

University of Plymouth

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates 19–22 May 2014

This inspection was carried out by eight of Her Majesty's Inspectors and nine 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	1

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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.

Key findings

- Good strategic leadership reflects the strong commonality of purpose across the partnership to train teachers who help raise standards and improve students' access to further and higher education in the region.
- Trainees are enthusiastic about their subject and phase of education, are determined to improve through critical self-evaluation and come to appreciate the fascination of teaching.
- High quality expert mentors across all phases ensure trainees develop good subject knowledge and a good understanding of how to teach that knowledge to pupils, students and learners.
- Strong collaboration between all elements of the partnership drives continuous improvement and ensures training courses meet the rapidly changing needs of the different sectors.

To improve the ITE partnership should:

- Ensure that the grading of trainees against the professional Teachers' Standards is linked to the quality of their students' learning.
- Include measurable trainee outcome criteria in action plans in order to measure progress towards defined targets.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The provider offers initial teacher training in primary, secondary and further education (FE). Partner schools and colleges are located in Plymouth and throughout Devon, Somerset and Cornwall. There are 553 primary undergraduate trainees, 147 primary PGCE trainees, 50 secondary PGCE trainees and 270 full- and part-time FE trainees.
- The training routes are:

Primary Bachelor of Education (with QTS)

Primary Post Graduate Certificate of Education (Core, Schools Direct and Schools Direct Salaried)

Secondary Post Graduate Certificate of Education with QTS (Core), QTS only (Schools Direct)

PGCE and Certificate in Education incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training (DET)

PGCE and Certificate in Education incorporating the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS)

The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- The University of Plymouth is in partnership with over 250 primary schools in several local authorities to provide initial primary teacher education. At the time of the inspection, there were 553 undergraduate trainees. The courses include specialisms in art and design, early childhood studies, English, humanities, digital literacy, mathematics, music, physical education, science and special educational needs. Those in years 3 and 4 of their programme were following the four-year Bachelor of Education Primary Teaching with Qualified Teacher Status. Trainees in years 1 and 2 were following a three-year Bachelor of Education programme. There were 147 trainees taking the one-year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), of which 38 trainees were on School Direct salaried route to a PGCE. These numbers included 25 trainees studying for PGCE in early years.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited 24 schools and jointly observed 29 trainees teaching. The observations of trainees were conducted jointly with their mentors. Inspectors held discussions with five former trainees. Inspectors also talked to mentors, headteachers and tutors about their training and analysed evidence about their outcomes. Twelve Bachelor of Education year 4 trainees brought their files to the university to discuss their final assessments with inspectors. Meetings were held with 26 other trainees in schools. Discussions also took place with the programme leaders, university-based tutors and the Strategic Partnership Board.

Inspection team

David Townsend, Her Majesty's Inspector; phase lead inspector
Jane Neech, Her Majesty's Inspector; assistant phase lead inspector
Richard Light, Her Majesty's Inspector; team inspector
Ian Hancock, Her Majesty's Inspector; team inspector
Juliet Ward, additional inspector; team inspector
Wayne Stallard, additional inspector; team inspector
Andy Maher, additional inspector; team inspector

The key strengths of the primary partnership

- The way trainees and newly qualified teachers (NQTs), in their teaching, show good personal attributes and develop effective professional skills for future success in the profession.
- The high quality professional dialogue between trainees and their tutors and mentors which ensures they are very clear about their performance in relation to the Teachers' Standards.
- The close partnership working between schools and university tutors in preparing trainees well to teach early reading and mathematics and to promote good behaviour in their pupils.
- The professional studies programmes, which leave trainees well placed to promote good progress for all pupils and help the more vulnerable overcome barriers to learning.
- The commitment and expertise of partner schools in helping to lead the well-regarded core training and in securing improvements to the taught courses.
- The rigorous recruitment and selection processes that identify trainees with strong potential to teach, including some for whom the university gives extra support in order for them to succeed in their chosen career.
- Trainees' preparation to teach the new National Curriculum which leaves them well placed to contribute fully to development work in schools.

