

University of Sunderland ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 18–20 May 2015 Stage 2: 5–7 October 2015

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted inspectors in accordance with the *Initial teacher education inspection handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2015.

The inspection draws on evidence from each phase and separate route 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

	Early Years ITT (EYTS)	Primary QTS	Secondary QTS	ITE in FE
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	3	2	2	2
The outcomes for trainees	3	2	2	2
The quality of training across the partnership	3	2	2	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	3	2	2	2

Overview of the ITE partnership

The overall effectiveness in each of the primary, secondary and further education ITE partnerships is good. The overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership requires improvement in early years ITT.

The overall effectiveness of the early years ITT partnership is not yet good because the quality of trainees' teaching is too variable. While there are clear strengths in this partnership, not least the breadth of placement experiences which make trainees well placed to seek employment across the early years sector, mentors are not given sufficient guidance to enable them to judge the quality of trainees' teaching accurately.

The overall effectiveness of the primary, secondary and further education partnerships is good because trainees, overall, are helped to teach children, pupils, students and learners well.

Key findings

- The attainment of trainees in the primary, secondary and further education partnerships is improving. Overall, trainees in these partnerships are prepared to teach well.
- The professional conduct of trainees in all four partnerships is strong. Trainees have a keen understanding of British values and how to promote them.
- Leaders of all four partnerships have responded quickly to the findings of the first stage of the inspection. As a result, appropriate plans to improve or enhance training quality and outcomes for trainees are in place.
- Employment rates of primary, some secondary subjects and further education trainees, overall, are strong.

To improve, the ITE partnership:

- must improve the overall effectiveness of the early years ITT partnership
- should continue to raise the completion rates of trainees in the primary and secondary partnerships
- should ensure partnerships are robust in their quality-assurance systems, for instance in the timely checking of actions taken to ensure the impact desired is evident
- should, when grading trainees as outstanding, particularly in the early years ITT and primary partnerships, ensure trainees awarded this grade truly demonstrate the quality associated with such a high standard.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The Faculty of Education and Society at the University of Sunderland is a large and diverse grouping of three separate departments: education, culture and social sciences. Teacher training for schools and for further education is located within the education department. At the time of the inspection, early years ITT was located within the social sciences department.
- At stage 1, the partnership offered a range of routes into teaching that depend on the age range to be taught. The routes include:
 - for early years ITT trainees, the Postgraduate Certificate in Early Years Studies; a part-time employment-based route leading to an Advanced Diploma in Early Years Studies; and a three-month Assessment Only route for graduates
 - for primary trainees, the three-year undergraduate BA (Hons) Primary Education with qualified teacher status (QTS); the three-year BA (Hons) Primary Education with QTS; the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) 5–11 years; School Direct (Salaried); School Direct (Tuition); and Assessment Only
 - for secondary trainees, the undergraduate BSc Mathematics (Hons), BA ICT (Hons), BA English (Hons) and BA Chemistry (Hons); PGCE; School Direct; and Assessment Only
 - for further education trainees, full-time and part-time courses through the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (at level 6) and the Professional Certificate in Education (at levels 5 and 6).
- The four partnerships comprise settings, schools and colleges across the north-east of England, and also London for Assessment Only trainees.
- Owing to retirement, there was a change in overall leadership of the partnerships between stages 1 and 2 of the inspection. At the time of stage 2 of the inspection, the new head of the department of education had been in post for eight weeks and the department of education was in the process of being restructured.

The early years ITT phase

Information about the early years ITT partnership

- The partnership offers three routes to the award of Early Years Teacher Status: a full-time programme leading to the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Early Years Studies with Early Years Teacher Status; a part-time employment-based route leading to an Advanced Diploma in Early Years Studies with Early Years Teacher Status; and a three-month Assessment Only route for graduates who have extensive experience of working with children across the birth to five age range.
- At the time of stage 1 of the inspection, seven trainees were following the full-time programme and eight trainees the part-time pathway. No trainees were on the Assessment Only route.
- This is the first year that the partnership has offered programmes leading to the award of Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS).
- The university works in partnership with a small number of early years settings, including schools, across the North East. Most partnership settings are based in and around Sunderland.

Information about the early years ITT inspection

- During stage 1 of the inspection, four trainees were observed teaching during their final placement. In addition, two part-time Advanced Diploma trainees were observed in the setting in which they were employed. During stage 2 of the inspection, two former trainees who were in the first few months of employment as early years teachers (EYTs) were also observed.
- Discussions were held with 11 trainees and former trainees in total, including one who had not yet secured employment, and their mentors. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire completed by 14 trainees and to the partnership's own trainee evaluations.
- Meetings were held with a range of setting- and university-based leaders, including managers, mentors, assessors and members of the partnership's strategic management group.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of evidence, such as course handbooks, development plans and the partnership's self-evaluation. They also reviewed documents to check that the partnership was compliant with statutory requirements relating to early years ITT (EYTS) and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Karen Ling	Lead inspector	(stage 1)
Lee Owston, HMI	Lead inspector	(stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 3

The key strengths of the early years ITT partnership are:

- trainees' enthusiasm, high standards of personal and professional conduct and their ability to continually reflect on their own practice, which helps them to improve the quality of their teaching
- trainees' understanding of equality and diversity, including their ability to instil respectful and tolerant attitudes in young children by celebrating differences and the uniqueness of each child
- trainees' well-developed understanding of the welfare requirements of the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework, enabling trainees to form strong attachments with children and establish a safe and nurturing environment in which to learn
- the breadth of placement experiences trainees receive so that they are confident to work with babies, toddlers, pre-school and school-age children and, therefore, well placed to seek employment across the early years sector
- the productive relationships that have been forged between leaders of the partnership and the schools and settings where trainees are placed.

