very important. Trust, communication, and openness to learning were vital for both mentors and PRTs. Emotional mentoring roles were more important to PRTs than appraisal or change roles. Mentoring worked best in a school culture that supported communication and collaboration. How the mentoring relationship was established was also important—whether it was imposed or chosen.

The context of the school was important as induction and mentoring works differently in different schools. The personalised inquiry approach meant the pilot programme was contextualised, with induction and mentoring activities that tended to be responsive to the PRTs' needs.

There was a difference between the beginning teacher's experience of mentoring when the mentor was also their head of department (HOD), and when the mentor was not the HOD. Some schools had the HOD as the curriculum mentor, another mentor as the educative mentor, and the PRT

Coordinator as the administrative mentor. This team approach strengthened the effectiveness of the mentoring process.

Mentoring meetings between mentors and PRTs occurred less frequently in the second year of teaching. Possible reasons for this included a lack of time allotted to mentors for mentoring, the reduced PRT time allowance, and the reduced needs of the PRT. PRTs who were employed as long-term relievers or on fixed-term positions found this stressful. Although overseas trained teachers (OTT) and returning teachers are not eligible for the same time allowances as PRTs, they benefitted from being mentored through the pilot.

The secondary pilot model depended on a partnership between the SCT and PRT Coordinator to lead the induction and mentoring processes in the school. Senior leaders tended to be supportive but not knowledgeable about the changes being made to the induction and mentoring processes in their schools. There was a benefit to the SCT or PRT Coordinator being on the senior management team because they could act as an advocate for induction and mentoring. Sometimes the SCT or PRT Coordinator found there was a conflict between their role and their other school responsibilities.

Each school developed a unique induction and mentoring plan, resources such as PRT and mentor handbooks, and policies, procedures, and routines that supported their plan. Most mentoring teams believed their induction and mentoring programme was sustainable as they had systems and policies in place.

## Barriers

Barriers to effective induction and mentoring encountered by mentoring teams were: lack of time, lack of money, and staff turnover. Sustained membership on the mentoring team was important. In the programme design, first-year mentors were to train second-year mentors. This was not always successful.

## Recommendations

Based on the facilitation team's experiences in the pilot schools and the findings of the research, the following recommendations were made to the Council:

1. That schools review their provision of induction and mentoring, document what happens, and then complete a gap analysis against the *Draft Guidelines*. That the Council provides a template for them to gather baseline data and then complete the gap analysis.
2. That sustainable generic pathways to mentor development be identified and provided, for example, a resource kit, mentor training, professional reading links, and mentor handbook framework.
3. That mentoring training be available for all SCTs and be a component of professional development for all middle leaders, especially new heads of department within the 3a output of the School Support Services contract.

4. That guidelines be developed for a PRT handbook that schools can personalise as part of their unique induction and mentoring plan.
5. That the Council sponsor the development of induction and mentoring in secondary schools as clusters, pairs, or single schools, with a programme informed by the pilot.
6. That the Council reviews its website to highlight the *Registered Teacher Criteria* and SAT and enable teachers to more easily access these resources.
7. That there is continued support for a mentor time allowance for both first-year PRTs and second-year PRTs.