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

The partnership should:

- improve the timeliness of school placements and arrangements for written assignments, in close consultation with trainees and, following this, carefully re-appraise trainee satisfaction rates
- ensure that all tutors and mentors use the widest range of evidence to make incisive judgements about the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' learning
- further enhance processes for quality assurance so that inconsistencies in the training experience for all trainees are identified and addressed sooner
- explore further ways of communicating the partnership's priorities for improvement with all schools and of involving them in defining

measurable criteria for judging the impact of actions taken on outcomes for trainees

- improve the analysis of former trainees' destinations following completion in order to identify new ways to help more trainees secure a first teaching post more quickly.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. Trainees demonstrate a firm commitment to becoming good or better teachers. The partnership ensures this becomes a reality. Trainees on all courses, who attained QTS in 2012/13, exceeded the minimum level expected in the Teachers' Standards. The progress to date of 2013/14 cohorts is at least comparable. Observations made of trainees by inspectors indicated that the provider's judgements are broadly accurate; in a small number of cases their assessment was more generous than that of the inspector.
2. The teaching of the very large majority of trainees is at least good. Whilst proportions judged outstanding are improving strongly, fewer trainees on the post-graduate programmes reach this highest level. Similarly, across all courses, a lower proportion of male than female trainees achieve the highest level. Therefore, the overall attainment of trainees is not yet outstanding.
3. Completion rates, which were previously in line with those across the sector, are now above average. Employment rates, whilst in line with national averages, have been consistently above regional benchmarks for a few years. Inspection evidence shows that most trainees go on to teach good or outstanding lessons in their first year as NQTs.
4. Trainees take advice well, are readily reflective about their practice and are keen to learn. As a result, they are insightful about their current attainment and what they need to do next. Trainees develop a good range of personal attributes, such as resilience and initiative.
5. The trainees whose teaching is good or better use their subject expertise to motivate pupils to learn. They plan effective sequences of lessons. Trainees' competence in teaching mathematics and science to pupils of different ages and abilities also develops well. For example, in one lesson seen, the trainee demonstrated for pupils a strategy for adding pairs of two-digit numbers together. This was built upon well by ensuring that those capable of going further were challenged to calculate using three-digit numbers.

6. Trainees set high expectations and include all pupils well; most are adept at carefully matching work to the needs of specific groups of pupils, such as those at risk of under-achieving. In addition, they manage behaviour skilfully, including that of pupils with particular social and emotional needs. Trainees also make an active contribution to the wider life of the school by leading extra-curricular activities. They confidently lead the work of support staff.
7. Headteachers of schools visited reported that NQTs were demonstrating good teaching skills and that pupils in their classes were, over time, making at least expected progress. From discussions with NQTs, school leaders and tutors and evidence from employer satisfaction survey data about the impact of NQTs' teaching, it is clear that they have been prepared well for a role in the profession. This also explains why the employment rate of trainees is above average in the south-west region.
8. Trainees develop competence in the teaching of reading. They speak with understanding about how to help pupils blend sounds in order to read new words. They are knowledgeable about how these skills should develop and the ways in which they might promote pupils' enjoyment and understanding of books.
9. Where teaching and pupils' learning require improvement, some good elements were evident, for example in the trainees' capacity to plan sequences of lessons that matched activities to the needs and interests of all pupils. However, trainees do not always accurately assess the progress pupils make during lessons. This means that opportunities are missed to increase the pace of learning for more able pupils.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

10. Each of the programmes offers a cohesive training experience that leaves trainees well prepared to teach. They get regular opportunities to apply theoretical learning from lectures at the university, through the learning opportunities and assignments set, to their own teaching on placement. Expert practitioners from the schools demonstrate new ideas well at seminars. Trainees regularly plan and teach lessons for their peers to observe and review, affording good opportunities for an exchange of thinking about classroom strategies.
11. University tutor-led training, including that delivered off-campus for School Direct trainees, is good. The training in phonics, mathematics, science, non-core subjects and professional studies helps trainees teach with both confidence and competence. Trainees who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire were positive about the quality of advice from subject and professional tutors, although a few post graduates felt that aspects of their training were adversely affected by late staffing changes. Trainees appreciate the thought-provoking lectures and the

practical nature of university seminars. Additional workshops help those who need them to develop and extend their subject knowledge. Trainees get good opportunities to develop leadership skills in their specialist subjects by organising teaching inputs for their peers.

