

Birmingham City University

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

31 March–3 April 2014

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

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Overview of the ITE partnership

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

This is because all phases are well managed, leading to good and better outcomes for trainees.

Key findings

- The partnership's thorough and rigorous recruitment and selection processes successfully identify trainees who can become good and outstanding teachers, and prepare them well for the demands of teaching.
- Strong cohesion between the various elements of the training promotes a wide range of skills that make trainees highly valuable to the schools and colleges where they teach.
- The partnership has a strong vision for excellence and is proactive in its response to changes in the landscape of ITE.
- Trainees have a remarkable sense of belonging to a real learning community, and are excited at the prospect of taking a permanent place within it to improve educational outcomes for all learners.

To improve the ITE partnership must:

- increase the proportion of trainees who attain at an outstanding level by the end of their course
- make further improvements in recruitment and selection to increase completion and retention rates for trainees in all subjects
- ensure that all tutors and mentors provide written feedback and set precise targets to improve trainees' teaching that mirror the high quality of oral feedback and target setting.

Information about this ITE partnership

- Birmingham City University is a well-established provider of ITE. Teacher training is offered in the University's School of Education.
- Current provision includes programmes that lead to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in the primary and secondary phases, including the School Direct training route in both phases. There are also training routes in Post-compulsory Education and Training.
- The partnership involves over 1000 schools, colleges and training organisations across the West Midlands region.

- In the primary phase at the time of the inspection there were 547 trainees enrolled on a three year undergraduate programme. Of the 282 post-graduate trainees, 60 trainees were on the 3-7 route, 147 on the 5-11 route, 56 on a 2-year part-time route and 19 following the School Direct route.
- In secondary there were 24 trainees on the School Direct route and 113 on the Core Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) programme. In Further Education, 69 trainees were following the full-time generic pathway and 31 were on the pre-service part-time pathway. This included eight trainees on the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Literacy course.

The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- The partnership offers five routes to QTS. There are 547 trainees enrolled on a three year undergraduate programme. Of the 282 post-graduate trainees, 60 trainees are on the 3-7 route, 147 on the 5-11 route, 56 on a 2-year part-time route and 19 are following the School Direct route. Around 900 schools are involved in the training, including teaching alliances and well established cluster groups of schools.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by PGCE full-time trainees and four taught by newly qualified teachers (NQTs). All the lessons taught by trainees were jointly observed with the class teacher or mentor. Inspectors also observed the feedback given to trainees, by the class teacher or mentor, following the lesson. Further discussions were held with a group of PGCE trainees, NQTs and headteachers of schools. Inspectors also scrutinised trainees' files.
- Two groups of undergraduate trainees from each year group were interviewed in the university. An undergraduate university-based training session was also observed.
- Documentation was scrutinised and the results of the online trainee survey conducted by Ofsted were analysed.

Inspection team

John Williams	Lead inspector
Adrian Guy HMI	Assistant lead inspector
Carole Baker	Team inspector
Jacqueline Duncan	Team inspector
Andrew Maher	Team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the primary partnership

- The high quality of the oral feedback given to trainees after lesson observations.
- The good use of specialist expertise in the teaching alliance and cluster groups of schools that helps trainees make very close links between the generic training and its implications for their own teaching.

- The partnership's clear vision for the future and the effective implementation of systems and structures to meet the need for new ways of partnership working in the changing landscape of ITE.
- The good quality of the induction and pre-course phase which identifies trainees' learning needs so that they feel well prepared to begin their programme.
- The provider's good pastoral support that ensures that most trainees attain well.
- The phonics and mathematics training by tutors, which impacts well on trainees' understanding of these aspects.

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

The partnership should:

- strengthen the quality assurance role of link tutors, through joint observation of training in schools, to improve the quality of targets set and the accuracy of the assessment of trainees' ability, particularly at the end of the first school experience
- increase further the proportion of trainees attaining at an outstanding level by the end of their course
- build further on improvements in recruitment and selection to ensure increased completion and retention rates for all trainees
- strengthen trainees' knowledge in other subjects to match their good subject knowledge in English and mathematics
- secure opportunities for trainees to teach phonics early in the programme and quality assure these rigorously to make sure they take place.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. All trainees in 2012-13 attained more than the minimum requirements as set out in the Teachers' Standards. At the time of the inspection the undergraduates had just completed their final placement. Provider data indicated that all had been assessed as 'good' or 'outstanding'; the proportion of outstanding had dropped slightly compared to the previous year. Over the last three years, the overall proportion of trainees attaining at an outstanding level, across all routes, has

remained steady and inspectors found no evidence of significant difference in outcomes between groups of trainees or different courses.

