

University of Hertfordshire

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

25–28 November 2013

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors and 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

	Primary QTS	Secondary QTS
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	2	2
The outcomes for trainees	2	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	2	2

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the provider must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Reference no. 080190

© Crown Copyright 2014

Overview of the ITE partnership

The overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership is good in primary and good in secondary.

Key findings

- Trainees are highly motivated and reflective. They demonstrate strong subject knowledge and are keen to succeed.
- Visiting tutors are of high quality. They play a key role in supporting trainees and quality assuring school based training and mentoring.
- Selection and recruitment of trainees is rigorous, of high quality and involves a range of partners to ensure that good quality trainees are selected.
- Communication across the partnership is strong.
- The leadership and management of the partnership are of high quality. The commitment to improve outcomes for trainees has been shared very effectively.

To improve the ITE partnership should:

- Increase the proportion of trainees achieving at an outstanding standard by the end of the course through:
 - improving trainees' understanding and use of assessment so that they are able to plan teaching which better matches the learning needs of all pupils, particularly the most able.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The university has partnership schools in 12 local authorities and particularly close links with Hertfordshire local authority. Partnership agreements are in place with over 600 primary schools and 60 secondary schools.
- At the time of the inspection there were 620 primary trainees and 235 secondary trainees.
- All postgraduate (PGCE) provision includes 60 credits at Masters' level.
- The Dean of the School of Education was new in post in August 2013.

The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- The university's School of Education is a large provider of primary ITE with undergraduate primary provision (three year Bachelor of Education), postgraduate primary provision (one year PGCE) and primary School Direct training places. For the year 2013-14 provision includes a large School Direct programme that builds on the successful Hertfordshire Regional Partnership which was an employment based route to QTS. School Direct training is closely linked to PGCE provision, sharing teaching and management staff.
- The School of Education has close relationships with local special schools. As the area has high housing costs recruitment is focused on trainees who are already locally based. There is a shortage of primary teachers in the locality so the School trains large numbers of primary trainees, most of whom take up their first posts in partnership schools.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed five lessons taught by trainees and 17 lessons taught by newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in a total of eleven schools.
- Inspectors held discussions with trainees and former trainees in partnership schools, groups of trainees at the university and trainers, leaders and managers and headteachers from partnership schools.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the provider's evaluations of its performance, course handbooks, achievement, completion and employment data, and external examiner reports and improvement plans.
- Inspectors reviewed the provider's website.

Inspection team

Robert Lovett HMI:	Overall and phase lead inspector
David Edwards HMI:	Assistant Lead inspector
Ann Henderson HMI:	Team inspector
Michael Brockett AI:	Team inspector
Jacqueline Duncan AI:	Team inspector
Julie Ward AI:	Team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- The self-motivated, confident and enthusiastic trainees who are well prepared to enter the teaching profession.
- The visiting tutors who are highly effective. Trainees gain significantly from excellent advice and guidance. Partner schools benefit from astute challenge and support to ensure the good quality of school placements.
- The centre based training which is never less than good and of which some is outstanding. Courses are responsive to individual requirements and feedback and are kept up to date with changing national requirements and priorities.
- The partnership's professional development and staff training which is of high quality resulting in better outcomes for trainees and for pupils.
- The communication between the partnership and the large number of partner schools which is very effective. Schools are kept well informed about school experience placements and training opportunities provided by the university.
- The rigorous and very successful selection and recruitment procedures which result in high completion and employment rates for all groups of trainees.
- The partnership's success in sharing its vision for excellence with schools. The newly revalidated courses are already beginning to have an impact on outcomes for trainees. There is good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the primary partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