12. The programmes give trainees good opportunities to explore their knowledge and understanding of how children behave. When in school, they promote good standards of conduct and recognise the link between the quality of teaching and how pupils act. They explore, in tutorials, the theoretical underpinning of different strategies and consider their effectiveness. Trainees are well prepared for their statutory responsibility for safeguarding pupils and fully understand their role in preventing bullying.
13. The professional studies programme helps trainees promote inclusion well. Conferences led by local teachers, links established with special schools, and university seminars, all focus effectively on how to help trainees support pupils with special educational needs. They also get good guidance in schools on how to support pupils for whom English is an additional language. Where, for example, a trainee finds that there are few or no bilingual pupils in their class, the university arranges for them to visit and work with peers who do have such pupils, to help them identify and apply strategies for themselves. As a result, many trainees come to teach with increased confidence and competence in this area.
14. The diversity of school placements gives trainees good opportunities to teach pupils from a range of cultures, backgrounds and localities. They have a growing appreciation of the different contexts in which teachers work, including large and small schools and those in rural and coastal areas. This and a related focus through the central training give most trainees a growing awareness of how schools work to close gaps in achievement for more vulnerable pupils.
15. Trainees receive good training through their placements in good and outstanding schools. On each training route, they gain experience in teaching a wide range of age groups. For example, trainees on the early years specialist pathway visit both primary schools and pre-school settings. They also guide primary trainees who are new to developing language and communication skills with reception-aged children. Similarly, primary trainees visit secondary school lessons and undertake international visits. As a consequence, trainees have a good overview of how children learn and develop as they mature.
16. Whilst the variety and quality of school experience on offer is not in doubt, several trainees experienced difficulties this year due to the late arrangement of placements. This led to difficulties for them in re-organising their termly timetable so as to secure a full training

entitlement. Additionally, some experienced the late return of written assignments, which caused them anxiety. The university has largely resolved these issues. However, those trainees responding to the online survey expressed disquiet about programme organisation this year and the extent to which their views had been taken into account.

17. Mentoring is good, and some is excellent. High quality professional dialogue with mentors and tutors helps trainees to reflect upon their practice more deeply and to know how well they are meeting each strand of the Teachers' Standards. Most training plans and records are well organised and provide comprehensive evidence of the trainees' development over time as a future teacher. The support and challenge for trainees who struggle have been very effective in ensuring they improve. Most mentors identify, with precision, priorities and targets for improvement. A few trainees get less specific guidance on the next steps to take.
18. The evidence supporting the judgements that mentors and tutors make on trainees' overall performance is typically strong. In a few cases, though, some evaluations of teaching are over generous because they do not focus sharply enough upon its impact on all pupils' learning. Mentors and tutors do not always use evidence sources beyond lesson observation, such as the scrutiny of pupils' work or discussions with pupils, to gain a wider view of how well pupils learn.
19. Trainees develop a good understanding of the new National Curriculum. An exploration of the implications for assessment, planning and teaching is woven into all facets of the programmes, including the subject specialist modules. For example, physical education specialists have been helped to understand how to use different forms of planning and assessment in the subject. Primary and early childhood specialist trainees share experiences about changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Trainees are confident about these changes and their knowledge and understanding are secure.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

20. Programme and partnership school leaders strive for the best training and outcomes for trainees. The university remains committed to providing different routes into teaching and has worked closely with school alliances in the region to establish School Direct successfully as part of the programme offer.
21. Subject tutors work hard to improve the central programmes by carefully evaluating each taught module and drawing on trainees' feedback to make improvements. Subject and professional tutors have

improved the methods used to track trainees' performance against the professional standards: for example, the electronic 'Scroll' system is used well to identify and intervene early for trainees whose performance declines on school experience. However, whilst good support is given when trainees are seeking employment, leaders do not have comprehensive data on former trainees' destinations. This impedes their work in promoting an increase in numbers gaining employment within six months.

22. School leaders and teachers play a key role in the delivery and improvement of the training programme. Expert practitioners and visiting speakers from the schools deliver good seminars at the university. Valuable training experiences are also offered for trainees from across groups of schools at 'hub' training events across the South West, and through School Direct teaching alliances. This and the very effective mentor training offered across the region help explain why so many partnership schools are long-standing members.
23. Processes for recruiting trainees onto the programme are strong for all training routes. Partnership schools and course leaders work closely to select trainees with moral purpose and the necessary personal attributes to succeed. High expectations are set; for example, mathematics tutors seek candidates for the specialist subject route who display passion for learning and the potential to be future leaders. The provider is committed to providing effective support for those trainees who show potential to teach but need extra guidance with academic study.
24. While the partnership has many strengths, including a good range of quality assurance mechanisms, it does not always detect or address inconsistencies, such as those schools that, whilst fully engaged in training, are unclear about the partnership's priorities for improvement. In addition, the small number of over-generous judgements on trainees' teaching was not identified soon enough.
25. The university recognises that staff changes, including at leadership level, and a sharp increase in trainee numbers resulted in some organisational difficulties this year. Programme leaders have quickly taken steps to put in place clearer procedures for written assignments, introduced well-regarded student consultation forums, and adjusted strategic plans so that pressure on school placement arrangements will be eased.
26. Despite these inconsistencies, trainees complete the programme well prepared for a role within the teaching profession. This is reflected in the extent of the partnership and the confidence of member schools in appointing former trainees to their schools. The priorities for improvement are well defined. Leaders know there is more to do to