2. Although a relatively large number of trainees defer completion of the training, largely for personal reasons, most go on to complete successfully and achieve QTS. The partnership provides effective support for trainees who are struggling and many go on to attain well. Employment rates within six months of trainees' completion of the training are a little above the sector average and improving. This is a reflection of the characteristics of the cohort. A significant proportion of trainees who have family commitments locally do not wish to move out of the area to seek employment. Long term employment, as measured by those who stay in teaching for three years or more, is good. Employment rates are consistently high for trainees of minority ethnic heritage.
3. Trainees' teaching has a number of strengths for this stage of their training. Trainees manage behaviour well. They plan for and use interesting resources, and are comfortable in teaching using new technology. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematics and phonics is good. Nevertheless, a significant minority have not been able to put their phonics knowledge into practice because of their individual placement pattern. Trainees are excellent role models for pupils and form very good relationships with pupils and staff in schools.
4. Trainees' ability to differentiate when planning for learning to meet the needs of more able pupils requires improvement. The use of assessment to plan and adapt teaching in lessons is not yet strong. There are weaknesses in the subject knowledge of some trainees in non-core, optional subjects that sometimes inhibit their ability to set work at the right level of challenge, especially for the most able pupils.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

5. Trainees are overwhelmingly positive about the training they receive. Some post-graduate trainees, while positive, have concerns, for example, about the timeliness of information about their school placements. Key strengths of training are its coherence between generic and subject central training, for example, in behaviour management and in mathematics, and rigorous follow-up by school-based mentors. The regular auditing of subject knowledge, especially in English and mathematics is a strength that drives trainees' improvements and is worthy of extending to all subjects. The impact of training in phonics, while good overall, is more variable because some trainees lack opportunities to teach it early on in the course.

6. The partnership has recognised that trainees' opportunity to follow elective modules outside the core subjects of English and mathematics has led to some variation in trainees' subject knowledge and confidence to teach these subjects. The partnership will move away from the elective parts of the course in the near future.
7. Most trainees have good opportunities to teach across the primary age and ability range, and surveys show that they are generally confident to teach pupils who have a disability or special educational needs. Trainees' experience of different phases is sometimes limited by the availability of appropriate placements.
8. When in schools, inspectors observed mostly good training by class teachers and good oral feedback to trainees following their teaching. In the best examples, feedback was sharply focused on 'how to teach the subject' leaving the trainee in no doubt about the next steps they need to take to improve. Most class teachers and mentors in partnership schools accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses in trainees' teaching, both in the lesson seen and over time. Nevertheless, at key assessment points, particularly at the end of the first school experience, overall grades, especially in schools less involved in the partnership, are sometimes too generous. This is mainly because the quality assurance of mentoring on link tutor visits is more limited than in full partnership schools.
9. Whilst oral feedback is good, the quality of written feedback to trainees is very variable. Targets or 'areas for discussion' are too often based on actions for trainees to complete rather than the way teaching can have an impact on pupils' learning; they are often not measurable and this is not picked up by link tutors in their visits. This is a pity because trainees are reflective and self-critical and want to do well.
10. Placements are suited well to trainees' needs but some trainees receive relatively little notice of the schools in which they are to be placed. However, this has not had any negative impact on trainees' progress.
11. High quality generic training ensures that trainees develop good initial knowledge and understanding of the changes to the National Curriculum, including Religious Education (RE) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). Trainees feel most confident in English, because of well-established provision in phonics and in mathematics, but outside these curriculum areas there are some gaps in trainees' knowledge and understanding of the implications for their teaching of the new National Curriculum. Partnership schools are at different stages in their preparation for the changes and mentors have not yet benefited from specific training in them. Trainees' experience in this aspect of their courses is dependent on the quality of their placements.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