- Further increase the proportion of trainees attaining at an outstanding level by:
 - sharpening targets for improving the quality of trainees' teaching so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve and how to maximise the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
 - improving trainees' understanding and use of assessment so that they are better able to plan work which challenges the most able pupils.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. Overall trainee achievement is good. Trainees awarded qualified teacher status (QTS), exceed the minimum standard expected by the end of their training. The proportion of trainees achieving at a good or outstanding level rose by 10% in 2012/2013. The partnership's accurate assessments of how well current trainees are doing indicate that these improvements will be consolidated in 2013/14. There is little difference in the achievement of different groups of trainees, with all doing equally well. Inspectors corroborated the partnership's overall judgement of the quality of trainees and former trainees. Trainees are confident, highly motivated and well prepared to meet the Teachers' Standards.
2. Selection and recruitment procedures have been improved and are now a significant strength. As a result, withdrawal rates have halved and completion rates are high. Because the quality of trainees is well regarded by local schools, employment rates are high, with almost all of the most recent trainees having secured teaching posts by October 2013.
3. Trainees have good professional attributes. They quickly build strong and productive relationships with pupils and other adults. They have high expectations regarding pupils' behaviour and use a range of effective strategies. The best recognise the essential link between good teaching, pupils' engagement and positive attitudes to learning.
4. Trainees and former trainees have good subject knowledge in English and mathematics and across a range of subjects. They make good use of this in their teaching to ensure that pupils are well taught and learn the correct subject specific vocabulary. In a good English lesson, for example, pupils used their knowledge of grammar and sentence structure very effectively to identify the key features of a poem.
5. Trainees are well prepared to use information communication technology to enliven their teaching and engage pupils. They use interactive whiteboards, visualisers and laptop computers to promote pupils' interest and learning. Trainees are particularly well equipped to warn pupils about the dangers of internet use and safety.
6. Trainees are well aware of different forms of bullying and particularly aware of their responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils. All of those spoken to know they need to find out about the school's safeguarding policies and procedures as a priority when joining a school.

7. Trainees are very well prepared to work with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, they do not always plan or teach lessons which challenge the most able and accelerate their learning well enough. This is in part because trainees' understanding of summative assessment linked to high expectations is not sufficiently well developed by the end of the course. NQTs said they would have welcomed practical opportunities to engage in assessments of pupils' work before leaving.
8. Trainees demonstrate a good knowledge of current initiatives and apply this well to their teaching.
9. Those trainees following the School Direct route make very good use of their prior experience and knowledge to get their training off to a flying start. They bring a range of expertise from their previous careers, often in schools. Many are already very effective teachers and all show the resilience, determination and desire to improve which will enable them to become good or outstanding teachers.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

10. Inspectors observed good quality university-based training in English and mathematics leading to good subject knowledge and outcomes. Because the quality of training has improved, trainees are increasingly positive about the benefits. In the online questionnaire completed during the inspection, almost all BEd trainees and all PGCE trainees judged the overall quality of their training to be good or better. Areas of training which were formerly weaker, such as training for the teaching of phonics and reading have been significantly improved and traditional strengths of the partnership, such as the teaching of mathematics, have been further strengthened.
11. Training in phonics, early reading, mathematics and science is of at least good quality, with trainees speaking in glowing terms about the exciting and innovative mathematics training with its sharp focus on practical 'hands on' learning. One former PGCE trainee described her English training as 'amazing' and said it had contributed significantly to her confidence and ability to teach phonics and early reading. Trainees are very well prepared to teach the new National Curriculum and were able to talk knowledgeably about changes to content and the possible impact on teaching.
12. The university online virtual learning environment (VLE) is well used, popular and very effective in enabling trainees to access a range of resources such as lecture notes, teaching resources and information on additional seminars and workshops.

13. Visiting tutors are held in universally high esteem and have a very positive impact on the academic and pastoral support for trainees. They are responsive to requests and readily accessible. Schools value the role of visiting tutors in quality assuring their work with trainees and in providing support and challenge for school based mentors and trainers.
14. Trainees have a good range of experience across key stages and very good experience in working with pupils in special schools. They also have opportunities to visit secondary schools and to observe high quality teaching of phonics. Almost all school placements are of at least good quality so that trainees are able to observe good teaching across a range of subjects and year groups. In the past some trainees have not received sufficient notice of which schools they were to be placed in. The partnership has recently changed its procedures and made this a greater priority. As a result, all trainees had at least seven days notice of their school experience placements this term. Trainees welcome this improvement and say makes preparation for school experience placements much more effective.
15. Almost all of the headteachers who responded to the most recent survey and almost all of those spoken to were very positive about the quality of training the partnership provides. They are particularly positive about trainees' subject knowledge for teaching, their professionalism, ability to quickly become part of a team and their ability to 'hit the ground running'. Some reflected on the good range of recent and relevant knowledge that trainees and NQTs bring with them. One headteacher reflected on how well NQTs are prepared to implement changes to the National Curriculum from September 2014 and how he had used this knowledge to prompt a whole school discussion about its impact on teaching.
16. There is good cohesion across the course. School based tasks are well matched to trainees' emerging experience and knowledge. Course documentation is of high quality, with course handbooks providing both essential information about the course and a range of useful resources. One School Direct trainee described it as 'the fount of all knowledge' and said she made frequent and detailed reference to it.
17. Assessments of trainees against the Teachers' Standards are accurate and thorough. However, written targets are sometimes too vague to be useful in helping trainees improve their teaching. Where they are sharp and well-focused on improving trainees' classroom practice they are not always followed up so that trainees are unclear about whether or not they have improved.
18. The partnership provides very good pastoral and academic support to ensure that trainees are helped through personal or professional