What does the early years ITT partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership must:

- ensure that a higher proportion of trainees demonstrate good or better quality teaching and exceed the minimum expectations as set out in the teachers' standards (early years) by making sure that trainees:
 - acquire a secure knowledge of systematic synthetic phonics and early mathematical development to ensure children are well prepared for the next stage of their education
 - use assessment information effectively to plan learning opportunities that challenge all children, including disabled children, those with special educational needs and the most able, and enable them to make good progress
 - develop the confidence and expertise to lead and influence the work of others so that they make a greater difference to the overall quality of teaching within their setting
- improve the quality and coherence of the training programme so that it has a greater focus on the impact of trainees' teaching on children's learning and progress by:
 - tailoring placements and training opportunities to better meet the learning needs of trainees as they progress through the programme

- reviewing the guidance for mentors to enable them to judge the quality of teaching accurately, ensuring they hold trainees to account for children’s learning and progress during individual sessions and over time
- improving the training and development of mentors so that they are better placed to support and challenge trainees, particularly in relation to their understanding of early mathematical development and the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics
- hasten the rate of improvement demonstrated by leaders so that important changes make a greater impact on current cohorts of trainees by:
 - ensuring robust quality-assurance mechanisms are in place to monitor the effectiveness of training and the consistency of support and challenge from mentors
 - adapting improvement planning so that the partnership is aware of the expected outcomes of intended actions and can measure their impact quickly.

Inspection judgements

1. The quality of trainees’ teaching is too variable. Despite virtually all trainees’ attainment being assessed by the partnership as ‘outstanding’ on completion of their programme, the practice observed by inspectors was not yet of a consistently good quality. Leaders acknowledge that assessments have been overgenerous. Mentors and assessors have given too much weight to the quantity of evidence trainees have collected against the teachers’ standards (early years) rather than its quality. Too little account has been taken of trainees’ teaching and its impact on children’s learning and progress in reaching overall attainment grades.
2. Overall, inspectors found trainees to be meeting rather than exceeding the minimum level of practice expected of EYTs as defined by the teachers’ standards (early years). Most trainees demonstrate stronger performance in their care practices with the early establishment of rules, routines and expectations so that children settle quickly. Too few trainees demonstrate the same high quality of practice in promoting good learning and progress for all groups of children, including disabled children, those with special educational needs and the most able.
3. Where children were observed to be making good or better progress in their learning and development, trainees and former trainees understood the precise needs of the children in their group. They used their knowledge of children’s likes, dislikes and interests to develop learning experiences that captured children’s imagination and engaged them in activities that developed their concentration, perseverance and ability to work independently. For example, one former trainee worked with a small

group of two-year-olds to make playdough, allowing children to develop their fine motor control and coordination when using tools such as whisks and spoons, all the while encouraging the development of new words such as 'squishy' or 'sticky' to describe their sensory experience. Those trainees exhibiting good or better teaching such as this understood the rich opportunities that one activity can provide to further children's development across multiple areas of learning.

4. When teaching required improvement, trainees and former trainees did not take sufficient account of what they knew about the children in their care to devise activities that would allow every child to make good or better progress. This was particularly the case for disabled children, those with special educational needs and the most able. Trainees commented to inspectors that they did not feel as well prepared by their training to cater effectively for the needs of these children.
5. Inspectors observed some weaknesses in trainees' and former trainees' subject knowledge, especially relating to early reading and mathematical development. On more than one occasion, inspectors witnessed trainees and former trainees adding to children's misconceptions by explaining ideas and concepts incorrectly. For example, inspectors overheard one child being told a cone was a triangle or that the number 57 was made from a five and a seven. Some trainees routinely mispronounced the sounds that letters represent. These errors went unchecked by mentors. The expectation to evaluate this aspect of practice has not been communicated effectively across the partnership.
6. A core component of EYTS is the ability for trainees to take a lead role in supporting and developing the practice of other adults within the setting so that the overall quality of early education improves. While some former trainees were able to fulfil this requirement from the very beginning of their first year in employment, others lacked the confidence and necessary skills to take responsibility for leading practice and managing the professional development of colleagues. Those trainees on the full-time route found this aspect of their work more difficult than those on the part-time employed route as they were completely new to their workplace and reluctant to 'take charge' when other adults around them had significantly greater experience.
7. Trainees and former trainees consistently demonstrate high standards of professional conduct. They form strong attachments with the children in their care and build relationships with the other adults in the setting. They understand the welfare requirements of the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework and apply these diligently in their day-to-day practice. As a result, children settle well and feel comfortable in the presence of trainees and former trainees who they have known for a relatively short period of time.

8. All trainees and former trainees understood the need to ensure that even the youngest children were respectful and tolerant of others, including those children and families who are different from themselves. Trainees seize upon every opportunity to celebrate the diversity found within their setting's local community, including the festivals and traditions observed by those of different faiths. Trainees and former trainees understand the uniqueness of each child and work well to instil a sense of belonging so that all children and their families feel welcome and included.
9. The partnership's recruitment and selection processes are effective. From the outset, trainees are selected because of their passion for the early years, their high levels of motivation and their enthusiasm to develop their own knowledge and skills further. This positive outlook and commitment contributes to the strong completion rate evident in the first year of the partnership. While there are no national benchmarks to make comparisons, only one trainee withdrew during 2014/15.
10. University-based training is successful at equipping trainees with an understanding of child development and the fundamental principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage that relate to children's personal development and welfare. Trainees are less well prepared to address children's learning, especially in key areas such as early reading and mathematical development. Training plans for both the full-time and part-time routes place greater emphasis on personal development and care than on promoting consistently strong learning and progress.
11. Trainees receive only one day of training in systematic synthetic phonics and one day focused on early mathematical development. While trainees told inspectors they found these intensive sessions useful, they acknowledge that they need greater exposure to these crucial areas of learning, across the year, providing a regular opportunity to revisit their learning and keep a check on their own levels of subject knowledge. Even on placement, there is no expectation that mentors will observe trainees teach early reading and mathematics. Setting-based staff have not received training to help them to offer subject-specific feedback in these areas to improve trainees' knowledge and practice.
12. Mentors provide a variable quality of support and challenge to trainees. Inspectors observed some mentors giving high-quality feedback on the quality of teaching. Trainees were challenged to identify what had gone well, what needed to improve and how they would adapt their practice in light of their reflections. However, the feedback did not always have a sharp focus on how different groups of children were doing and the progress they had made. Not all mentors are confident in giving feedback and making accurate judgements. In these instances, discussions focus more on what the trainee has done than the impact of their actions on

