**Natalie Firth, geography trainee**

**Dixons Teacher Training 2019-2020**

As a recent Physical Geography graduate from Aberystwyth University, I have always known I wanted to teach, and working as a teaching assistant for a year after graduating confirmed this. During the application process, I signed up to the *Get Into Teaching* website and received a one-to-one tutor, who provided me with support throughout by: having phone calls; proofreading my personal statement, and giving me advice for my interviews. Therefore, I would definitely recommend signing up to receive an online tutor.

The constant communication between myself and the Teaching Institute team at Dixons City Academy was great and having a summer induction in July also calmed some nerves. I was able to meet the team of trainees starting alongside me in September as well as ask questions. I also received textbooks which helped with my subject knowledge. As a condition of my offer, I had to complete a subject knowledge enhancement course for Human Geography. This, along with the textbooks, further calmed my nerves as I was able to work on my Human Geography knowledge, which I considered one of my areas of development. I would therefore recommend doing this if you also feel concerned, but it is also important to remember it is not possible to know everything there is to know about the subject.

Although September was a nerve-wracking time, the centre based training prepared me for the training year. Having university lectures every Friday in Stage 1 at Dixons City Academy also increased my confidence and prepared me for the classroom. It is important to remember that this is your training year – it is not possible to become the outstanding teacher you want to be immediately. However, by training with Dixons Academy Trust, I have been given the best possible guidance and support to help me to become the best teacher I can be. I have progressed greatly through having supportive mentors, lecturers, programme leaders, and my fellow trainees.

One top tip I would give is to be organised and ensure you regularly update your Progress Portfolio. Also, always remember why you are doing this; you are making a difference and changing the lives of the young people of Bradford and Leeds for the better.