12. The partnership has a vision for excellence that is firmly rooted in new ways of working in ITE. The course structure for the current year is based on a desire to drive up outcomes and improve the partnership. There are some excellent features in the training programme. For example, the second placement is focused on small group work in a contrasting school. This provides opportunities for trainees to understand the small but key steps pupils make in developing their understanding. There is good use of the university's own sponsored academy. The Arthur Terry Alliance of schools uses the expertise of individual schools in the partnership well for the benefit of all trainees. Long-standing cluster groups of schools continue to provide support and training on a local basis. The partnership overall is extending its use of cluster groups well.
13. Schools are engaged in the partnership, at different levels, according to their needs and capacity to support trainees in any one academic year. This provides opportunities for each school to tailor their training to the individual needs of a trainee. However, some schools with limited involvement in the partnership do not always offer placements of the same quality as those provided by more established partners. The quality of mentoring is not monitored as systematically, or reported on, by link tutors as in full partnership schools. This results in variable quality of training, particularly in the feedback given to trainees, both orally and in writing.
14. The partnership has fully embraced the opportunities presented by the School Direct Programme to further its commitment to raising standards in local and regional education. The University draws well on and shares its expertise with six lead primary schools, including three teaching alliances and one academy. A particular strength of the provision is the close collaboration between tutors, mentors and lead practitioners in schools to provide high-quality continuing professional development for teachers and trainees alike across the partnership.
15. Recruitment and selection procedures are good and the partnership is consistently successful in recruiting trainees from ethnic minority groups. Almost a quarter of trainees over the last three years have come from minority ethnic backgrounds, compared to ten per cent nationally. The process, from trainees accepting a place to beginning on the course, through induction, task setting and initial needs assessment, is excellent.
16. The partnership makes good use of a range of data from trainees and schools in order to improve the quality of training. For example,

feedback from trainees about their subject option choices has led to a review of this for 2014-15. This is because, in subjects other than English and mathematics, trainees currently have some gaps in their subject knowledge. The partnership's plan for paired placements in one class in the second setting is working well. However, there is a need to establish the precise role in the classroom of the trainee who at any one time is not leading the teaching.

17. The partnership is fully compliant with ITT requirements and criteria. Its self-evaluation documents are crafted well and the summary self-evaluation document (SED) is a very useful tool. The documents identify accurately the improvements needed. The partnership has focused hard and with success on ensuring that outcomes for all trainees are at least good. The partnership recognises that its task is now to increase rapidly the proportion of trainees who are judged outstanding. The improvement plan is directly linked to the SED and is well-focused on improving outcomes for trainees.
18. 2013-14 has been a year of change for the partnership with a new, revalidated course, and changed ways of working. The partnership is monitoring the impact of these changes and, given the highly effective structures and systems in operation, is well placed to improve further.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Hill West Primary
Etching Hill Primary
Tidbury Green Primary
Ryders Hayes Academy
Mere Green Primary
Longford Primary
Cherry Orchard Primary
Boldmere Junior
Whitehouse Common Primary
Little Aston Primary
Shireland Hall Primary
Twickenham Primary
City Road Academy

The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The partnership works predominantly with approximately 200 secondary schools in the West Midlands area, including two Teaching School Alliances.
- A one-year, full-time secondary course is offered and also a School Direct route that leads to a PGCE.
- At the time of the inspection there were 113 trainees on the secondary PGCE mainstream course and 24 following the School Direct route.
- The partnership has extensive local, regional, national and international links and makes good use of these, as well as the wealth of expertise across their partner schools, in order to enhance the quality of the trainee experience.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed, jointly with mentors, 11 lessons, taught by nine trainees and two newly qualified teachers (NQTs), in a total of 11 schools. Inspectors also met with groups of trainees and NQTs in schools and at the university.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders from the partnership, school-based tutors and professional tutors, class teachers, headteachers and members of the Partnership Steering Committee. Telephone interviews were also held with a small sample of other headteachers.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the provider's evaluations of its performance; course handbooks; achievement, completion and employment data; committee minutes; external examiner reports; and documents relating to school experience placements.