difficulties and almost all are able to complete the course and become good teachers.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

19. The senior leadership team has a clear vision for improving outcomes for trainees and providing high quality teachers for local schools. This vision is widely shared and is effectively reinforced at partnership training and dissemination events. There is a strong drive for consistency in the quality of school based training. Visiting tutors play a key role in quality assuring the work of schools and promoting improvement. The partnership is well placed to continue to improve.
20. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and is used well to inform improvement planning. The outcome of a rigorous process of review and consultation with a range of partners is a revalidated primary programme which is already beginning to impact on trainees' achievement and about which they speak with real enthusiasm. Subject improvement plans are detailed and well informed. They set appropriate areas for improvement and focus based on trainee and partnership evaluations of outcomes. As a result, outcomes for trainees have improved in respect of their understanding and confidence in teaching reading, phonics and mathematics, and their ability to work with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They have a better understanding of how to assess the progress and small gains in attainment these pupils might achieve.
21. The provider reacts quickly to feedback from schools and trainees and was described by one headteacher as 'nimble' in its responsiveness. Communications across the partnership are a notable strength. Provider staff are readily accessible and very responsive to requests from trainees and schools.
22. The progress of all trainees is carefully tracked. Areas for improvement are identified and shared with trainees and trainers. Where additional support is required this is quickly provided and additional workshops and seminars advertised on the partnership VLE. The performance of groups of trainees such as men, women and minority ethnic trainees is analysed. Equality of opportunity and outcome is well promoted and carefully monitored. All groups of trainees achieve equally well.
23. The provider has a significant commitment to educational research and links this very effectively to continuing professional development for teachers. This research based approach to improving the quality of teaching has been very effective in improving outcomes for pupils and greatly enhancing the quality of teaching trainees are able to observe. One headteacher spoke about how a research based Masters' course

had helped him improve the quality of mathematics teaching, raise attainment and provide better mathematics teaching for trainees to observe. Another spoke about the high proportion of staff gaining a Masters' degree through the partnership and the significant impact this had on improving the quality of teaching and training. Schools have strong commitment to the work of the partnership and to training high quality teachers.

24. Recruitment and selection procedures are now of high quality and result in good trainees, almost all of whom complete the course and secure teaching posts. School based colleagues are fully involved and well trained for their role. There is detailed training for all interviewers and additional sessions for any who miss out.
25. All statutory safeguarding requirements are met, with meticulous records of the checks carried out on trainees to ensure their suitability to work with children. On the rare occasions when checks are not completed in time the provider has clear procedures for ensuring the safety of children and best interests of trainees are protected. The partnership fully complies with regulations concerning the recruitment of trainees, including those on the School Direct route.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Beechfield School
Bernards Heath Infant School
Churchfield Primary School
Cranborne Primary School
Grange Junior School
Green Lanes Primary School
Hertford Heath Primary and Nursery School
High Beeches Primary School
Laurance Haines School
Oakwood Primary School
St Joseph Catholic Primary School
Whitehill Junior School
Woolgrove School, Special Needs Academy

The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The PGCE secondary provision is offered through a centrally-based PGCE and School Direct route. It is offered in art and design, business education 14-19, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages (MFL) and science. The University of Hertfordshire is one of the few providers offering PGCE Business Education 14-19. The PGCE includes 60 credits at Masters' level. There are 55 School Direct salaried trainees following a wide range of subjects and six following the School Direct training grant route. The course contributes 30 and 60 Masters' level credits respectively to each of these routes.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by trainees and six lessons taught by newly qualified teachers (NQTs).
- Inspectors held discussions with individual trainees, NQTs and former trainees working in partnership schools; trainers, leaders and managers; headteachers and members of the partnership board.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence, including information related to recruitment and selection, statutory safeguarding and compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, tracking and assessment, trainees' teaching evidence and assignments, analysis of outcomes for trainees, evaluations and improvement plans and external moderator reports.
- Inspectors reviewed the partnership's website.