communicate these across the wider partnership and to ensure exacting criteria for measuring the impact of intended actions in their planning. Good gains have been secured in outcomes for training, the core programme and the tracking of trainees' progress, all indications of good capacity for further improvement.

27. The provider is compliant with ITE criteria and requirements.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Ipplepen Primary, Newton Abbot
The Grove Primary, Totnes
Furzeham Primary, Brixham
East the Water Primary, Bideford
Torpoint Nursery and Infant, Torpoint
Blackawton Primary, Totnes
Ermington Primary, Ivybridge
Ernesettle Community Primary, Plymouth
Gulworthy Primary, Tavistock
Milton Abbot, Tavistock
Quethiock Church of England Voluntary Aided, Liskeard
Cann Bridge, Estover
St Stephen's Community Primary, Launceston
St Peter's Primary, Whitleigh
Plympton St. Maurice, Plymouth
Shakespeare Primary, Plymouth
Brixham Church of England Primary, Brixham
Sherwell Valley Primary, Torquay
Callington Primary, Callington
Woolborough Church of England Primary, Newton Abbot
Salisbury Road Primary, Plymouth
King's School and Nursery, Plymouth
Beechwood Primary
Oldway Primary

The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The secondary partnership involves 30 schools across three local authorities in the south-west peninsular. It includes a new Schools Direct partnership led by Penrice Academy in St Austell. The university sponsors primary and secondary academies and a University Teaching College in Plymouth. In 2013/14, there are 35 core trainees and 15 Schools Direct trainees. There are subject specialist courses in science (with biology, or chemistry, or physics), mathematics, art and design, drama, music, geography and English.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors jointly observed 16 lessons taught by trainees alongside their mentors or class teachers, and three lessons taught by NQTs. Inspectors interviewed the trainees and scrutinised their portfolios of training evidence. Inspectors observed trainers giving feedback to trainees. Inspectors interviewed these trainers, and eight school-based professional mentors.
- Meetings were held with the secondary programme leader and Schools Direct leader, and with the core subject pathway tutors. Separate discussions took place with the ITE programme committee, and the University Academy Trust Board. The self-evaluation and action plans of the secondary programme were scrutinised. The reports of external examiners were evaluated. Meetings were held with those responsible for managing safeguarding arrangements and for recruitment and selection.

Inspection Team

Brian Cartwright, Her Majesty's Inspector: Secondary phase and overall lead inspector

Terry Russell, additional inspector: assistant phase lead

Emma Brown, additional inspector: team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the secondary partnership

- The coherent, effective training across the partnership that leads to well-qualified and knowledgeable trainees who exceed the minimum Teachers' Standards.

- The high quality of mentoring, and good training of mentors that results in effective, accurate and efficient diagnosis and feedback of trainees' strengths and areas for development.
- The high levels of trainees' subject knowledge, coupled with insightful research into contemporary education including changes to the National Curriculum.
- The good planning, and subsequent flexible delivery of those plans by trainees that ensure their students make good progress.
- The good preparation and experience that trainees have for teaching students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The useful opportunities for all trainees to experience sixth form or college teaching.
- The careful and rigorous recruitment and selection of high calibre trainees, including those whose first degrees do not exactly match the subject taught.

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

The partnership should:

- ensure any grading of teaching consistently links the actions of the trainees to the learning of their students
- review the mechanism whereby the recording of trainees' progress against their weekly targets is clearly linked to weekly formal observations
- ensure that the action plans that result from the monitoring and evaluation of trainees' outcomes include measurable performance milestones.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

28. Trainees make at least good progress during their training year. All those who completed their training in 2012/13 exceeded the Teachers' Standards, and half of them did so by a considerable margin. Almost all of the current cohort are on target to achieve just as well. A key strength of these good or better trainee teachers is their detailed planning of lessons. They use prior attainment information about the

students they are teaching well to prepare a range of different approaches to the lesson, so that students are challenged and interested in learning.