Inspection Team

Susan Wareing HMI	Lead inspector
Paul Metcalf	Team inspector
Terry Holland	Assistant lead inspector
Terry Russell	Team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the secondary partnership

- Rigorous recruitment and selection processes that successfully identify trainees who have the potential to become good and outstanding teachers.
- The high quality of the induction and pre-course phases that identify trainees' individual needs very well, so that they make a confident start to their teaching.
- The exceptionally coherent way in which trainees are prepared, through the Education, Pedagogy and Professional Studies Programme (EPPS), to teach the new National Curriculum from September 2014 and support disadvantaged pupils, which is a strength worthy of sharing beyond the partnership.
- Trainees who leave their courses with a wide range of knowledge and skills which makes them highly employable. Their career progression is swift and they make a real difference to the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.
- An ambitious vision for the future of the partnership that is enthusiastically embraced by all stakeholders. Highly effective collaboration across the partnership leads to wide-ranging continuing professional development for all its teachers and trainees.
- The trainees' exceptionally strong sense of belonging to a genuine learning community in which they are equal partners, resulting in their very strong commitment to taking their place in improving outcomes for all learners.

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

The partnership should:

- increase the proportion of trainees across all subjects, programmes and routes, who attain at an outstanding level by the end of their training
- build on improvements in recruitment and selection to ensure increased completion and retention rates for all trainees in all subjects
- make sure that all tutors and mentors provide precise targets and written feedback for trainees that match the excellent quality of oral feedback.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

19. The proportion of trainees demonstrating good or outstanding teaching has risen steadily over the last three years but there has been some variation between subjects. The overall proportion of trainees whose teaching is assessed as outstanding by the end of the course has not been increasing rapidly enough.
20. Arts subjects have performed better than mathematics and sciences, although the latter of these two has only recently been introduced into the programme. Outcomes in drama are consistently high, with 80% of trainees attaining at an outstanding level in 2013. Withdrawal rates are below the sector norm but the proportion of those who interrupt their training is rising. Partnership data shows this to be due mainly to individual personal circumstances and the legacy of trainees who have not yet passed the QTS skills tests. The partnership has invested considerable resource in the eradication of outcomes that are less than good and is rightly proud of achieving this in 2013.
21. There are no significant differences in the attainment of different groups of trainees who complete the course, or between trainees on the PGCE and School Direct routes. The recruitment, selection and completion rates of trainees from ethnic minority backgrounds are strengths of the training.
22. Employment rates are consistently high. The partnership has a strong local and regional reputation and partnership schools are keen to recruit their trainees as NQTs. This is because of trainees' highly professional conduct and their positive impact on their students' achievement. They progress rapidly into positions of responsibility and make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.
23. Lesson observations and evidence from teaching files confirm that the great majority of trainees and newly-qualified teachers (NQTs) have strong subject knowledge. This helps them to plan, in great detail, lessons that enthuse and inspire their students, so that they generally make good progress. Trainees and NQTs set themselves and their students high expectations and deploy a wide range of strategies to manage behaviour very effectively in their classrooms. This contributes to the very positive relationships they foster with students. Most trainees and NQTs use good questioning techniques to make frequent checks on students' understanding. They are already showing early ability to re-shape their teaching in the light of feedback from students about their learning. NQTs and most trainees have good knowledge and understanding of National Curriculum levels. Some trainees can apply this appropriately to assess students' work accurately.

24. Good quality training, through the EPPS programme, develops trainees' knowledge and understanding of the variety of students' special educational needs that they may encounter in their classrooms. Trainees and NQTs generally meet these needs well, at this early stage in their career, although a minority of trainees struggle more with the challenge of matching work effectively to students' needs, especially those of the most able students.
25. The partnership provides good support for trainees' understanding of approaches to teaching students who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Placements are carefully selected to ensure that trainees have as wide an experience as possible of a range of ethnically, socially, culturally and economically diverse school contexts. However, depending on the nature of their placements, some trainees show less awareness of EAL issues.
26. Trainees and NQTs make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in their teaching. They are confident users of interactive whiteboards and websites and use a range of subject-specific software to engage and support their students and assess their learning. Trainees and NQTs understand their responsibility for the promotion of students' literacy. They include the teaching of subject-specific terminology in their planning but sometimes miss other opportunities for students to practise their literacy skills. Chances to for students to practise their mathematical skills were less evident in lessons observed.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