children's learning and progress. University staff do not offer sufficiently rapid support for mentors to address this issue.

13. Course leaders ensure that all trainees experience a suitable range of placements covering a range of early years settings and age groups. This prepares trainees well for future employment by ensuring they are confident to cater for the needs of all children in the birth to five age range and are adaptable to different types of setting, such as daycare, children's centres and schools. The placements often afford trainees the opportunity to work in challenging areas where there are high proportions of funded places, such as those for disadvantaged two-year-olds. Nevertheless, placements are often secured based on the proximity to where trainees live rather than the precise matching of a setting's strengths to the emerging gaps in trainees' own learning and practice.
14. Recent changes to the training programme have strengthened the link between theory and trainees' practice. However, despite leaders being aware of the need to develop this more coherent approach to training during the academic year, they have waited until the summer to redesign their approach. Leaders have not been rapid enough in their response to change. Planned improvements have not made a quick enough difference to the experiences and outcomes of trainees.
15. Leaders have recently devised a new set of grading criteria to support better-quality assessment and target setting. Importantly, new documentation ensures that mentors assess the impact of trainees' teaching on the learning and progress of the children in their care. The criterion developed to support this aspect of the teachers' standards does not set a high enough bar. Leaders have not been ambitious enough in what they expect trainees' teaching to achieve in relation to children's progress.
16. Course leaders are passionate about their work and act as advocates for EYTS, understanding its role in elevating the status and quality of the early years profession. Well-established relationships between the university and settings ensure this vision is shared by all who work within the programme. To this end, the partnership is committed to improving the quality of training and outcomes for trainees. It has identified the correct priorities for improvement in response to regular feedback from trainees, former trainees, settings and employers. It has acted promptly on the feedback from stage 1 of the inspection, although it is too early to see the impact of the actions taken.
17. The strategic management group represents a wide range of key stakeholders, including a representative from the local authority. It is well placed to discuss emerging issues and respond to feedback from settings, employers and trainees, but is not always swift in following through on agreed actions. For example, while leaders already recognise that the

new grading criteria are not ambitious enough, they do not intend to change them until after the first interim assessment later in the year. In this way, actions do not make a big enough difference to the experiences and outcomes of current trainees.

18. Quality-assurance mechanisms require improvement. Until recently, mentors have been university-based rather than from within partnership settings. As the partnership moves towards a model of setting-based mentors, there will need to be a much stronger process for assuring the quality of support and challenge offered to trainees, including the need for joint observation within and between settings to ensure parity of judgements. As the strategic management group receives information about the quality of its new mentor workforce, a programme of training and development will need to be considered to ensure the expertise of all those advising and judging trainees is of the highest calibre.
19. Leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning are too descriptive and insufficiently evaluative. While they identify the correct areas for improvement, they do not allow all stakeholders to judge the impact of the intended actions on trainees' outcomes or the quality of training. Leaders are aware of these issues and have increased their focus on improving the quality of trainees' teaching and the validity of judgements about trainees' overall attainment.
20. The partnership meets its legislative requirements regarding equality and diversity, discrimination and safeguarding. Trainees' qualifications and their suitability to work with children are checked and recorded. The partnership complies fully with regulations concerning the recruitment of trainees.

Annex: Partnership schools/settings

The following settings were visited to observe trainees' and former trainees' teaching:

Barnwell Daycare
Dubmire Daycare
Little Angels Nursery
New World Nursery
Normanby Primary School
Thorney Close Daycare

The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- There are approximately 230 schools in the partnership covering 13 local authorities.
- At the time of stage 1 of the inspection, there were two undergraduate courses (BA (Hons) Primary Education) – one three years in length and the other four. The four-year course was in its final year of operation. All in all, there were approximately 340 undergraduate trainees at stage 1 of the inspection. There were 27 trainees following the PGCE in Primary Education (5–11 years) course, 11 trainees on the School Direct (Salaried) route and one on the School Direct (Tuition) route. Nine trainees were following the Assessment Only route.
- On successful completion of their courses, trainees are awarded qualified teacher status (QTS).

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- When observing trainees and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach, inspectors took into account a range of evidence including pupils' work in books. During these observations, inspectors asked pupils about their work. During both stages a range of documentary evidence was considered.
- During stage 1, inspectors visited six schools. Inspectors observed the teaching of 11 trainees representing the four-year undergraduate and School Direct (Tuition) routes. While in school, inspectors held discussions with the trainees observed and their school-based mentors. It was not possible to observe undergraduate trainees from the three-year course because their time in school had ended. While based at the university, inspectors held discussions with 12 trainees from the three-year undergraduate route plus a number of school-based mentors. A training session was also observed. Inspectors took into account the findings of the NQT surveys and the responses recorded by trainees via Ofsted's online survey. There were 51 responses to the survey from postgraduate trainees, 37 from undergraduates, one from the School Direct (Tuition) route and 11 from the School Direct (Salaried) route.
- During stage 2 of the inspection, inspectors visited six schools and observed the teaching of 10 NQTs. Discussions were held with the NQTs and their induction tutors. Meetings with members of the partnership were held at the university to discuss strengths and areas for improvement identified at stage 1. Telephone conversations were held with five former trainees representing the postgraduate, undergraduate and Assessment Only routes.