29. Trainees use their subject expertise well in order to ensure that key subject learning points are conveyed to students. Trainees set high demands of their students, and consistently encourage students to attempt new and more difficult work. Trainees know their students well and gain their respect, so that students are keen to try hard and do their best. Trainees have a good knowledge of how their subject should be taught, and understand the steps that students need to make to increase their understanding or develop new skills. As a result, students enjoy learning to the extent that they want to share their excitement of mastering new skills with their friends and family.
30. Trainees are usually good at managing students' behaviour, and have fully grasped the importance of engaging students with motivating activities as one of the first requirements of good behaviour management. Trainees also become responsive to on-going learning in their lessons, and demonstrate good adaptations in the light of their assessment of how learning is progressing. In most lessons observed by inspectors, trainees allowed sufficient time for students to practise and review new learning.
31. Trainees respond well to the challenging assignments set by the university. Good feedback by pathway leaders ensures that these assignments play a key part in developing trainees' understanding of whole-school aspects, for example special educational needs.
32. Taken over a period of time, the proportion of trainees who qualify at the end of the course is in line with the national average for the sector. Small numbers mean that any fluctuations in the proportion of trainees who complete appear disproportionately significant, and in the current year a higher number of trainees than usual have withdrawn or deferred. All of these situations are linked to personal circumstances rather than any lack of progress towards successful course qualification.
33. Most trainees successfully obtain teaching jobs when they qualify; all of those in the 2012/13 cohort did so. Over time, employment rates have been at or slightly above the national average for the sector. Partnership schools are keen to employ trainees, with many examples of former trainees now taking positions of responsibility in partnership schools. Trainees fulfil wider professional responsibilities well in the partnership schools. They demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

34. One of the aims of the training course is to 'engender in each trainee teacher an appreciation of the fascination of teaching'. Mentors model that attitude exceptionally well. Their incisive analysis and feedback to trainees are a notable strength of the training. Trainers correctly identify the key strengths of each lesson, and areas still requiring development, from their observations and from discussions with trainees and other teachers. They then select just those aspects that were pertinent to the trainees' current targets for improvement to feed back what has gone well and what needs improvement. The importance of students' understanding and mastery of a subject's characteristics forms a key strand in the advice and guidance of trainers. The best examples allow the mentor to share the bigger picture of what constitutes successful learning with the trainee.
35. However, there are some occasions where trainers focus so much on how well the Teaching Standards are met, strand by strand, that the progress students are making in the lesson is overlooked. This leads to instances where the grading against the various strands of the Teaching Standards is too generous. The recording of trainees' grades and the setting of consequent developmental targets are a systematic and effective process; however, it is not always clear how the targets that trainees agree with their mentors in their regular meetings are subsequently met.
36. Trainees are responsible for self-auditing their subject knowledge and recording areas that need developing. Practice varies here, with many examples seen of clear progress in increasing subject knowledge, but also examples where the record is not yet complete. Mentors are a useful source of expertise to bridge gaps in subject knowledge, but do not routinely make sure that all trainees complete their audit.
37. The university centre-based training and the partnership schools' in-house programme of wider professional studies are well planned and provide timely input for trainees. Trainees know about changes to the National Curriculum, with their expertise in this used by their school subject departments. The programmes are linked to assignments, and mentors are able to connect this generic training to subject-specific applications very well. It results in trainees being able to participate fully in the wider life of the school, and to gain effective insight into how schools work.
38. The centre-based training includes a well-regarded 'day of difference' conference that brings experts in inclusion and equality to teach trainees about these aspects in relation to modern multicultural England. The training includes instruction and guidance on managing bullying, and in the essential child protection skills, duties and responsibilities of teachers.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

