

The Titan ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection Dates Stage 1: 18–20 May 2015 Stage 2: 13–15 October 2015

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty’s 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 upon evidence 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 and Secondary QTS
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	2
The outcomes for trainees	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

Primary and secondary routes

Information about this ITE partnership

- The Titan partnership offers initial teacher training in the primary and secondary phase. The Titan partnership is the ITT provider for Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy. There are 10 primary and 10 secondary schools in the partnership, all in the north and west of Birmingham, close to the centre of the city. All the schools are set in areas of high economic deprivation. They include Birmingham local authority controlled schools, academies, grammar schools, single-gender schools and an all-through special school. Most schools have well-above-average proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The majority of trainees are following the provider-led route, which is based at St George's Community Hub. There are also nine trainees following the School Direct route, managed by some of the partnership's schools. All courses lead to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), validated externally by Birmingham City University. In the 2014/15 academic year there were 12 primary and eight secondary trainees.

Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- The inspection was conducted by the same two inspectors at both stages of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of 11 trainees, in six schools, during stage 1 of the inspection and the teaching of eight newly qualified teachers (NQTs), in five schools, during stage 2. Discussions were also held with recently qualified teachers who had completed their training at Titan during the last two or three years. Inspectors observed training activities, met with school-based mentors, headteachers, class teachers, professional tutors, and leaders and managers of the partnership.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of evidence, including work in pupils' and students' books, trainees' files, course handbooks, development plans, data on trainees' progress and attainment, completion and employment rates, and evidence of the partnership's self-evaluation, including that for 2014/15. Inspectors checked that the necessary statutory requirements for safeguarding and initial teacher training (ITT) were met.
- Inspectors took account of five responses to Ofsted's online NQT questionnaire. Inspectors also reviewed the partnership's own trainee evaluations of the programme.

Inspection team

Brian Cartwright HMI, lead inspector

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The key strengths of the primary and secondary partnership are:

- The determined and effective corporate leadership of the partnership that successfully addresses local schools' educational needs, including the challenge of recruiting teachers to schools facing challenging circumstances.
- The adaptability and subject knowledge of trainees in both phases and their improving outcomes over time, including the quality of their teaching.
- The strong emphasis on the development of trainees' subject knowledge through systematic and regular study, coupled with training from mentors who are themselves experts in their subject, in both phases.
- Good behaviour management by trainees in both phases that is directly linked with their good teaching and interesting lessons that motivate their pupils and students.
- Close and perceptive quality assurance practice led by very experienced senior school leaders who respond quickly to any shortfalls.

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

The partnership should:

- Further increase the proportion of outstanding trainees in both phases by ensuring all trainees are consistently able to evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupil and student learning, and so adjust their teaching to maximise pupil progress.
- Include pupil and student progress information as the prime indicator of successful teaching and learning as part of routine lesson observations; collate this information at weekly mentor meetings, and strengthen the partnership's oversight of this indicator.
- Secure the regular checking of the implementation of the development plan to help programme managers monitor the progress of actions towards annual targets.

Inspection judgements

1. The original mission of the Titan partnership, to recruit and train effective teachers for local inner-city high-deprivation schools, is being relentlessly upheld. The positive impact of this training is evident in the high proportion of former trainees teaching in these local schools, many

now at senior leadership level. The partnership also delivers ongoing professional development to staff in its partnership schools. All these contributions by the partnership have improved the overall quality of these partnership schools so that now all are at least good, with some that are outstanding. In this respect, Titan is serving the educational needs of local schools, pupils and students exceptionally well.

2. Strong quality assurance practice maintains consistently good or better training across the partnership. School leaders and their professional tutors personally ensure that potential future employees are good enough to teach in their schools. Frequent formal assessment points, and regular informal exchange of information between placement mentors and the centre-based ITT leaders, enable quick interventions where necessary. In almost every case, this allows trainees to meet challenges successfully and ultimately complete their training and move into employment. Typically half of the NQTs are employed in local schools within three miles of the partnership hub.
3. Senior staff from partnership schools are closely involved in the recruitment and selection of candidates for training. Despite the difficulties of recruiting faced by this and other providers in the crowded market for teacher training in Birmingham, the partnership maintains high standards of selection and, as a result, sustains good completion rates and successful subsequent employment for almost all of its trainees.
4. Self-evaluation is accurate, and recognises the many strengths of training provision, whilst also seeking to raise trainee outcomes even further. The partnership development planning that emerges from this self-review is succinct and addresses all the pertinent issues. However, it does not establish a clear enough connection between the quality of trainees' teaching and the impact their teaching has on pupils' and students' progress over time. Interim checks on this progress of pupils and students as the training course proceeds would better allow managers to recognise trainees' improvement.
5. The clearly articulated 'Entitlement' agreement is the key document that helps all partners know their roles and responsibilities. Partnership schools take this very seriously, and it leads the programme of all teacher training in their schools irrespective of the external ITT provider. Training materials are clear, with straightforward, well-signposted requirements for mentors and trainees. This helps structure the effective and systematic improvement of how well trainees teach in relation to the teachers' standards and the regular monitoring of trainees' progress against these standards.