Inspection team

Mark Williams, HMI
Jane Jones, HMI
Jonathan Brown, HMI

Lead inspector
Assistant lead inspector
Team inspector

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the primary partnership are

- the employability of Sunderland trainees, meaning they are meeting local demand well; this is because trainees:
 - are committed to teaching and are confident about entering the profession
 - understand their responsibilities well and display high levels of willingness to contribute to wider aspects of school life
 - promote positive attitudes in their pupils, including good behaviour and good behaviour for learning
 - are aware of potential barriers to pupils' learning and personal development, reflected in the way they seek to tackle discrimination of any kind
 - teach well overall, showing a readiness to reflect on their own teaching and, increasingly, its impact on the learning of their pupils
 - have increasingly high expectations of how well their pupils are to learn and behave
- the way in which the elements of the taught programmes combine to provide trainees with the knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the primary curriculum
- the way in which professional studies and the modules relating to curriculum innovation are helping trainees to widen their understanding of the range of pupils in their classes; to consider how to teach the foundation subjects discretely and across the curriculum; and to tackle stereotypes, thereby promoting British values well
- the increasingly stronger role played by the strategic management group in deciding priorities and influencing practice
- the clear drive for improvement provided by the primary team based at the university, including the swift response to the findings of the first part of this inspection
- the rise in completion rates owing to the increased robustness of arrangements to recruit and select the most suitable trainees for the course.

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

The partnership should:

- enhance trainees' ability to get the best outcomes for their pupils by:
 - ensuring trainees are familiar with the range of practical apparatus, models and images available to develop pupils' conceptual understanding in mathematics
 - strengthening trainees' understanding and use of assessment across the curriculum, so that they are clear about pupils' attainment and progress and what they look like in practice
 - reducing the variability in the quality of targets set by school-based trainers and those set at the end of training so that trainees are clear what they must do to strengthen their teaching further
- make clear to all in the partnership the criteria for grading trainees so that those graded as outstanding at the end of their training truly demonstrate the quality associated with such a high standard
- increase the robustness of quality-assurance systems to check that the partnership's actions to strengthen training always improve trainees' teaching and pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

21. Outcomes for trainees are good and improving. All exceed the minimum expectations laid down in the teachers' standards. Consequently, trainees are prepared well to teach children and pupils in the primary age range regardless of which route into teaching they follow. This is why the overall effectiveness of the primary partnership is good.
22. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate good attitudes and attributes. Coupled with their commitment to teaching, there is little wonder why they are seen as so employable, particularly locally. They are confident about entering the profession, understand their responsibilities well and display high levels of willingness to contribute to wider aspects of school life. Through discussions and observations, it was clear to inspectors that they promote positive attitudes in their pupils, including good behaviour and good behaviour for learning.
23. The performance of trainees when referenced to the teachers' standards is good. Strengths observed over time at both stages of the inspection included the ability to teach the primary curriculum well. Another strength is the way in which trainees, through curriculum innovation modules for instance, are successfully widening their understanding of the range of pupils in their classes, for example those of Gypsy Roma heritage. Consequently, they are increasingly well placed to tackle stereotypes, thereby promoting British values well.

24. Trainees generally meet the needs of different abilities in their classes, including those pupils with special educational needs. As a result, pupils make at least expected progress in their learning. This is because trainees reflect on their own teaching and, increasingly, its impact on the learning of their pupils. It is also because trainees have increasingly high expectations of how well their pupils are to learn and behave. However, trainees' understanding and use of assessment varies, so not all are clear about pupils' attainment and progress and what they look like in practice, such as in pupils' books and their responses to questions. This means that pupils in their classes are not always challenged to achieve as well as they can. This variation in understanding is not always picked up by school-based mentors who in their reports sometimes focus on what trainees have done rather than the impact of trainees' teaching on the pupils in their classes or groups.
25. In 2015, all trainees across all routes were graded as good or outstanding at the end of their training. While indeed there are outstanding trainees now teaching as NQTs and recently qualified teachers, the evidence collected by the partnership to support the number it assesses to be outstanding is not always robust. The exception to this is the Assessment Only route. Evidence for these trainees focuses not just on the effort made but on how well pupils are learning as a result of teaching.
26. Completion rates are improving owing to the increased robustness of arrangements to recruit and select the most suitable trainees for the course. Rates are broadly in line with national figures for undergraduate trainees and above for postgraduates.
27. The strengths in training identified at the June 2012 inspection have been at least sustained. Training quality, overall, is good.
28. The taught programmes combine well to provide trainees with the knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the primary curriculum. Professional studies modules and those relating to curriculum innovation, coupled with theory-linked practice days, are helping trainees to widen their understanding of the range of pupils in their classes. As a result, trainees are increasingly equipped to consider how to teach the foundation subjects discretely and across the curriculum. Trainees' and NQTs' teaching shows they manage behaviour and promote good behaviour in the pupils well. Trainees have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and how to prevent it. Such training at the centre is enriched by well-qualified university staff and regular input from teachers and school leaders.
29. Support, both personal and pastoral, is rightly regarded by schools, trainees, NQTs and former trainees as a key factor in helping those who may be struggling to complete the course and exceed the teachers' standards.

