



I wanted to be a primary school teacher from the age of 15, after spending a few weeks completing some work experience in my former primary school. Even as a young person, I could see the extraordinary impact that school staff (and teachers especially) have on the children they work with. They are teachers, confidantes, friends and support networks all rolled into one: it truly is an incredible vocation. I'm not sure that there is any other career that can offer the same professional rewards that teaching can; there is a real buzz to be had when you witness children thoroughly engaged in your teaching, or those 'lightbulb' moments when they eventually make progress within a lesson.

Why School Direct? I was pushed towards this programme due to the fantastic reputation it has amongst schools and head teachers across the North East. The 'one year' route into teaching appealed to me, as I knew that I would spend more time in the classroom and less time in a lecture theatre/seminar. You learn more in class by working with actual children than you ever will elsewhere! I also relished the opportunity to work predominantly in one school (St Aloysius), as it allowed me to fully immerse myself in day to day running of an outstanding school: it also allowed me to develop stronger links with parents and the wider community.

I believe the course sets you apart from other candidates when considering jobs in the future. Many trainees gain employment in the school they train at, which is what happened to me. If this is not possible, then you are always supported in finding another role elsewhere.

For all those considering applying for this course, my biggest piece of advice would be to get as much experience of working with children as possible. This does not necessarily have to be in a school - youth clubs, sports clubs and other youth activities are a good place to start. Whilst the course starts everyone on a level playing field, regardless of any experience you may (or may not) have had with children, gaining some

experience will offer insight into how a child's mind work. This is invaluable when you first start on the course. Finally, be ready to work hard and accept that there will be difficult moments along the way.

Whilst the course is indeed challenging, the support that you receive from within school and your training peers makes it all fully achievable. The programme is training you, in 1 year, what other courses try to achieve in 3; there are times when it will be intense and exhausting, but there is always help at hand to guide you through the tougher times. There is no better feeling that overcoming some of the obstacles you will face this year- they make you a stronger teacher, as they are thoroughly preparing you for what lies ahead.