39. The secondary phase is a successful part of the wider initial teacher training programme of the University of Plymouth. It plays an important role in sustaining the supply of well-trained new teachers for the South-West region. The development of a School Direct partnership with a teaching schools alliance, the sponsorship of academies and of a University Technology College illustrate the scale of ambition shared by leaders across the region.
40. The key strength of the partnership is the far-reaching and substantial collaboration between the university and the partnership schools, academies and teaching alliances. This results in a shared sense of purpose, which is 'to prepare each trainee teacher for entry into the profession as a subject specialist with the levels of knowledge, personal qualities and standards of professional competence necessary to stimulate the imagination of children and to maintain and improve standards in schools'. The partnership does this well.
41. The partnership has managed recent substantial changes to the numbers of trainees and range of subject pathways very well, sustaining good outcomes for trainees. A new Schools Direct programme uses the university as the Higher Education partner, with an aligned programme for Schools Direct trainees that integrates with the overall core training calendar. Further changes are planned for 2014/15, in line with the changing landscape of supply for teacher training. The provider is leading change in initial teacher education in the region and has consistently demonstrated a strong capacity to improve further.
42. The high subject expertise of subject pathway tutors is used to good effect in training mentors; this training is widely valued by mentors and their schools and is a key reason for the ongoing strength of the secondary partnership. It allows for the recruitment of trainees whose first degrees are not a direct match to the secondary subject course. For example, sports science graduates are training to teach science because of excellent additional subject knowledge enhancement from tutors and mentors.
43. Mentors and professional tutors praise the quick response by the provider to any concerns raised. The role of the Plymouth Institute of Education in ongoing teacher professional development is being used as a successful element in recruiting teachers to partnership schools set in challenging socio-economic locations. This approach reflects the consistent vision across all the phases of education to increase opportunities for young people, especially from backgrounds that might

make them at risk of under-achievement, through widening their access to further and higher education.

44. Partners are involved fully in the recruitment and selection of potential trainees. The deservedly high reputation of the provider in the region leads to very high numbers of potential applicants. These are carefully sifted before any are invited to interview. Successful trainees appreciate the rigour of the process, and the very high proportion of good or outstanding trainees bears testimony to the reliability of initial recruitment. Some small shortfalls in terms of completion rates are not connected to any under-achievement of trainees.
45. All partnership members contribute to regular monitoring and review, leading to an accurate self-evaluation. The provider regularly surveys its trainees and has a good, and improving, formal meeting programme with trainee representatives. The action plans that result from these reviews propose activities that resolve the issues raised. However, these activities do not include measurable trainee outcomes as targets that could be used to gauge the success of these actions. Swift action has been taken to address some concerns raised in previous surveys including the national NQT survey. As a result, the most recent NQT survey shows above-average levels of positive responses to most questions. There remains some dissatisfaction amongst current trainees with the response of the provider to student views. The trainees interviewed for this inspection had no such concerns, and all spoke highly of the support of mentors, subject tutors and programme leaders.
46. All trainees are teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4, thereby ensuring compliance with this 11–16 teacher-training programme. All also have useful post-16 teaching experiences, to varying extents. In a few schools, some uncertainty over exactly when Key Stage 4 begins has led to one or two schools incorrectly assuming that an early start, in Year 9, counts as Key Stage 4 experience for a trainee. The provider has addressed this shortcoming appropriately by requiring schools to ensure that trainees teach Years 10 or 11 as well as Key Stage 3.
47. The systems for checking the suitability of trainees in respect of safeguarding in all phases meet requirements, with a number of additional checks in place for students on courses lasting more than one year.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Callington Community College
Coombe Dean School

Devonport High School for Girls
Kingsbridge Community College
Launceston College
Marine Academy Plymouth
Penrice Academy
Saltash.net community school
South Dartmoor Community College
Stoke Damerel Community College

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the FE in ITE partnership

- The university works in partnership with five partner FE colleges in the South West to provide teacher training for those working, or intending to work, in post-16 education and training. Full-time pre-service training, leading to the diploma in education and training (DET), is provided at the university and at three of the colleges. Two-year part-time in-service programmes are provided at all of the colleges. There are ten specialist pathways: art and design, digital literacy, early childhood studies, English, humanities, mathematics, music, physical education, science, and special educational needs.
- At the time of the inspection, 125 trainees were on the full-time course, and 145 on the part-time course, with second-year trainees completing the diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector (DTLLS). The vast majority of in-service trainees work at the partner colleges. The pre-service trainees undertake placements both at the partner colleges and at a number of other colleges in the region.

Information about the FE in ITE inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors visited four of the five partner colleges and three colleges used for placements. They observed 20 trainees teach, mostly alongside either their mentor or a teacher trainer. Inspectors interviewed all of the observed trainees and their mentors, and scrutinised trainees' portfolios of work and reviews of their progress. Inspectors also interviewed trainees who had finished their programmes in 2013.
- Inspectors held discussions with programme leaders at the university, and with teacher trainers at the university. They also interviewed programme leaders and other key staff at each of the colleges. Inspectors scrutinised course documentation, training resources, and a range of supporting evidence provided by the university and the colleges.

