

University of Essex

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates Stage 1: 9–11 June 2014

Stage 2: 29 September–1 October 2014

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty’s Inspectors in accordance with the *ITE Inspector Handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from June 2014.

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

Inspection judgements

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

	ITE for FE
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	3
The outcomes for trainees	3
The quality of training across the partnership	3
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	3

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the FE in ITE partnership

- The University of Essex partnership was established in 2007 and comprises the university and two general further education colleges: Colchester Institute and South Essex College.
- The partnership offers two-year part-time in-service courses validated by the university as a Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) or a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). It also offers one-year full-time pre-service courses leading to the Cert Ed or PGCE (Professional).
- Staff at the two partner colleges provide all the training; there is no provision at the university. Work-based training takes place at each trainee's place of employment (the college), at other educational settings, through voluntary work carried out by trainees, or on work placements arranged by partner colleges.
- At the time of the first visit in June 2014, there were 96 trainees on the partnership's courses. Of these, 68 were enrolled at Colchester Institute. At South Essex College, 13 of the 96 trainees were at the end of their training and about to complete their qualifications; at Colchester Institute 40 trainees were about to complete. A second inspection visit was carried out in September 2014 to observe former trainees' teaching.

Information about the FE in ITE inspection

- During the first inspection visit inspectors carried out eight observations of trainees' teaching. Five of these observations were carried out jointly with a tutor from the partnership or a workplace mentor. During the second inspection visit inspectors observed the teaching of 13 teachers who had recently completed their training.
- During each stage of the inspection inspectors interviewed trainees, former trainees, tutors, mentors, course leaders and managers from the colleges and from the university. Inspectors also examined trainees' assessed work, training plans, progress records, data and other relevant documents associated with the partnership's provision of teacher training.
- Inspectors took account of the partnership's self-evaluation document, development plans and of trainees' responses to the online trainee survey carried out during stage 1 of the inspection.

Inspection Team

Penelope Horner HMI	Lead inspector
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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 3

The key strengths of the FE partnership are:

- trainees' good use of their strong subject knowledge, professional expertise and experience which gives them credibility with learners and helps learners' understanding
- the high proportion of trainees who progress to relevant employment with providers of education and training
- the good role modelling provided by teacher trainers, which successfully encourages trainees to try new approaches to teaching and learning
- the strong collaborative work within the partnership so that members are open to new ideas and to learning from one another
- the management of provision, which is highly responsive to feedback from trainees and the need for improvement when it is identified.

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

The partnership must:

- prepare and use clear criteria for judging the quality of trainees' teaching at each stage of the course so that the rate of progress in trainees' practice can be improved and a higher proportion of trainees can become good or outstanding teachers
- standardise criteria for trainers' assessments of teaching practice to ensure that evaluations of the quality of trainees' teaching are always accurate
- make use of a wider range of assessment information, in addition to teaching observation reports, to evaluate the quality of trainees' teaching
- implement planned programmes of development for mentors to ensure that they provide accurate assessments of trainees' teaching and progress during the course

- ensure that training pays sufficient attention to preparing trainees to develop their learners' skills in English and mathematics
- ensure that improvements are made consistently well across the partnership, in order to raise trainees' achievement.

