

# University Campus Suffolk

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

20–23 May 2013

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors in accordance with the *ITE Inspection Handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from January 2013.

The inspection draws upon evidence from each phase and separate programme within the ITE partnership to make judgements against all parts of the evaluation schedule. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees.

## Inspection judgements

*Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is requires improvement; grade 4 is inadequate*

	ITE for FE
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	<b>2</b>
The outcomes for trainees	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	2

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## **Initial teacher education for the further education system**

### **Information about the FE in ITE partnership**

- University Campus Suffolk (UCS) was established in 2007 as a joint venture between the Universities of East Anglia and Essex, with the aim of providing a higher education presence in Suffolk. UCS has a main campus in Ipswich and five learning network centres based in further education colleges in the region. It provides training for initial teacher education (ITE) for the further education system in each of the five learning network centres; no training takes place at the main campus. Courses lead to Certificates in Education (Cert Ed.) and Professional Graduate Certificates in Education (PGCE) awarded jointly by The University of Essex and The University of East Anglia. UCS is also involved in ITE provision for schools through local school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) arrangements in collaboration with the local authority.
- Around 140 trainees were on the courses at the time of the inspection, of whom 30 were following a full-time, one-year pre-service course, with the remainder on a two-year, part-time in-service programme. The provision was last inspected in November 2011, when all aspects of the training were judged satisfactory, except recruitment, selection and trainees' progress, and leadership's ability to anticipate change, which were good.

### **Information about the FE in ITE inspection**

- Inspectors undertook 20 observations of trainees' teaching. This sample included trainees from all learning network centres. Eight of these observations were undertaken jointly with the trainee's mentor or tutor. Inspectors also held discussions with individual trainees and with five groups of trainees, including former trainees. Inspectors observed four training sessions at three learning network centres.
- Inspectors held discussions with mentors, tutors, senior leaders, and managers in UCS and from all partner colleges. They looked at trainees' individual learning plans and other on-line and documentary evidence. During meetings in UCS and with partners, inspectors reviewed and discussed a wide range of documentary evidence including data about the outcomes for trainees and for groups of trainees, records of self-assessment, improvement plans and records of partnership meetings and communications.

## **Inspection Team**

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## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **The key strengths of the FE partnership are:**

- The clear actions to improve trainees' outcomes so that successful completion rates are high across the partnership and almost all trainees' teaching is good or outstanding by the end of their training
- The quality of training which gives trainees skills in management of learning to promote good behaviour and ensure student engagement and learning
- The high quality support extended to trainees, in particular the quality of support from mentors and tutors and the clear guidance and direction following observations of teaching and learning
- The range of continuing professional development opportunities extended to trainers, mentors and other Higher Education (HE) staff at learning network centres, which fosters a culture of scholarship and learning across the partnership
- The effectiveness of leadership and management actions to raise outcomes for trainees, deal successfully with recommendations from the previous inspection, improve programme structure and phasing and enhance partnership working.

### **What does the FE partnership need to do to improve further?**

#### **The partnership should:**

- Improve the quality of outcomes for trainees further by refining and improving the accessibility of on-line individual learning plans so that information may be recorded more easily and reviewed more effectively by trainees, their tutors and mentors
- improve the timeliness and range of placements for pre-service trainees, and increase the opportunities for in-service trainees to experience other learning and skills settings during their training

- further improve arrangements at each learning network centre to allow mentors to meet formally and, where appropriate, attend training events.

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

1. The proportion of trainees successfully completing both the pre- and in-service programmes has shown improvement across the previous three years and is high. Success rates for trainees are high across the partnership, in both full and part-time routes and for all groups of trainees. Retention is high and almost all of those who complete the courses now achieve their qualification. When trainees do leave the programme, the reasons are well understood and documented. Across the partnership, there has been much successful work to improve the consistency of trainees' experiences and ensure that they achieve their potential in all learning network centres.
2. Training across the partnership is good and has a strong focus on developing successfully trainees' classroom skills, professional attributes, and employability. In particular, the training successfully develops trainees' skills in classroom management and provides useful and practical strategies to ensure student engagement and learning. Trainees, particularly those new to teaching, value these skills very highly and gain confidence rapidly. As at the previous inspection, trainees reflect carefully on how to improve their teaching and show good awareness of the constituents of good classroom teaching.
3. Employment rates for full-time pre-service trainees are high, and many former trainees gain employment in the partner colleges or with other local employers immediately upon completion of their training. Trainees successfully completing the in-service programmes frequently achieve promotion or gain additional responsibilities.
4. Trainees' attainment is good across both full and part-time routes and at all learning network centres. By the end of their programme almost all trainees' teaching is good or, in a significant proportion of cases, outstanding for each route and for different groups of trainees. Around one in three of the trainees across the partnership is outstanding by the end of the course. The progress made by trainees from their starting points, especially those on the pre-service route is rapid. Across all learning network centres, there was a very close level of agreement between inspectors and partnership staff about trainees' teaching capabilities.