Inspection Team

Philip Mann HMI:	Phase lead inspector
Trevor Riddiough HMI:	Assistant Lead inspector
Terry Russell AI:	Team inspector - mathematics
Terry Holland AI:	Team inspector - art and design

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- The highly motivated and reflective trainees who demonstrate strong subject knowledge and are keen to succeed. Their good behaviour management of students promotes good learning.
- The rigorous recruitment and selection of trainees who demonstrate the commitment to become good or better teachers by the end of the course.
- The effective use of robust quality assurance procedures to ensure consistently good training across the partnership.
- The preparedness and commitment of school based trainers and mentors who carry out their roles effectively to ensure trainees make good progress.
- The clear lines of communication and full engagement of all those involved in the partnership.
- The strength of teamwork and good capacity for further improvement between leaders of the programme and those in partnership schools to train high-quality teachers for employment within the local area and further afield.

What does the secondary partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

- Further increase the proportion of outstanding trainees by:
 - ensuring trainees' lesson planning fully meets the needs of all students, particularly the most able
 - ensuring observations and feedback to trainees focus fully on the impact of trainees actions on the learning of all students
 - ensure that all trainees understand what constitutes outstanding teaching and how to achieve it
 - eliminating any variability in performance between subjects and training routes through the rigorous and systematic use of data to support improvement planning.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. The outcomes for trainees are good. Trainees in all routes and subjects achieve well because training effectively meets their individual needs from the outset. They demonstrate a good level of performance in all the Teachers' Standards and a desire to become good and outstanding teachers.
2. The number of trainees withdrawing from the course has fallen over the last three years and consequently completion rates are now above the sector average. Rates of employment are high and many past trainees gain posts of further responsibility within schools locally and further afield. There are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of trainees.
3. Trainees following the School Direct route quickly build on previous experience and skills gained in other careers before training to become teachers. They are highly motivated and all demonstrate the necessary qualifications, skills and ability to become good or outstanding teachers. They are reflective, resourceful and evaluate their lessons in depth to improve their own teaching.
4. Trainees in all subjects and routes possess well-developed subject and curriculum knowledge. The early completion of subject audits by trainees, followed up at regular intervals in the course, ensures a good level of subject knowledge is achieved. Evidence files are comprehensive working documents that contain a wealth of background research undertaken throughout the course. The best trainees use their secure subject knowledge well to question their pupils and explain key concepts using technical language intelligently to support pupils' good progress. This is confirmed by the observations of NQTs who refer to technical vocabulary with confidence in their questions to promote deeper thinking. Trainees teaching science are able to make effective use of practical techniques learnt in central training sessions. Those trainees teaching mathematics make good use of practical resources and interactive whiteboards to explain difficult concepts well.
5. As a result of highly effective training, NQTs and trainees from all routes demonstrate the ability to use a wide variety of strategies to manage pupil behaviour effectively. They very quickly build positive relationships with pupils in their care. Trainees are quick to utilise new knowledge and understanding about how to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in their lessons. NQTs make good use of teaching assistants to support these pupils in the best lessons observed. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate the ability to support those pupils who

speak English as an additional language equally well due to effective training within partnership schools.

6. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate an ability to plan well-structured lessons that elicit good rates of progress for their pupils. In the best lessons seen, NQTs ensure that activities are carefully designed to stretch the most able while ensuring gaps in achievement are reduced for those less able. Teaching aids such as interactive whiteboards are used competently in many lessons. However, not enough use is made of this technology and other equipment to inspire pupils and actively include them in stimulating learning experiences.
7. Most trainees can identify for themselves the improvements they need to make in their teaching. At the end of training, the majority of trainees are teaching good lessons and some lessons that are outstanding. Trainees use a wide range of interesting teaching strategies to ensure students enjoy their lessons. Most focus well on students' learning, including for those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
8. In most cases, trainees suitably challenge pupils. For example, during a sixth form physics lesson taught by an NQT, the level of challenge was increased by encouraging pupils to create a mark scheme for their responses to a question on nuclear fission. By so doing, pupils also developed a strong awareness of how they could work at the highest possible level. However, in a minority of cases, other pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Work planned for the most-able pupils does not always extend and challenge them because it is not tailored to meet their specific needs. In some lessons, the pace is not fast enough to generate good or better rates of progress.
9. Trainees demonstrate a growing awareness of the changes to the National Curriculum because of effective training. They benefit from general and subject specific modules delivered at the university and structured meetings and training provided by the host schools. As a result, trainees display the skills needed to plan for their pupils so that all make good progress, regardless of the curriculum offered.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

10. Trainees speak very positively about the quality of training both in schools and at the University and justifiably so. This is because the level of coherence between the taught aspects of the course, school placements and school based training experiences is strong. Trainees are very positive about the high quality of school-based mentoring and training, support from university tutors and the quality of school placements. Coherent documentation coupled with clear expectations means that these roles have been strengthened and are designed to enhance each other. These views are further confirmed by the online questionnaire where all those trainees who responded judged the quality of training to be good.
11. The overall quality of centre-based training is good with some outstanding sessions observed. Sessions are of high quality and very relevant to the needs of trainees; for example, the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and dealing with homophobic bullying in schools. Trainers are expert in their field; many with significant proven track records of working in partnership schools. Course tutors make regular reference to an extensive range of Ofsted documentation, up-to-date research and websites to support the development of subject knowledge.
12. Outstanding training in behaviour management ensures trainees develop a wide range of skills in promoting good behaviour in lessons. Consequently, trainees demonstrate a good understanding of the links between the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and their learning in lessons. Trainees have developed good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well. They use a good variety of teaching approaches to maintain high levels of interest. Observations of NQTs and trainees, confirms this as a particular strength in most lessons, contributing very effectively to the good learning that takes place. The phased introduction to sixth form teaching in the second half of the year enables trainees to apply their existing skills to new contexts.
13. Tutors make effective use of post-selection information to identify training needs for individuals quickly. Well-designed pre-course tasks enable trainees to make a good start from the beginning of the course. Assignments are marked appropriately and trainees receive constructive feedback to help them improve further. The Masters' modules effectively extend the critical thinking skills of trainees and their ability to reflect on best practice. The assignments enable trainees to draw on research, reflections and their observations and to apply what they have learned immediately to their teaching.

14. The centre-based training incorporates a relevant, weekly professional studies programme with associated assignments. School-based mentors and trainers are fully aware of what trainees have learnt on centre-based courses. This helps trainees put new learning into practice quickly. This ensures that trainees can meet and exceed the minimum level of practice expected of teachers by the end of their training, as defined in the Teachers' Standards.
15. The quality of school placements is good. Trainees are placed in effective subject departments and have extensive opportunities to learn from experienced teachers in good or better schools.
16. Clear and comprehensive procedures ensure consistency of training in all partnership schools. Lesson observations against the Teaching Standards are completed to a high standard by all mentors, trainers and visiting tutors. Clear target setting leads to good progress in trainee performance in the classroom. As a result, most trainees understand how to plan and teach lessons that elicit good rates of progress for their students. However, some trainees are not clear about what constitutes outstanding teaching and how to achieve it. Consequently, while much teaching observed elicits a fast pace and good rates of learning, there is not enough outstanding teaching.
17. The assessment of trainee's achievement is accurate. High-quality feedback supports trainees' rapid development, enabling them to become good or better teachers. Regular feedback to trainees by school based mentors and trainers identifies what to improve next in their teaching but does not focus sharply enough on students' learning. Inspection evidence confirms this feedback is consistent in quality, regular and informative with a good focus on pupils' progress and learning. Developmental targets are precise and followed through from one observation to the next. As a result, trainees have a very clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
18. Mentors and trainers keep a watchful eye on trainees' subject knowledge and help to plug any gaps identified in the subject audit completed at the start of the course. Opportunities are provided for additional training, tutorials, extra meetings with subject specialists and involvement in national subject associations to improve specific areas of weakness. Trainees are then encouraged to apply this acquired knowledge in their teaching practice by planning schemes of work or lessons which address these weaknesses. For example, an art trainee with a background in jewellery making was encouraged to move outside her 'comfort zone' and design a display board for students on how to create a comic strip. Meanwhile, she ran a workshop at the University for her fellow fine art trainees on designing jewellery.