27. Training through the EPPS programme is of high quality and exceptionally well integrated with other elements of training. The EPPS sessions are quickly and rigorously followed up in subject-specific groups by tutors and in placement schools by professional and subject mentors. The sessions and support are very well evaluated by NQTs and trainees. They especially value the judicious use made by the partnership of school-based experts who help them to apply what they have learned to their specific school and subject contexts. The quality of training is further enhanced by regular visits to outstanding schools and other settings to see outstanding practitioners in their classrooms.
28. The high quality training provided for behaviour management is strongly valued by trainees and NQTs, building their confidence and leading to their good and often outstanding ability to create a positive atmosphere for learning in their classrooms.

29. Mentors are well-qualified and experienced and have ready access to training. Trainees and NQTs speak very highly of the strong academic and pastoral support they receive from tutors and mentors. This includes the quick identification of any gaps in trainees' subject knowledge followed by strategies for further improvement. Mentors are very well respected for their expertise and approachability at all times. Most mentors enjoy the role and show great commitment to helping trainees to improve their practice, giving very generously of their time. They appreciate the good communication established with tutors and their availability to support schools on the rare occasions when a problem occurs.
30. Trainees are well prepared for post-16 teaching in schools and show a growing awareness of forthcoming changes to 16-19 education. The generic EPPS programme provides high-quality training in the transition into post-16 education and in key curriculum strands. All central subject training includes Advanced-level teaching and all trainees are guaranteed the opportunity to teach post-16 classes on at least one placement.
31. The arrangements for trainees' transition between placements is a strength in terms of the way mentors receive specific training and exchange information about their trainees' progress and targets set. This means that trainees make a very secure start to their second placement. Information, from joint lesson observations with mentors and from trainees' files, attests to the impressive quality of oral feedback from mentors to trainees on their progress, and to the accuracy of the partnership's assessment of its trainees.
32. Despite this generally strong mentoring and the robust quality assurance systems put in place, the partnership recognises that there is some variation in the quality of the written feedback on trainees' progress. Not all written feedback and target setting is as sharp as the best across all subjects and programmes, and for all trainees.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

33. The partnership's self-evaluation processes are honest, open and well-informed by internal and external data and trainee and NQT satisfaction surveys. Quality assurance systems are comprehensive and transparent and ensure that the quality of placements is monitored very rigorously. There have been recent improvements in the mentors' consistent use of the Teachers' Standards in assessing trainees' progress. However, the variation in the quality of the written feedback of a minority of mentors and in the sharpness of the targets they set for trainees has not been picked up rapidly enough.

34. The partnership has worked hard since the last inspection, through rigorous monitoring of the performance of trainees from selection through to final assessment and the commitment of additional resource, to ensure that all trainees now become at least good teachers by the end of their course.
35. The provider is very successful in recruiting and selecting trainees to meet local and regional needs. Selection processes are rigorous and fair and lead to the recruitment of high quality trainees. Subject knowledge is assessed accurately at interview and trainees must demonstrate a positive aptitude for teaching through a variety of group and individual tasks and activities. Nevertheless, a small but rising number of trainees do not complete their training, mainly because of personal circumstances, or waiting to pass the QTS skills tests. The provider has made great efforts to support these individuals and ensure that every candidate understands fully the demands involved in a teacher training year, and subsequent teaching career, but there is more work to be done.
36. The selection process is increasingly carried out in partnership schools, therefore school-based staff are routinely involved and tutors also contribute. These procedures ensure consistency in the quality of selection procedures and in the quality of successful applicants.
37. Course and subject leaders are very knowledgeable, always readily available and supportive not only of trainees and NQTs but also of longer-established teachers who trained in the partnership. This has cemented strong relationships and fruitful professional dialogue between university and school-based staff, trainees and former trainees. It has also fostered highly effective collaboration between university-based staff and partnership schools, as in the wide-ranging, continuing professional development accessible to all their teachers and trainees. Teachers therefore engage readily in research on their classroom practice.
38. Trainees, NQTs and former trainees have an exceptionally strong sense of belonging to a genuine learning community in which they are equal partners. They have a very strong commitment to taking their place in improving outcomes for all their learners.
39. Leaders and managers pursue a creative and strategic vision, enthusiastically embraced by all stakeholders, for the future of the partnership in the region. One clear measure of its success is the effectiveness with which the partnership meets the recruitment needs of local schools. The strong determination of leaders and managers is also evident in the on-going improvements made to programmes, including

tackling the recommendation from the last inspection and eradicating Grade 3 outcomes for trainees.