30. Trainees, NQTs and schools report the partnership is effective in raising trainees' confidence in, and preparedness to teach, reading. Online questionnaire responses support this view. Some trainees and NQTs correctly report, though, that opportunities to put phonics training into practice could be made in a more timely fashion.
31. Training in mathematics continues to improve, with trainees and NQTs reporting how their confidence in teaching the subject is growing. Where this confidence is leading to best teaching and learning, trainees and NQTs encourage their children and pupils to see mathematics all around them, to understand how and why methods work, to make connections and to explain their thinking. In a nursery class, for example, an NQT interwove different aspects of mathematics such as 'counting on' throughout her teaching. It was clear from the children's learning journals, even at this early stage of the school year, that such an approach was typical. In general, though, trainees, and sometimes school-based mentors, are not always familiar with how to use the range of practical apparatus, models and images available to develop pupils' conceptual understanding in mathematics.
32. The trainee online survey plus discussions with trainees and NQTs indicate that school placements have in the past not always been organised in a timely fashion. The partnership has responded to this with urgency. Already a large majority of current trainees know where they will be placed in spring and autumn 2016. Such action illustrates the clear drive for improvement provided by the primary team based at the university, including the swift response to the findings of the first part of this inspection. Furthermore, as part of this review, the partnership is more proactive in ensuring increased opportunities for trainees to experience working with pupils from diverse backgrounds and a suitable range of placements, including in other key stages.
33. Such clear drive and swift action is also demonstrated by the partnership's response to the variability in the quality of targets set by school-based mentors to improve trainees' teaching and pupils' learning, identified during stage 1 of this inspection. Where targets are sharply defined, trainees make rapid progress and NQTs, regardless of final grading, hit the ground running. However, not all targets set during or at the end of training have been sharp enough to ensure trainees are clear about what they must do to strengthen their teaching further. The training programme for school-based mentors has now been revised to include a sharper focus on target-setting and gathering evidence to support the difference training is having on teaching and learning quality. As yet, though, it is too soon to measure the impact of such actions.
34. The leadership of the partnership is good. The partnership is compliant with ITT criteria and requirements.

35. The approach of the primary strategic management group and the university leaders is open and honest. The strategic management group plays a key role in deciding priorities and changes, for example in developing the 'grading grid', including key vocabulary to be used across the partnership. It also advises the university where good practice exists or where a need is to be met. It was instrumental, for example, in setting up a conference focusing on special educational needs and looked after children.
36. Partnership leaders are ambitious for the partnership. Responding well to the emerging findings from the first stage of this inspection, action is currently under way to support training for mentors, including the creation of DVDs so that those unable to attend sessions at the university are able to experience the same training in their schools. Further improvements undertaken include the training of university-based staff in important features to consider when observing teaching and learning in mathematics.
37. The partnership's plan reflects the most important areas to improve and which to enhance. The plan takes into consideration the feedback received from trainees, NQTs, schools and external examiners and reflects the accuracy of self-evaluation. Leaders agree with inspectors, though, that they should check in a timely way how effectively the good plans they have in place are leading to trainees becoming even better teachers.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and NQTs' teaching:

Academy 360
Easington Colliery Primary
Farringdon Academy
Greenland Community Primary
Hadrian Primary
Harton Primary
North View Academy
St Paul's CE Primary
Simonside Primary
Stanhope Primary
Whitburn Village Primary

The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The secondary partnership works with approximately 97 schools in 13 local authorities located around the university. Successful trainees gain a PGCE with QTS to teach in the 11 to 18 age range.
- At stage 1 of the inspection, 141 trainees were following the PGCE course; 28 were completing the Secondary Professional Year as the third year of their BSc Mathematics (Hons), BA ICT (Hons), BA English (Hons) and BA Chemistry (Hons) training; seven trainees were following the School Direct route and four the Assessment Only route. In addition, the university offers a subject knowledge enhancement year in mathematics, science and computer science, following which trainees undertake a PGCE. Twenty of the PGCE trainees in this cohort had completed the enhancement year.
- Postgraduate trainees specialise in one of seven subjects: English, mathematics, science, business studies, design and technology, computer science and geography. A wider range of subjects is studied by those on School Direct and Assessment Only routes, including dance and drama, and psychology.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 trainees during stage 1 of the inspection and 13 NQTs during stage 2. The majority of these observations were carried out jointly with leaders from schools where the trainees and NQTs were based. Inspectors observed the feedback provided by school-based colleagues and scrutinised trainees' teaching files. Work in the books of pupils taught by the trainees and NQTs was looked at during the observations.
- During both stages, inspectors held meetings in schools with trainees, NQTs, school-based mentors, school leaders with responsibility for training and induction, and headteachers. Discussions were also held with leaders from the university and partner schools. In stage 1, inspectors also had telephone discussions with a few trainees.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide variety of documentation provided by the university, including their self-evaluation documentation, the improvement plan and information relating to the progress of trainees. Inspectors took account of the views of 70 postgraduate and 24 undergraduate trainees who completed Ofsted's online survey, and the university's own surveys. The information from the national survey of NQTs was also considered.
- At both stages of the inspection, inspectors checked that the partnership met all the statutory criteria for initial teacher training.

Inspection team

Helen Lane, HMI	Phase lead inspector	(stage 2)
	Assistant phase leader	(stage 1)
John Menedez	Phase lead inspector	(stage 1)
Carole Baker	Team inspector	(stage 2)
Madeleine Gerard, HMI	Assistant phase leader	(stage 2)
Rob Burgess	Team inspector	(stage 1)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are

- Partnership leaders pursue an aspirational vision to train high-quality teachers to meet local and regional needs. Leaders have ambitious plans to extend the provision to other localities where recruitment of teachers is difficult.
- The partnership is well respected by its trainees, former trainees, NQTs and schools. Schools employing former trainees from the University of Sunderland hold them in high regard.
- The partnership leaders have strong relationships with the schools with which they work. Schools are closely involved with the leadership and management of the partnership, and in delivering bespoke training packages, which enhance the knowledge and understanding of trainees.
- School-based mentors are well trained. The university employs imaginative approaches to online training which are well received by mentors and ITE coordinators. As a result, excellent support is provided to trainees by school-based mentors.
- Trainees value the strong specialist knowledge and the proactive support from university tutors. Tutors monitor rigorously the work of trainees. Consequently, the attainment of all trainees has been good or better over the last two years.
- Trainees exhibit high levels of personal and professional conduct, demonstrating high expectations in the classroom which impact positively on the behaviour and progress of the young people they teach.