19. Trainees are well prepared to deliver the new National Curriculum. The partnership acknowledges that trainees require working knowledge of the current curriculum as well as the new. It accepts that the curriculum is in a state of flux and prepares trainees for the transition from the old to the new with clarity and purpose. Opportunities to provide subject curriculum knowledge are exploited at every opportunity. The provider ensures effective knowledge of the new requirements through involvement in the consultation, subject associations and its own research.
20. Trainees are provided with a staged approach to post-16 teaching. Opportunities for observations, team teaching, lead teaching and whole class teaching are provided. Trainees are given complementary experiences in schools where there are opportunities for post-16 teaching to develop their skills further.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

21. Programme leaders provide good leadership and the drive to improve provision further within the national context of change in initial teacher education. Teamwork is a real strength and issues from the previous inspection have been tackled well. Those with a subject responsibility display the vision, expertise and capacity to improve provision further as trainee numbers expand. Good outcomes for trainees have been sustained over time and the partnership demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.
22. The drive and commitment of course leaders to further improve provision is reflected in higher expectations for both current trainees and school based trainers. Training continues to improve which is reflected in the elimination of early withdrawals from the course this term and better outcomes for trainees. Furthermore, the partnership has merged a highly successful graduate teacher programme into an effective employment based route under the School Direct initiative.
23. The recruitment and selection of trainees with the potential to become good or better teachers is outstanding. Partnership schools are very effectively involved in the process. For example, innovative use is made of pupil forums in partnership schools during the interview process to assess the potential of PGCE trainees to teach well. All procedures for selection comply with current requirements both for initial teacher education and safeguarding. Effective procedures are in place to ensure equal opportunities legislation is fulfilled and the progress of trainees is carefully monitored.
24. The clear lines of communication established across the partnership are a significant strength. Both mentors and trainees say that leaders and

tutors respond very quickly to any concerns that they may have. Experienced mentors and staff from partnership schools make a good contribution to the programme design and training activities. Attendance at mentor training events is high and this contributes effectively to the consistency of training across the partnership. Mentors say they feel valued by the partnership. They appreciate the feedback they receive from visiting tutors. Such activity contributes to further improvements in their ability to be effective mentors.

25. Robust and well-established quality assurance procedures are used effectively to monitor the school based training within partnership schools and ensure it is consistently good or better. These are applied by programme leaders and visiting tutors effectively to ensure consistency in the use of documentation, training procedures and mentoring in all partnership schools. As a result, school based trainers and mentors are well prepared for their roles. Effective use is made of data related to trainees' views and their achievement to inform self-evaluation and support further improvements in provision. The recent introduction of a computer based facility to gather information about trainee performance is providing a wealth of data to monitor the individual progress of trainees. However, this data is yet to be used with precision to identify and eliminate any remaining weakness in training between subjects and increase the proportion of outstanding trainees.
26. The quality of improvement planning is good overall. Priorities for action following the last inspection have been successfully tackled. The national training priorities have been developed effectively through the core programme. Programme leaders have been strategically proactive with key partners in the local area to develop the employment-based provision further as part of the School Direct initiative. However, not all subject plans place sufficient emphasis on increasing the number of outstanding trainees and how this might be achieved.
27. All statutory safeguarding requirements are met, with meticulous records of the checks carried out on trainees to ensure their suitability to work with children. On the rare occasions when checks are not completed in time the provider has clear procedures for ensuring that the safety of children and best interests of trainees are protected. The partnership fully complies with regulations concerning the recruitment of trainees, including those on the School Direct route.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Hertswood Academy
Marlborough School
Monks Walk School

Nobel School
Parmiter's School
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School for Boys
Simon Balle School
The John Warner School
The Priory School
Watford Grammar School for Girls

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70029
Inspection number	421248
Inspection dates	25–28 November 2013
Lead inspector	Robert Lovett HMI
Type of ITE partnership	HEI
Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	07-11 March 2011
Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70029

Provider address	Hertfordshire Regional Partnership College Lane Hatfield ITE (HEI) AL10 9AB
-------------------------	--