5. Trainees demonstrate a good grasp of the relationship between involving and challenging teaching and student engagement and success. As at the previous inspection, the trainees think carefully about how to improve their practice, and show good awareness of the constituents of good classroom practice. In training sessions and in their learning plans, trainees reflect well on ways to use the theoretical elements of their training to good effect in the classroom. Trainees on both full- and part-time routes improve their practice rapidly during training, and are confident in seeking support from mentors and course tutors.
6. Lesson planning pays good attention to students' individual needs, stress the importance of maintaining pace and providing varied and challenging activities. Trainees have confidence to adapt their teaching to meet needs arising in lessons. In all observed lessons, trainees communicated to students clear expectations of good behaviour and engagement with learning; students responded well and appreciated the calm and professional atmosphere of their classes. In a particularly successful lesson, for example, one trainee dealt effectively and rapidly with one student's inappropriate remarks, exploring in a sensitive and clear way the aspects of equality and diversity raised. The group developed their understanding of equalities matters and the lesson was able to proceed smoothly.
7. Nearly all lessons observed began with energy and students were quickly involved in purposeful activities. For example, in one outstanding textiles lesson, within 20 minutes students were working with confidence on sample pieces to develop specific technical skills. In this lesson, despite widely varying starting points, the trainee ensured that each student achieved and extended their knowledge and skills in ways that allowed them to produce an artefact before the close of the lesson. Trainees are careful to ensure that resources and classroom materials are relevant and engaging, and consider carefully the appropriateness of materials and their part in promoting learning. However, a very small minority make insufficient use of available information learning technologies (ICT) in their teaching. Good use is made of group and paired work to stimulate effective peer learning and productive discussion.
8. Nearly all trainees have extensive specialist subject knowledge and put this to good use in extending students' understanding and career aspirations. Trainees use relevant subject-based activities to develop learners' literacy and/or numeracy skills. For example, in one English class, a trainee used a short quiz to test knowledge of word classes and language devices. As part of the activity, students calculated the

certainty they had of producing a correct answer and accumulated points, which they totalled, and 'spent' as the quiz progressed.

9. The vast majority of trainees use questioning effectively to assess students' progress and understanding during lessons. In outstanding lessons, trainees used directed questions and carefully considered follow-up questions to test and extend knowledge. Students reacted well to such challenge and responded to questions with enthusiasm. In a very small minority of cases, during otherwise good sessions, trainees failed to direct questions effectively, and missed opportunities to extend the understanding of the most able students.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

10. The training that prepares trainees to teach in the further education and skills sector is good, and some aspects are outstanding. For example, tutors are good and often excellent role models. Trainers know their trainees very well and make effective efforts to relate theory to trainees' specialist subject areas during training. They use a wide variety of teaching and assessment techniques in their training sessions that trainees appreciate and from which they gain confidence to experiment in their own teaching. Particularly effective is trainers' focus on giving trainees practical and varied strategies to manage behaviour in the classroom.
11. Improvements in the quality of training across the partnership and in both programmes have led to clear improvements in the outcomes for trainees, particularly in the proportions whose teaching is good or outstanding by the end of their training. In all centres, trainers encourage trainees to complete as many peer observations as possible so that they can share best practices and improve their pedagogical skills. Trainers provide particularly good personal support to trainees across the partnership, and this is valued highly.
12. Trainers, mentors and other HE staff at learning network centres benefit significantly from the range of continuing professional development opportunities at UCS. All staff involved with higher education courses are entitled to undertake postgraduate studies, including Masters Degrees and Doctorate qualifications free of charge. Many tutors and mentors have extended their own subject knowledge as a result. Staff value highly such development opportunities, which foster a culture of scholarship and learning across the partnership and help to raise trainees' aspirations and theoretical understandings.
13. All trainees have a mentor who is a specialist in their area or in one closely related to their subject. The vast majority of mentors give very

generously of their time to help trainees during the programme. Trainees' development of subject specific teaching skills benefits significantly because of the advice and support provided by their mentors, with many trainees able to cite aspects of advice and guidance that have helped refine their teaching. At most learning network centres, mentors communicate frequently informally, but only in a minority of cases do mentors have formal meetings with time allocated for discussion of common concerns. Most mentors receive formal training upon taking up their role in the partnership, however a small number have been unable to attend training sessions and rely on knowledge about the role gained from training in previous posts within other partnerships. The provider recognises the need to improve arrangements at each learning network centre to allow mentors to meet formally and, where appropriate, attend training events.