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

The partnership should:

- ensure trainees plan learning to meet the needs of all groups of learners, including the most able and low attainers who need to catch up
- implement a rigorous and systematic approach to analysing information about all of the outcomes of trainees in order to:

- monitor completion and employment rates for all courses and subjects over time
- identify milestones and success criteria by which to evaluate the impact of key actions taken to further improve the partnership
- raise completion and employment rates so that they are consistently high for all courses and subjects.

Inspection judgements

38. By the end of the course, all trainees, including Assessment Only, exceed the minimum level of practice as defined in the teachers' standards. Attainment has risen over the last four years. In the last two years, the partnership has judged all trainees completing the course to have good or outstanding practice against the teachers' standards, with approximately half of the trainees judged to have outstanding practice.
39. The partnership rigorously monitors the progress of trainees in liaison with school-based mentors. As a result, support plans are quickly put in place for trainees whose practice in particular areas is judged to be less than good. All trainees who received such interventions last year improved their practice so that it became at least good. Observations of trainees and NQTs during the inspection confirmed the accuracy of the assessment judgements made by the partnership. The gap in attainment between male and female trainees has closed and is now smaller than the gap in attainment between male and female trainees nationally. There are no significant differences in the outcomes of trainees following the different routes to QTS.
40. Training provided by the partnership is of high quality. There are effective centre-based training sessions and well-placed and well-structured tasks and assignments. Trainees are committed and enthusiastic about their teaching and exude confidence in lessons. They are reflective about the quality of their teaching. Trainees use their strong subject and curriculum knowledge to plan and teach interesting lessons which engage their classes and enable their pupils to make good progress.
41. At stage 1, the assessment of pupils' progress, particularly in providing pupils with feedback and guidance about how to improve their work, was identified as an area for development. The partnership acted quickly to address this weakness. All NQTs have this teachers' standard as a target for improvement in their individual career plan. A new lesson-planning template has recently been produced, in liaison with school mentors, which focuses on assessment in the lesson. While it is too soon to see the impact of the lesson plan, improvements in marking and feedback were seen in pupils' books during observations of NQTs. Marking was regular, and often provided learners with extensions or questions to which they were responding. As a result, pupils' progress was good.

42. Trainees have a good understanding of the range of barriers to learning and how they might help pupils by adapting their teaching to meet the needs of those who are disabled and those with special educational needs. Trainees often provide different tasks for pupils of different abilities. However, some are less confident about adjusting activities to challenge and support the most able and low attainers who need extra help to catch up. The new lesson plan guides trainees to plan activities for different groups of pupils, and NQTs have this area as a target for improvement in their individual career plans. It is too soon to see the impact of these developments.
43. Trainees have benefited from contrasting and complementary teaching practice placement schools, including schools judged to require improvement and in a range of socio-economic circumstances. They have further opportunities to develop their experience of different schools during two weeks of enrichment. The partnership has developed a database to monitor the different experiences of trainees. Although all trainees have had an opportunity to experience post-16 teaching, some feel less positive about their ability to teach this age range.
44. Specific training, including an immersive session in Polish, has helped to make sure trainees are aware of approaches to support pupils learning English as an additional language. However, few trainees have had opportunities to put this training into practice and are consequently less well prepared for teaching such pupils. Leaders are addressing this by using the new database to monitor the opportunities trainees have for working with different groups of pupils.
45. Trainees speak with confidence about the use of assessment information and using data to monitor the progress of their pupils. They understand well the particular need to ensure the good progress of disadvantaged pupils.
46. Trainees and NQTs build effective relationships with their pupils. They put into practice training they have received at the university and during school placements to manage behaviour effectively. NQTs apply school policies well to ensure a good and safe learning environment.
47. High-quality training about British values, bullying and child protection is delivered to trainees. As a result, trainees and NQTs contribute well to the personal and social development of their pupils, both as form tutors and in personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons. Headteachers spoken with during stage 2 said the NQTs from the University of Sunderland are very well informed about their responsibilities for safeguarding.

48. Trainees value the training they receive to help them develop the literacy and mathematical skills of their pupils. Trainees promote literacy particularly successfully across their specialist subjects through use of key words, spelling practice and development of extended writing.
49. Completion rates for the undergraduate course were above the national average in 2014 and 2015. However, completion rates for the postgraduate course declined in 2015 and are well below the national average, although with marked variability between subjects. The rates for geography, design and technology and business studies, for example, are in line with national figures, but English, computer science, mathematics and science were well below.
50. Completion rates were identified as an area for development during stage 1. As a result, the course leader undertook wide-ranging research into the resilience of the trainees and has identified emotional resilience as an area of weakness. Leaders have taken action to address this, and the high number of withdrawals, by adding regular drop-in sessions at the university and buying an online package to support trainees. Furthermore, the recruitment procedures have been tightened for this year, with greater involvement of schools, and exercises to better test the resilience of potential trainees. It is too soon to measure the impact of these initiatives. Leaders recognise that completion rates by course and subject have not been analysed or evaluated effectively to identify trends or comparisons with national averages.
51. Employment rates are in line with or above national rates for postgraduate trainees qualifying in 2015 and have improved on previous years. All trainees have been employed from the English, geography, design and technology, mathematics and science courses. However, employment rates in computer science have been well below the national average for two years. This year, a number of the undergraduate trainees have not passed the skills tests required for QTS. The employment rate for undergraduate trainees has been well below national average for the last two years. Course leaders have taken action to address this issue by providing 'boot camps' for such trainees to improve their key skills. Employment rates by course and subject have not been analysed and evaluated effectively to identify trends or comparisons with the national average.
52. Course leaders take account of trainees' views. Following the trainee survey, leaders addressed trainees' concerns about gaining employment, leadership and management of the courses, and response to trainees' views. The partnership's own exit survey shows that these issues are no longer a concern. The NQT survey of 2013/14 suggests that some NQTs did not rate their training overall. During stage 2, inspectors questioned

NQTs and school leaders on their views about the training provided by the university. The response was entirely positive.