40. At once forward- and outward-looking, the partnership has forged very strong links with its local and regional communities. Leaders and managers are also well-connected to national and international educational networks, keeping the partnership abreast of the latest developments, in subjects and pedagogy, at a time of significant change for ITE. As a result, the partnership is sensitive to changing trends in recruitment and has been quick to introduce new subjects, for example science, and new routes, such as the School Direct training route.
41. All statutory safeguarding requirements are met and the provider is fully compliant with all ITE requirements.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Fairfax School, Sutton Coldfield
Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls
Heath Park School, Wolverhampton
CTC Kingshurst Academy, Kingshurst
Colmers School, Birmingham
Queen Mary's High School, Walsall
Kingsbury School, Kingsbury
Sidney Stringer Academy, Coventry
King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys, Birmingham
The Stourport Academy and Sixth Form Centre
Stourport-on-Severn
Queensbridge School, Birmingham

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the FE in ITE partnership

- Birmingham City University works with a wide range of FE and skills providers across the West Midlands covering the diversity of this provision. Since the University discontinued the delivery of in-service provision there is no set partnership of colleges, but the University works closely with six key partners.
- The following discrete pathways are offered: a full-time one-year pre-service generic course; a part-time two-year generic pre-service course; and a specialist part-time two-year course in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Literacy.
- Trainees on each pathway obtain a level 7 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).
- All training takes place at the University, supported by work-based training in the trainee's placement. This is a significant change since the previous inspection when in-service provision was delivered through some partner colleges.
- At the time of the inspection 69 trainees were on the full-time generic pathway and 31 trainees were on the pre-service part-time pathway, including eight on the ESOL and Literacy course.

Information about the FE in ITE inspection

- The three inspectors undertook a total of eight observations of teaching, mainly of trainees who will complete the programme this academic year. The teaching of a small number of trainees who completed the programme in the previous academic year was observed. All observation of current trainees was undertaken with the workplace mentor. Interviews with a number of former trainees and current trainees and their mentors took place, including those training in prison settings. Additional interviews with mentors, tutors and staff in the workplace took place alongside scrutiny of trainees' portfolios to determine trainees' progress.
- Inspectors observed two training sessions for trainees by University staff, one for full-time trainees and one for part-time trainees. Inspectors held meetings with senior staff at the University and with all key partner colleges during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the provider's self-evaluation, review documents and development plans as well as other information about the pathways and overall programme.

Inspection Team

Anne Taylor
William Baidoe-Ansah HMI
Kathleen Brown

Additional inspector (FE Lead inspector)
(FE Assistant lead inspector)
(FE team inspector)

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the FE partnership

- Thorough and rigorous recruitment and selection processes which successfully identify trainees with the potential to be good and outstanding teachers and prepare them for the demands of the training.
- The strong cohesion of the training including opportunities for trainees to weave their own practice into the programme.
- Good support by tutors and mentors resulting in high completion rates on the full-time and ESOL pathway.
- High rates of progression of trainees into relevant employment because of good quality teacher education and training, and good employability training.
- Strong involvement of key partners who jointly own the quality of the programme and are fully committed to its development.

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

The partnership must:

- increase the joint monitoring, by tutors and mentors, of trainees' progress in teaching and against the professional standards, in order to increase mentors' confidence, accuracy of judgements and rigour in the monitoring of trainees' progress.

