**Kirsty Wheelhouse, languages trainee**

**Dixons Teacher Training 2019-2020**

After completing my undergraduate degree in English Literature and Hispanic Studies, I decided that I would love to teach Spanish at secondary level and was drawn to Dixons due to their student-centred focus and drive. After leaving higher education, I was full of passion for Hispanic culture and a desire to spread the power of learning languages and exploring foreign cultures, and Dixons, with their rigorous yet supportive in school course appealed to me. Before the course started, I was nervous and I frantically read whatever literature I could find around teaching, especially teaching MFL. This was a useful but time-consuming pursuit, and once I was given a subject knowledge checklist and guidance from the Dixons Teaching Institute team, I was working less but learning more. This efficiency was incredibly important as I had a summer job and wanted to use the summer to relax before the course began. Dixons wants teachers to be resilient and dedicated, but never at the expense of their well-being, and this will be echoed throughout the course.

There were two main highlights of my training year, both student-centred. The first was when a Year 8 student who struggled in Spanish approached me with handwritten notes, declaring that he had put in so much hard work for me. This reminded me of the impact that teachers can have on their students, and how important interpersonal relationships are in creating a safe and secure environment for students. The second was when a student actively listened to what I was saying after seemingly endless restorative conversations. They realised that I cared and believed in them, and there was a distinct growth of mutual respect that led to increased motivation and positivity in my classroom. This taught me that while teaching can be hard, it is worthwhile because our pupils are special and so incredibly loyal.

The main pressure point in the year was the time I walked into a lesson and everything went wrong; the work was pitched too high and the climate for learning was not right. However, the team supported me. The Head of Department told me that he would support me no matter what, my mentor sat with me and we talked through the whole lesson and came up with an action plan, and every other member of staff made it clear that I was not to give up, because, despite the fact that I felt that I was failing, I stayed in that classroom and handled it. By talking to colleagues and acting on feedback, the next lesson, the students were much better. Teaching is the best job in the world because you never cease to be amazed by the goodness and creativity of your students, and once you have earned their trust, it is a uniquely beautiful thing.

When applying for the course, you really need to consider if you are aligned with Dixons Academies Trust’s values and mission. The Trust is relentless in providing a wealth of opportunity for their students to challenge social and educational disadvantage. Dixons want to see that you are as values-driven and as aligned to the mission as they are. When applying, take time to research by making use of the resources available to you on the internet, or even talk through your thoughts or concerns with your Get into Teaching mentor or a member of the Dixons Teacher Training team. Do not be afraid to enquire and ask questions, the team will want to assist you in any way they can.

If you do get the role, organisation is key, I cannot stress this enough. Firstly, get a planner and use it. It will help you keep on top of what can seem like a tsunami of information. Compile evidence as you go along so you do not stress yourself out – Dixons and Leeds Trinity want you to be healthy and happy. Finally, read the handbook.