53. The involvement of schools in the leadership and management of the partnership is a considerable strength. The strategic management board of school and university leaders is developing its role in monitoring the work of the partnership. School practitioners lead sessions for trainees, for example, in behaviour management and working with pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Trainees value the opportunity to learn from current practitioners. The impact is seen in the high-quality training provided by the partnership and the attainment of trainees.
54. The partnership is developing its provision of wider professional development opportunities for NQTs. NQTs contributed to the 'ITT's no joke' conference during which they shared ideas and tips with trainees. Furthermore, NQTs have the opportunity to attend conferences about English as an additional language, assessment and the Prevent strategy. A partnership leader has plans to develop closer links with NQTs, identifying training needs and monitoring their progress.
55. Trainees and NQTs hold their school-based mentors in high regard. Mentors are trained through face-to-face conferences and meetings and by online courses. A recent conference was well attended by school mentors, who worked together to design the partnership's new lesson-planning template and share emerging issues. As a result of effective training and support for mentors, the attainment of trainees has risen. Moderation by the university of the judgements about attainment made by school-based mentors demonstrates that mentors' judgements about trainees against the teachers' standards are accurate.
56. The course leader took swift action to address the areas identified as emerging areas for improvement at the end of stage 1. She and her colleagues have worked hard to address the issues identified at stage 1 and by their own self-evaluation. However, plans for improvement are insufficiently focused on outcomes for trainees. Plans do not include sharply focused milestones and success criteria, for example about completion rates, by which leaders and the strategic management board can monitor and evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve the partnership.
57. The responses of partnership leaders to areas for improvement identified in stage 1, and from the views of stakeholders, demonstrate strong capacity for improvement.
58. The course is compliant with ITT criteria and requirements, including for the Assessment Only route.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and NQTs' teaching:

Academy 360
Castle View Enterprise Academy
Excelsior Academy
Heaton Manor School
Hebburn Comprehensive School
Heworth Grange Comprehensive School
Kenton School
MacMillan Academy
Oxclose Community Academy
St Anthony's Catholic Girls' Academy
Sandhill View Academy
South Shields Community School
Southmoor Academy
Venerable Bede Church of England (VA) School

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the FE in ITE partnership

- The University of Sunderland Post-compulsory Education and Training partnership offers full-time and part-time courses through the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (at level 6) and the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (at levels 5 and 6). Part-time courses are available for in-service trainees and full-time courses are predominantly for pre-service trainees. Trainees can gain further qualifications through their work in educational settings or through further study that leads to Masters degrees.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 75 trainees on full-time pathways leading to a teaching qualification. There were 226 trainees studying on in-service programmes.
- The partnership represents lifelong learning settings throughout north-east England. The majority of trainees gain placements in general further education and sixth form colleges. An increasing number are employed in school settings. A small proportion are employed in community and workplace settings.

Information about the FE in ITE inspection

- Seven inspectors carried out 39 observations of trainees and former trainees, at different stages of their studies in 12 colleges, schools and other settings from the partnership. Inspectors also observed sessions in which mentors or tutors gave feedback on what they had observed. In six cases, inspectors observed interim and final review sessions, during which trainees, tutors and mentors discussed the progress that trainees and former trainees made. Wherever possible, inspectors interviewed trainees, mentors and tutors, senior leaders and managers, and former trainees. Inspectors also looked at the trainees' individual learning plans and held discussions with trainees and former trainees to evaluate the impact of their training on the quality of their teaching, and on the progress that their learners made.

Inspection team

Christopher Jones, HMI	Lead inspector	
Steve Hailstone, HMI	Assistant lead inspector	(stage 1)
Karen Lowe	Team inspector	(stage 1)
Steve Ingle	Team inspector	(stage 1)
Vincent Ashworth, SHMI	Assistant lead inspector	(stage 2)
Brenda Clayton	Team inspector	(stage 2)
John Homewood	Team inspector	(stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the FE partnership are

- Retention, completion and achievement rates are consistently high.
- The training of good-quality FE and skills teachers enables them to make a valued contribution to the colleges and settings in which they work.
- Trainees and NQTs work with confidence and expertise to plan and teach lively, interesting and challenging lessons that enable learners to make progress and achieve.
- Trainees and NQTs improve their learners' English and mathematics skills.
- Trainees and NQTs ensure that learners recognise the impact of the values of tolerance, respect for the law, democracy and equality on their day-to-day life and work.
- Trainees benefit from highly qualified research leaders in further education who enable trainees to apply academic rigour to improve the practice of teaching.
- Strong and dynamic leadership has ensured that all partners are fully engaged in the redesign and development of the programme.

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

The partnership should:

- ensure that trainees experience a wider range of settings so that they understand more fully the breadth and range of the sector
- increase the clarity of targets set at the end of the programme so that NQTs and their mentors can define better the actions for improvement they need to address in their first year of teaching
- monitor the impact of staff changes in partnership colleges on the training that trainees receive.