Inspection Team

Alan Hinchliffe, Her Majesty's Inspector: FE lead inspector
Richard Beynon, Her Majesty's Inspector: assistant lead inspector
Andrew Armitage, additional inspector: team inspector
Jo-Ann Delaney, additional inspector: team inspector
John Homewood, additional inspector: team inspector
Terence Hunt, additional inspector: team inspector
Steve Stanley, Her Majesty's Inspector: team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the FE partnership

- The outstanding leadership and management of the partnership, both at the university and in the colleges, which result in highly effective collaboration to raise standards of further education teaching in the region.
- The good or outstanding progress made by trainees in developing the skills and attributes to become accomplished teachers.
- The consistently good training throughout the partnership, complemented by the excellent support trainees receive from their trainers and mentors.
- The effectiveness of the training in helping trainees to be aware of, and respond to, current policy initiatives in the further education and skills sector.
- The culture of high expectations and standards in the partner colleges and the placement colleges, which is transmitted to trainees, who as a consequence take pride in their work and are ambitious to improve.

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

The partnership should:

- ensure that judgements made on trainees' lessons are enriched and are more accurate by focusing more on the impact of their practice on the rate and depth of their students' learning, in addition to the current focus on the extent to which trainees are meeting the professional Standards
- strengthen the quality and consistency of mentoring further by ensuring that all mentors understand fully their role in supporting trainees to reflect on, and improve further, the range of techniques and resources that they use to teach specific elements of their subjects.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

48. The proportion of trainees who complete their training successfully has improved over the last three years and is high. Such improvement is commendable in an increasingly challenging environment for further education teacher training. The reasons for the small number of withdrawals or deferrals are well documented, and trainees whose training is interrupted for personal reasons are given every opportunity and encouragement to resume their studies at a later date. The training attracts diverse trainees from a range of ages and academic or vocational backgrounds. There are no noticeable differences in achievement by social group, although successful completion rates are consistently slightly higher for pre-service trainees than in-service trainees. Most pre-service trainees gain employment at the end of their training, often in the colleges in which they have been trained or are undertaking their placement. For those seeking work outside the partnership, the high reputation of the partner colleges strengthens their applications. A small number of trainees do not have sufficient opportunity to broaden their experience through teaching different courses at different levels. Trainees' written assignments are of good or better quality; those trainees with less secure academic backgrounds make good progress in developing their academic skills.
49. Trainees make good or outstanding progress in developing their teaching skills. By the end of the training, the vast majority of trainees meet the professional Standards for further education teachers at a good or outstanding level. The small minority of trainees who are yet to demonstrate consistently good teaching practice all have the potential to develop into good teachers. Many in-service trainees are already accomplished practitioners, and the training strengthens their skills further. Pre-service trainees quickly establish very good habits that prepare them well for their future careers. For example, their lesson planning is usually exceptionally thorough, and they reflect thoughtfully on the individual needs, and diverse backgrounds, of the students that they teach. The vast majority are adept at classroom management, although a small number would benefit from being more assertive with their students. Trainees think carefully about the range of strategies, and assessment techniques, that they will use in lessons, and usually execute these effectively. Trainees react positively and effectively to current policy agendas, including the strong focus on helping students to improve their English and mathematics, and to preparing students to find, and succeed in, employment. Trainees usually produce learning resources of high quality, although many have yet to learn how to exploit fully the potential of new technologies in their lessons.

50. Trainees' thorough preparation is usually, but not always, reflected in the effectiveness of their lessons. While both trainees and trainers focus rigorously on ensuring that the processes of teaching meet the expectations laid down in the professional Standards, both are less adept at evaluating how effectively trainees' lessons result in rapid and deep learning or skills development. As a consequence, trainers are sometimes over-generous in their judgements on trainees' lessons, and neither trainers' nor mentors' reports on lesson observations, nor trainees' self-reflections, focus sufficiently on the experience of the students in the classroom and how much they have learnt.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