The partnership should:

- involve partners in key strategic decisions in order to broaden the partnership's vision for excellence
- ensure that the partnership works collaboratively to anticipate and plan the implications for trainees of longer-term changes in the FE sector
- improve the focus and scope of improvement planning by consolidating course review processes and widening the evidence base that underpins them to include the views of employers and former trainees
- identify differences and share best practice between the full-time and part-time provision so that all trainees on any pathway benefit from high quality training and support.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

42. Trainees and former trainees have said they feel well prepared to start teaching in FE although some trainees on the ESOL and Literacy programme do not feel as prepared to teach young learners as they do to teach adults.
43. On the full-time pathway and the part-time ESOL and Literacy pathway almost all trainees successfully complete the training. While the proportion is lower on the part-time generic pathway the university monitors and supports those trainees who defer. The majority of these trainees do complete in subsequent years. The rigorous selection process ensures all trainees have the potential to be good or outstanding trainees on commencement of the programme. However, a very small number of completing students do not achieve at this level.
44. The University tracks trainees' progression into employment well. A very high proportion of trainees' go into teaching, across a wide range of institutions including the prison service, and increasingly into secondary schools.
45. Trainees are keen to improve their teaching. They are aware of their potential to be good or outstanding teachers and most strive to achieve this. Trainees are reflective and self-critical and see the value of tools such as the reflective journal to improve the quality of their teaching. A few trainees who achieved a good standard of teaching early in the course have not yet made progress to being outstanding teachers.
46. Trainees' teaching is good. Trainees are knowledgeable in their subject area. They have a good rapport with students and are able to hold their interest well. Trainees produce detailed lesson plans, with clear objectives. They use a good range of learning and teaching methods to engage students and promote learning. However, some of their instructions to learners lack clarity so that learners sometimes become confused. Trainees make good use of information learning technology to enhance learning. They use an appropriate variety of assessment methods, although some miss opportunities to assess learning and give feedback on how students can improve their work.
47. Most trainees know and understand their learners and appreciate the importance of planning to meet individual needs. While their differentiation of activities caters for most students, trainees need a wider range of strategies to stretch and challenge more able learners. Most trainees have good skills in classroom management and behaviour management, although a few have not yet developed a strong enough

classroom presence to fully engage a minority of students in their learning.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

48. Training, tutor support and mentoring are good. These aspects are highly valued by trainees as having most impact on improving their teaching. They are well prepared to manage their students' behaviour positively and most trainees are confident to teach students across the ability range, including those who have a disability or special educational needs. Training on all pathways, including the specialist ESOL and Literacy course, is delivered by experienced specialist tutors and models good teaching practice. The programme integrates theory and practice well. Trainees are provided with increasing opportunities for the sharing of good practice with each other in taught sessions and in highly valued specialist and pastoral workshops. The programme encourages trainees to weave their own practice into assignments and discussions and to relate it to the theory taught.
49. External speakers, peer-led sessions and optional studies are valued by trainees and broaden their knowledge of current practice in different settings. This provision complements other taught sessions in ensuring that trainees' knowledge of the sector is up to date. Key changes in post-16 education are covered early in the programme. However, trainees' understanding of the implications for their teaching of the 16 to 19 study programmes is patchy. Trainees are encouraged to integrate English and mathematics into their teaching and make good use of opportunities to share good practice on methodology with their peers. However, they sometimes miss opportunities to put this into practice. Tutors and mentors do not check regularly enough that they are doing so. Trainees' awareness of the significance of work experience, non-qualification activities and employability are insufficiently developed.
50. For some trainees the support is very good but a very few trainees do not benefit from this high standard and interventions to improve provision for them have not been timely.
51. Most trainees receive good feedback on their overall progress and in mid-term reviews. They find the Personal Development file an effective tool in bringing together formal feedback, targets following observations, records of tutorials, and trainees' own rationale for planning and their critical reflections. Together these provide trainees with a clear picture of their progress. Target setting is a strong feature of the programme. Trainees' short and medium term targets are effectively reviewed before each observation and support their progress well. Longer-term developmental targets, such as developing their own information technology (IT) and language skills, provide trainees with a

higher level of challenge. The quality of trainees' critical reflection in their journals is good.