Inspection judgements

59. The partnership has provided good training and sustained strong outcomes for trainees during a period of significant change in the FE and skills sector. Over the last three years, retention, completion and achievement rates have improved and are consistently high. The capacity to improve provision further is good. The provision is fully compliant with all the regulations affecting teacher education and training in the FE and skills sector.

60. The training programme ensures that the individual skills and expertise of full-time and part-time trainees grow well; by the end of their training, almost all trainees make good progress. They meet the professional

standards for FE teachers well and become thoughtful, effective teachers. At the end of their training, all trainees are good or better teachers. Most teach on a range of courses, at different levels, in their placement settings. For too many, however, the breadth and scope of their placement experience is too limited, for example teaching on only one level of course or in only one setting. All NQTs begin employment confident that they can develop further as able practitioners in their chosen field; for a few, their limited experience means that they do not know enough about other opportunities in the sector. A large majority gain employment in colleges, schools and other settings. Trainees are of varying ages and backgrounds. There are no evident discrepancies in their progress by social group.

61. The well-judged and finely tuned support from tutors and mentors helps trainees and NQTs to develop and hone their teaching skills quickly. Trainees and NQTs take pride in their role and exemplify, for the most part, what it is to be a good or better teacher and the impact that this has on their students. Trainees and NQTs understand the importance of preparing well for teaching, and know the consequences for students' progress when planning is weak. They use their teaching rationales to reflect carefully on what they need to do to ensure that their teaching meets the varied and individual learning needs of their students.
62. Most trainees and NQTs demonstrate their willingness to take enterprising and lively approaches to teaching and learning. They work hard to ensure that their students improve their skills in English and mathematics; they are particularly strong in supporting the improvement of reading, writing and numeracy as it applies to their subject. The development of students' oracy skills is, however, weak. All trainees have excellent and wide-ranging subject knowledge. Many of their placement and induction mentors and colleagues comment on how the fresh ideas and teaching approaches that teachers from the partnership bring improve their own practice.
63. Trainees and NQTs have high expectations of what their students will achieve. Because they teach and manage behaviour well, their students show interest and are keen to participate in classes, tutorials, workshops and one-to-one reviews. As a consequence of extremely good training, trainees and NQTs ensure that their students have equality of opportunity and that they understand the importance of the values that inform their daily lives at home, in education and training, and at work.
64. Rigorous and challenging interviews to join the training programme ensure that trainees are well matched to placement settings, including schools to train in subjects that are primarily taught to learners over the age of 14. Trainees spend much of their time at a single placement. In larger placements, trainees benefit from being able to observe and work

with colleagues teaching in other subjects and to work, for example, on developing their assessment strategies or their classroom management techniques. For some trainees, especially those in schools and community learning settings, these opportunities are underdeveloped. University and partnership tutors teach their trainees well: trainees learn a lot about areas such as 16 to 19 study programmes or employability skills, but do not necessarily experience them as part of their teaching practice. This means that, when questioned, trainees are unable to tease out the implications for their future practice.

65. In university-based training, trainees benefit from highly qualified research leaders in further education who enable trainees to focus on academic rigour to improve the practice of teaching. Trainees value the training sessions at the university very highly and enjoy very much the opportunities they have to attend twilight and weekend conferences and seminars. NQTs and trainees commented on how much the training had improved, and continued to improve, their teaching. They appreciated the opportunities they have to give feedback to their course tutors on how to improve the programme for future trainees. From this feedback, the university programme team and partnership managers have redeveloped the course to provide more space between assignments so that trainees could reflect more deeply on the detailed and valuable feedback they get. They have also provided greater focus on the data that teachers use to ensure that all students make the best progress they can from their various starting points. Because of this, the course is very well structured to meet the needs of, and changes to, the FE curriculum.
66. Feedback from employers showed that there was some confusion about the grades that trainees got at the end of their training; too often it was not clear whether the grade told employers about the quality of teaching, or the academic attainment of the trainee. The university course team conducted an extensive review of the way they judge progress and attainment. They have, with the partnership, developed a straightforward tracking tool that both exemplifies and clarifies the attributes, skills and qualities required of an outstanding teacher in further education and skills settings.
67. Trainees set targets for their further development at the end of their training. As NQTs, they use these targets well to set actions, with their mentors, for their professional development. However, too often these targets are ill defined and too broad; rarely do these targets focus on the impact of improved teaching on the progress that students make. There is little evidence that they are validated and moderated by placement mentors at the end of teaching placements.
68. The partnership is very strong; stakeholders at all levels work well together to the benefit of trainees and NQTs. Extremely strong and

dynamic leadership from the university has ensured that partners are fully engaged in the redesign and development of the programme. University managers are keenly aware of the need to ensure that all new partnership managers and tutors understand the requirements, content, structure and dynamics of the course. The new partnership website, the improved mentor handbook and the database of mentor training and expertise help tutors and mentors to meet the exacting demands of their role.

69. The partnership uses data very well to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the training. Leaders and managers from the partnership review self-evaluation and development plans to improve the quality of teacher training. However, targets for improvement are not always sharply focused.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Bishop Auckland College
East Durham College
Gateshead College
South Tyneside College
Sunderland College
Tyne Metropolitan College

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70070
Inspection number	455800 / 10004332-2
Inspection dates	18–20 May 2015
Stage 1	
Stage 2	5–7 October 2015
Lead inspector	Mark Williams, HMI
Type of ITE partnership	HEI
Phases provided	Early years ITT, primary, secondary and further education
Date of previous inspection	June 2012
Previous inspection report	http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70070
Provider address	University of Sunderland The Faculty of Education and Society 3rd floor, David Goldman Informatics Centre St Peter's Campus St Peter's Way Sunderland SR6 0DD

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