Manjit More
’08 AMBASSADOR

Studied: History, University of Birmingham
Taught: History, Pensnett High School,
West Midlands
Now: Leadership Development Officer,
Teach First

I understand first-hand the problem of educational disadvantage. The school I went to failed my
friends, my family and my local community and it’s
unacceptable. The students who went to my school
were no less intelligent than those who attended the
other school down the road that was in an affluent
area. When I saw Teach First, I saw that this was my
chance to make a difference and bring about change.
It’s my responsibility and society’s responsibility to do
something about it.

Summer Institute was fantastic preparation for what
was ahead. I felt like I was truly part of a national
movement with those of us about to embark on our first
year of teaching at the centre. Having everyone around
you feel as passionately as you do about something is
a wonderful experience.

The first time I really felt like, ‘right, now I am a
teacher,’ was probably around February or March of my
first year when the GCSE results came back. I saw the
results and thought, ‘you know, you guys have done
alright.’ The pupils had done 95% of the work and I had
maybe contributed to 5% of their achievement, but I
thought, ‘that’s OK, that’s good...I’m onto something!’

Teaching history to year 7, 8 and 9s is hard because
they don’t always see the relevance. History is
something that happened hundreds of years ago and
they struggle to see the link between history and their
wider life. However, if you can make it exciting you’ll
have kids running to your lessons to find out what
happens next in the First World War or the Civil War,
and when they believe they are progressing they want
to become better and better. That’s great to see.

We had a problem in my school with pupils not turning
up to lessons on time. I said to the head teacher that
no pupil will ever be late for my lessons, because

I also inherited the school football team, who hadn’t
won a game in three years. I said, ‘come on lads, we’ve
got to do this, we’ve got to win at least one game and
we’ll be the best team in the school’s history - which
has been going for 88 years!’ We did it. We won our
game and it was fantastic.

The biggest highlight for me was the pupils walking
through the door and giving me their time - the most
valuable commodity they’ve got - that, and getting
100% A*-C in my GCSE class!

After my school closed I knew I wanted to continue
helping thousands of school children. For me, an
obvious route was to help the teachers themselves,
so I applied to be a Leadership Development Officer
for Teach First, and now my job is basically to support
Teach First participants in the classroom. If I help
those participants develop so their pupils can make
progress, and if one of my participants teaches 150
pupils and I’ve got 25 participants, then you’re talking
about thousands of children that I can positively
impact. That’s a great feeling.