14. Lesson observations are frequent, well managed and valued highly by trainees. Strengths and areas for improvement identified by tutors are accurate and directly related to the impact on trainees' and students' learning. Feedback following observations is highly constructive and balanced, and records are very detailed. Trainees are given good time to reflect on their teaching before being asked to critique and grade their own lessons.
15. A minority of trainees' electronic individual learning plans (e-ILPs) are incomplete. The current e-ILP, which is under trial, is an over-lengthy document that attempts to be an overarching tool to track progress. Some elements of the e-ILP are useful and many trainees use the plans well to reflect on their progress and achievement of targets. However, with too many people having access to the online plan, it is sometimes difficult for trainees, their tutors and mentors to track the changes made to the document. The provider recognises the shortcomings of the document and intends to issue a version that has improved controls for access and simpler structure. Despite the difficulties experienced by some trainees with their e-ILPs, the vast majority of trainees' targets are reviewed frequently, with clear, thoughtful target setting helping them to make at least good progress during training.
16. The range of placements for pre-service trainees is adequate, but in a minority of cases, the timeliness of establishing the placement requires improvement. Also, UCS recognises the need to increase the opportunities for college-based in-service trainees to gain more extensive experience of other learning and skills settings during their training.
17. Extensive revision of the training programmes since the previous inspection has led to significant improvements in the coherence and balance of training. During revision, managers and trainers considered



trainees' views on, for example, the scheduling of assessments, the credit value of individual units, and the scale of units. Elements of the new courses now combine successfully to sustain individual trainees' progress and secure improvements in their teaching.

18. The marking of trainees' work is thorough and accurate. Trainees who have had written work referred are clear on the reasons for this and have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their grades on resubmission. Second marking is rigorous with assessment classifications sometimes changing after scrutiny by tutors from other colleges in the partnership. In most cases the original assessment decisions are upheld, but when decisions are moderated either up or down the rationale is clear with good evidence of discussion and reference to the standards

**The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

19. Good leadership and management have contributed to improvements in the quality of training, resulting in clear improvements in trainees' outcomes since the previous inspection. Leaders and managers communicate high expectations and ambition for the partnership. Strategic and operational decisions focus rightly on improving the experiences and outcomes for trainees. UCS initial teacher education management group pays close attention to trainee progress at all learning network centres. There are good selection procedures to ensure that trainees are on the most appropriate course and that they have the skills, understanding, experience and qualities necessary to be successful.
20. Tracking and analysis of trainees' destinations has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now good. All managers and members of training teams in colleges across the partnership contribute energetically to the common goal of securing improvement.
21. Outcomes for all trainees benefit from very close and constructive partnership working. There is very good consultation about key matters of programme development and partners delegate responsibility fairly amongst themselves for improvement activities. The recent improvements brought about by re-design and re-validation of the programme provide a clear example of effective partnership engagement focused on the needs and progress of individual trainees. At each partner college, senior managers and principals pay close attention to initial teacher education performance, and ensure that any

pre-service trainees on placements at the college receive high levels of support.

22. The partnership meets current statutory initial teacher training criteria and requirements and all relevant legislation, including that related to promotion of equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination, and safeguarding. The partnership meets the local and regional demand for teachers and trainers in the further education and skills sector well. Recruitment and selection process are effective in recruiting high-quality trainees that meet the needs of employers throughout East Anglia. UCS selects candidates with appropriate qualifications, good subject and specialist knowledge and a demonstrable aptitude for teaching, which results in good outcomes for trainees.
23. Leaders have a sound awareness of current national workforce challenges and trends, and appropriate involvement with regional and national bodies. Within the individual learning network centres, a variety of initiatives ensures provision is responsive to local need. The major employers of teachers, the colleges, have good representation in management and strategic decision-making. A decision to reduce the partnership from five to two colleges from the start of 2013/14 involved and received agreement from all five college principals. Clear strategic analysis underpinned the decision, taken in a constructive manner in order to concentrate the partnership geographically, affording improved communications and quality monitoring.
24. The partnership self-assessment is accurate in its judgements and demonstrates an inclusive, network-wide approach to improvement. Self-evaluation draws upon much improved analysis of the outcomes for trainees as well as on evidence from external examiners' reports, satisfaction surveys from trainees, former trainees and employers, and the constant discussion of progress and improvement matters amongst partners.
25. The capacity to improve outcomes for trainees and the quality of training across the partnership is good. Leaders and managers have made good, and in some areas excellent, progress against required actions and recommendations from the previous inspection report. The partnership action plan and progress review process is subject to frequent and searching scrutiny. Improved collection and analysis of reliable data have provided the capacity to make informed judgements about trainees' progress and to make comparisons across UCS and between different groups of trainees.

## **Annex: Partnership colleges**

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Great Yarmouth College  
Lowestoft College  
Easton and Otley College  
Suffolk New College  
West Suffolk College

## ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70258
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Inspection dates	20–23 May 2013
Lead inspector	Richard Beynon HMI
Type of ITE partnership	HEI
Phases provided	FE
Date of previous inspection	31 October–4 November 2011
Previous inspection report	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70258">http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70258</a>
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