51. All of the trainees interviewed spoke very positively about the training and the support that they receive, and inspection evidence shows that the quality of training is consistently high throughout the partnership. Recent modifications to the structure of the courses have provided greater coherence between the different components of the training, and reduced the burden of assessment for trainees without compromising its integrity. The training focuses particularly strongly from the start on supporting trainees to develop fundamental pedagogic skills, although the theoretical underpinning of these skills is not neglected. Trainees value both the high quality of their taught sessions and the unwavering personal and academic support that they receive from their trainers and mentors.
52. Trainees' progress throughout the course is monitored assiduously, with a strong focus on evaluating progress against the professional Standards. Detailed individual development plans, discussed with trainers and mentors, promote critical reflection and effective target setting throughout each module. Trainees who are particularly well organised benefit significantly from the detail of these plans by reviewing at regular intervals their progress against each component of them. However, a minority of trainees struggle to follow through each part of the plan to ensure that the targets have been reviewed and met. The formal assessment of trainees' written work is both accurate and comprehensive, with points for improvement identified clearly. In the few instances where it is necessary, good attention is paid to helping trainees to improve their English.
53. The vast majority of trainees benefit from excellent support from carefully-selected mentors who act as good role models. Mentors help trainees integrate well into their colleges, and trainees benefit from a good level of involvement in college matters outside their teaching responsibilities. Partnership leaders have rightly taken steps to strengthen the impact that mentors have on developing trainees' subject-specific teaching, and this aspect of their work is improving.

However, further training and guidance are needed to ensure that all mentors identify, and articulate, precise subject-related areas for development following their observations of trainees' teaching. In too many instances, mentors do not evaluate with sufficient clarity the impact of trainees' teaching on their students' acquisition of subject-related skills, knowledge and understanding.

54. The strong focus on helping trainees to understand the policy context of further education to inform their practice is a strength. At the majority of partner and placement colleges, staff have a well-developed understanding of the purpose and structure of study programmes for students aged 16 to 19, and trainees benefit from this. During the course, trainees discuss the implications of recent legislative changes and policy initiatives. In assignments, trainees consider effectively and thoughtfully the impact of such changes on their work and on the lives of their students. However, a very small minority of trainees are unclear about the precise requirements for work experience in study programmes. These trainees confuse employment-related activities, such as open days for employers and industry visits, with real work experience. Trainees recognise, and implement, the imperative to help their students to improve their English and mathematics to prepare them for both life and work.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding

55. Outstanding leadership and management across the partnership have brought about swift and sustainable improvement over a period of several years. Although trainees' outcomes are not yet outstanding, all partners work determinedly to identify and resolve the few remaining barriers to achieving excellence. The partnership makes a very significant contribution to raising standards of teaching in the region it serves. The high quality of the partner colleges, and the placement colleges, is instrumental in ensuring that trainees are surrounded by, and therefore seek to replicate, good or outstanding practice. Highly effective leadership at the university ensures that all partners collaborate particularly effectively to ensure consistency through high-quality training and teaching experiences for trainees.
56. The partnership is well managed both strategically and operationally. An ambitious vision is shared by all partners and supported well by senior leaders at the colleges. Day-to-day management of the partnership is very effective and ensures that trainees benefit from excellent organisation and communications. The formal structures in place, which enable partners to meet and ensure that common aims are striven for, work very well. In line with the high expectations that permeate the partnership, pre-service trainees are selected through a rigorous

procedure that seeks to ensure that all have the capacity to become good or better practitioners.

57. Partnership leaders from the university and the colleges evaluate the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision rigorously, and determine key priorities for development through a consensus focused on improving trainees' outcomes. Data are used well to identify any variations in achievement across the partnership. However, the basis on which trainees' final attainment grades are decided is not sufficiently clear to all of the staff involved, and over-generous grading of the extent of students' learning in trainees' lessons remains an obstacle in parts of the partnership to raising standards even further. The overall partnership self-evaluation document aligns well with the equivalent documents in the partner colleges, providing a common thread throughout the partnership in identifying aspects for development.
58. The partnership makes a very strong contribution to meeting regional needs for well-trained, reflective teachers who have high aspirations and expectations for their students. In key sectors such as media design, music, digital arts and technology, the partnership does much to support the regional move away from traditional industries and into sectors that can thrive in rural communities or areas of economic hardship.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Cornwall College
Exeter College
Petroc
Somerset College of Arts and Technology
Truro and Penwith College

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70059
Inspection number	434191
Inspection dates	19–22 May 2014
Lead inspector	Brian Cartwright HMI
Type of ITE partnership	HEI
Phases provided	Primary, Secondary, FE
Date of previous inspection	March 2011 (pri, sec) and March 2012 (FE)
Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70059
Provider address	Plymouth Institute of Education Nancy Astor Building University of Plymouth Drake Circus Plymouth PL4 8AA