52. The allocation of placements is well-managed by the University. The wide range of contacts ensures that trainees are quickly and appropriately placed in settings across different contexts. The match between trainee and placement is good and any problems arising over the placements are quickly resolved. Some key partners provide a large number of placements across several subjects and levels of courses which meet trainees' needs well. These providers can also offer a wide range of mentors, which allows flexibility for trainees to change mentor if for any reason it is necessary. Some key partners provide additional support and training for trainees and mentors. This adds to the quality of the programme for these trainees.
53. Support for trainees, through University tutors and work-based mentors, is good overall. Trainees on the full-time programme have very high levels of tutor contact and support. Good-quality mentoring ensures trainees' good progress. High-quality support and training is provided to all mentors by University tutors; some training is customised for key partners. A mentor newsletter is regularly circulated and mentors are invited to an annual mentor conference. There has been an increased focus on the observation of teaching and learning within mentor training, but some mentors still lack confidence in this key aspect of their role, and their judgements of trainees' teaching are not always accurate.
54. The system for monitoring trainees' progress and intervening to provide support is not consistently well- applied. Variability in the quality of individual tutor and mentor support is not always been identified quickly enough. Joint observations currently take place twice in the training year: once at the beginning of the programme and again at its end. The monitoring of trainees' progress lacks rigour because there are too few joint observations and progress reviews.
55. The programme is responsive to changing markets. It allows good opportunities for trainees to explore other contexts and this ensures maximum employability in the post-16 sector, for example in prisons and more recently in secondary schools. Trainees who wish to teach in prisons are well supported within the generic programme. Prison elements are well integrated and the programme is sufficiently flexible to address constraints presented by the prison environment, for example the requirement to make a video recording of a teaching session. Learning materials have been specially developed and are accessible via the University virtual learning environment (VLE). Secondary school placements are arranged for trainees who wish to teach in schools.

56. Good ICT resources are available to trainees in the university. The VLE is used well by trainees working in the prison sector but it is underdeveloped for other trainees. Many trainees, especially on the part-time programme, would benefit from further development of this resource, if they are unable for any reason to attend related training sessions. Part-time trainees perceive their programme as more fragmented than the full-time programme, for example, in terms of room changes, staffing and communication.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

57. The good quality of training and outcomes for trainees has been maintained since the previous inspection. The post-compulsory education provision is now a crucial and integral part of the School of Education. The well-established sharing of good practice across the School of Education is wisely used in the context of developments in 14-19 in education, drawing on an increasing contribution from secondary phase tutors to the training on the FE programme. The post-compulsory team has successfully introduced improvements to the training which reflect the changing local need. For example, an increased focus on prison and school education is improving trainees' employability. Leaders demonstrate good capacity to improve further.
58. Thorough reviews of the performance of each programme inform plans for improvement. Reviews are based on a wide range of evidence including the views of staff, trainees and mentors, and provide a detailed evaluation of the operation of the programme. Differences in outcomes for particular groups of trainees are explained and actions agreed to bring about improvement. However, there is duplication in some of the University's review processes and this does not make the best use of limited staff resource and ensure clarity in improvement planning. The views of employers, other partners and former trainees are not sought in the review process, and so self-evaluation lacks a strategic perspective.
59. Key FE college partners are very committed to working with the University to further develop the quality of provision and highly skilled teachers. They regularly attend partnership meetings and provide a valuable resource and guidance on operational matters to improve and maintain the quality of placements and mentor support. These partners would value further involvement in the strategic development of the programme, because the supply of high quality teachers is vital to their success.

60. Recruitment and selection processes are rigorous and well-managed. The competition for places, the preparation required and the range of tasks involved ensure that all trainees have the potential to be good or outstanding trainees. Pre-course materials and tasks effectively prepare trainees for the demands of the programme and a career in teaching.
61. The provision fully complies with ITT in FE requirements.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Birmingham Metropolitan College
Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College
Pool Hayes Arts and Community School
Solihull College
Solihull Sixth Form College
South and City College, Birmingham

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70075
Inspection number	429013
Inspection dates	31 March–3 April 2014
Lead inspector	Susan Wareing HMI
Type of ITE partnership	HEI
Phases provided	Primary, Secondary and FE
Date of previous inspection	01 March 2010
Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70075
Provider address	City North Campus Franchise Street Perry Barr Birmingham B42 2SU