Inspection Judgements

1. The proportion of trainees that are retained and complete their qualification is high. However, this masks some differences in performance at each of the partner colleges. At Colchester Institute success rates have improved steadily over time and are consistently high. At South Essex College they were high in 2013/14 and a good improvement on previous years. However, a high proportion of trainees in the college's current cohort, who were due to complete in 2015, have either withdrawn from, or suspended their studies, often as a result of difficult, extenuating circumstances. Therefore, this improvement at the college is unlikely to be sustained in 2014/15. Tutors and managers at both colleges provide suitable help and guidance to enable trainees to remain on their programmes wherever possible.
2. The proportion of trainees who complete their courses as good or outstanding teachers is too low and requires improvement. Managers and tutors place too much emphasis on trainees' final observation grade in judging the quality of trainees' teaching. This does not always translate into similarly good or outstanding practice in the day-to-day teaching that subsequently follows; it reflects tutors' view of trainees' potential as teachers rather than the standard that trainees have reached at the end of their training. The good practice that observers see during training is not sufficiently well established in trainees' teaching to ensure that they continue to perform at such high levels as newly qualified teachers. As a result, in their self-evaluation, managers and tutors over-estimated the proportion of good and outstanding teachers in the cohort of trainees that completed in 2014.
3. Progression to employment in education and training is high. Almost all the trainees continue in employment at the end of their training or gain relevant employment in the sector locally, thus meeting the education and training skills needs in the region.
4. Trainees have strong subject knowledge and professional expertise. They plan lessons well with clear objectives for learning and differentiated activities which make good use of their subject expertise to illustrate theory or bring topics to life. Trainees use their knowledge of recent developments in industry to make sure learning is relevant and up-to-date and to prepare resources that explain difficult concepts or

terminology. This gives trainees credibility and assists their learners' understanding, helping to build productive working relationships.

5. Trainees do not always have sufficiently high expectations of their learners. Trainees at Colchester Institute expect learners to arrive at lessons promptly, be ready to learn and that their behaviour will be good. However, trainees do not always make effective use of questions to probe and extend learning sufficiently or to tease out key points in order to improve learners' understanding. Former trainees working with learners at level 3 do not always demand high enough standards of these learners or provide sufficient challenge to enable them to make better progress. At South Essex College, trainees have insufficiently high expectations of learners' behaviour and do not always have the skills to manage poor behaviour. Lessons are often disrupted by chatter between learners when the teacher is talking. The college has recently introduced a suitable new behaviour policy to tackle this.
6. Teacher trainers are good role models, encouraging trainees to take appropriate risks and try new approaches in their teaching. Trainees make good progress in developing their skills and teaching practice. They gain in confidence and are able to apply what they have learned in their training sessions, and from their mentors, to their practical teaching. During teacher training sessions, trainers make effective use of trainees' own experience and subjects to exemplify points. Trainers and mentors provide helpful feedback to trainees on how they might improve, although this is not always captured in written records.
7. At an early stage in their training, tutors assess trainees' needs in English, mathematics and academic writing skills and provide some good, effective support to help trainees develop these skills further. Tutors monitor trainees' academic progress carefully and give some good guidance and support to enable trainees to tackle the demands of written assignments and research. Tutors provide helpful personal support and guidance to enable trainees to remain on programme when they encounter difficulties and barriers that threaten trainees' continued participation. However, this is not always successful in preventing these trainees from suspending their studies temporarily or leaving the course.
8. Trainees' practice in improving learners' English and mathematics skills is not yet uniformly good across the partnership. Trainers at both colleges in the partnership are keenly aware of the need to develop these skills in trainees. South Essex College's action to train its staff in improving learners' English and mathematics has helped trainees to make better progress. Former trainees are now careful to ensure that English and mathematics are included in lesson plans and that teaching reinforces and develops skills in these subjects if necessary. At Colchester Institute, trainees are clear about the importance of English

and mathematics and many provide additional work for individuals or small groups to help learners improve their skills. Trainees working with learners at level 1 or 2 are adept at helping these learners to improve. However, when working with learners at level 3, former trainees sometimes assume, for example, that learners with GCSE English or mathematics at grade C or above do not need further help to improve their use of these subjects and do not provide sufficient reinforcement or support.

9. Most mentors give trainees good support and helpful guidance to develop their subject specialist teaching skills. Mentors' productive working relationships with trainees enable them to apply their training successfully within their subject areas. Trainees value this contribution to their development and many trainees maintain this professional relationship after completing their training. However, course leaders hold too few regular meetings to share or standardise practice among mentors. Not all trainees in the cohort completing in 2014 were allocated mentors. This has been rectified for the current cohort.
10. The partnership has suitable arrangements in place for assessing trainees against the 2014 professional standards for teachers and trainers. Managers and tutors assess trainees accurately against these standards and to meet the requirements of the university. All trainees meet these standards by the end of their training.
11. Arrangements for monitoring trainees' progress require improvement. The criteria for judging trainees' teaching are insufficiently clear or graduated. They do not enable trainees and tutors to measure the progress trainees are making towards excellence in their practice. Not all mentors are trained in the observation of teaching and learning for teacher training purposes. Course leaders do not carry out routine moderation of tutors' and mentors' observation reports to ensure that judgements about the quality of trainees' teaching are accurate or standardised.
12. In their assessments, observers pay insufficient attention to the impact of trainees' teaching on their learners' progress. Trainees reflect well on their performance and make good use of the feedback they are given but do not include learners' progress in their reflections. As a result, their reflections are insufficiently evaluative and do not help them improve their practice further.
13. Managers and tutors use too narrow a range of information to assess trainees' progress in developing as teachers. For example, they make insufficient use of feedback from mentors or learners' progress and attainment in their assessments of trainees. As a result, trainees are not

sufficiently clear about how well they are doing or challenged to become even better.

14. Meetings between tutors and trainees to review progress are insufficiently frequent or regular and do not always pay sufficient attention to trainees' long-term targets to enable them to make better progress. Although tutors and mentors give useful feedback that helps trainees improve, it focuses too often on short-term targets for improvement between one lesson and the next rather than trainees' development over time. Managers and tutors have recently taken action to tackle this area for improvement and now include progress towards long-term developmental targets in observation reports. They have plans to make better use of feedback from mentors to assess trainees' progress.
15. Senior managers and course leaders are self-critical and prepare well-considered and evaluative reports on the quality of provision. However, the basis on which judgements are made about the quality of trainees' teaching at the end of the course is flawed, so managers' analysis is over-generous. Managers and tutors have not monitored trainees' progress effectively enough or taken sufficient action to ensure that most are good or outstanding teachers by the end of their training.
16. The university is successful in its strategic aims for the partnership. Provision meets regional skills needs and responds to gaps in provision locally. It is designed well to offer different entry points for trainees and links effectively with the range of other qualifications that are available to people wishing to teach learners over the age of 16. Former trainees are successful in gaining relevant employment in the region.
17. Successful work by the university has developed the partnership to provide coherence in provision and strong collaborative work between partners, and with other teacher training providers. It is an equal partnership in which information and ideas are shared openly and willingly to improve provision. The programme of study is jointly prepared to meet professional standards for further education teachers. Tutors and managers at each college meet regularly to share practice and improve the delivery of the programme, for example, by developing Colchester Institute's value-added system for measuring trainees' progress.
18. Despite much staff change at each partner college, management of the programme is strong and responsive to feedback from trainees. Trainees at South Essex College are complimentary about the staff changes made by managers between the first and second years of their course, giving trainees more time for professional discussions about practice and the opportunity to learn from one another's experience.

19. Arrangements for the recruitment, selection and initial assessment of trainees are thorough. They ensure that they are placed on the most appropriate course for their needs and circumstances and are given suitable support. To strengthen these procedures further, course leaders at Colchester Institute have recently introduced an additional assessment of applicants' suitability as teachers to the selection process for the full-time course. For September 2015 entrants, South Essex College course leaders now refer applicants with only voluntary teaching activities, which may be vulnerable to change, to its full-time provision so that teaching practice opportunities are better secured.
20. Managers and staff at all levels are highly responsive to feedback and the need for improvement when it is identified. Since the first inspection visit in June 2014 they have acted promptly to make appropriate changes to provision. These include: action to improve trainees' teaching of English and mathematics in lessons; additions to a module to develop trainees' use of questions in lessons; developing mechanisms for assessing and reporting trainees' progress over time; greater use of mentors and individual tutorials to review trainees' progress; prompts to ensure greater attention to learners' progress in assessing teaching and in trainees' reflection.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Colchester Institute
South Essex College

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70257
Inspection number	428998
Inspection dates Stage 1	9–11 June 2014
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Lead inspector	Penelope Horner HMI
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Phases provided	FE and skills
Date of previous inspection	15-19 November 2010
Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70257
Provider address	Wivenhoe Park Colchester Essex CO4 3SQ