6. Employing schools value the ongoing professional development of NQTs that Titan provides. Not every employing school takes up this training opportunity, as some use different providers. All NQTs are engaged in a systematic programme of professional development.
7. All aspects of training line up well together, so that no training time is wasted. Training fully meets statutory requirements. Topics are delivered in a timely manner to meet trainees' developing needs throughout the programme. Trainees affirm that centre-based training has close connections with what they need at that time, and they value the relevance this brings. There is well-coordinated centre-based and school-specific training on safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' strategy. Schools in the partnership are acutely aware of the risks to their pupils and students in this respect. They make sure all their trainees and staff are fully aware of these risks, and those from child sexual exploitation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
8. School-based tutors are experienced practitioners themselves, most having more than five years of experience. Mentors are often former Titan trainees in their third or fourth year of teaching. They are familiar with the training programme from their relatively recent participation. Mentor training is thorough and rigorously enforced by the partnership. It includes bespoke training for mentors who are unable to attend centre-based sessions. Subject expertise is delivered centrally by practising teachers from the partnership schools.
9. Regular, formal quality assurance visits to schools by programme directors enable the quality of mentors to be closely monitored. Visits include observation of training sessions, joint lesson observations and scrutiny of trainee and mentor files. Feedback from trainees is also collected. This information is collated and analysed to steer mentor development and to inform adjustments to the training programme as required. The level of scrutiny is high; it includes school headteachers, and is helping to continuously improve the quality of training. There is now wide recognition across the partnership of the means of ensuring that more trainees improve their performance from good to outstanding; namely to embed the practice of evaluating teaching through its impact on pupil and student learning and progress.
10. Training is bespoke to each trainee and begins from the interview and selection process for successful candidates. Trainees receive consistently good-quality feedback from mentors, tutors and subject tutors that sets out what steps are needed to improve trainees' teaching. The placements are effectively matched to trainees' strengths and areas for development identified at interview, and subsequently throughout the training. For example, at changes of placements another formal analysis

of training needs is used to best match a placement to the individual's training requirements.

11. The diverse range of high-quality placements covers all kinds of schools and permits a good match for all trainees; this is valued highly by trainees. All the placement schools present challenging contexts where social and economic disadvantage is widespread. As a result trainees are exceptionally well prepared to teach in these types of schools and these schools benefit over time from the good quality of new Titan-trained NQTs that they recruit. Some of the partnership schools have previously been schools causing concern; their current leaders are key sources of training on aspects of school improvement.
12. This rich diet of different schools and tailored training ensures trainees experience a wide range of teaching approaches, including strategies to maximise the progress of a wide range of pupils and students. The centre-based 'Broader Educational Issues' sessions were cited by trainees as particularly helpful in enabling them to apply skills beyond their placement schools. They learn to effectively teach disadvantaged pupils and students, those with disabilities or special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language.
13. Trainees in both the primary and secondary phases teach well by the end of their training; all exceed the minimum level of practice defined in the teachers' standards and many excel. The pupils and students they are teaching generally make at least the expected progress over time. Trainees' expectations of what pupils and students can achieve are particularly high with regard to teaching disadvantaged pupils and students and those with special educational needs.
14. Although about half of the primary trainees reach the highest achievement grade offered by the provider, none of the secondary trainees do, which is one reason why outcomes are not yet outstanding. Not all trainees consistently evaluate the success of their teaching in terms of its impact on pupils' progress, and this prevents some from moving the quality of their teaching from 'good' to 'outstanding'. Employment rates are above the benchmarks appropriate to each phase but have not been consistently high. Employment rates are marginally higher for primary than secondary trainees, although small numbers can cause dramatic fluctuations from one year to the next. Completion rates in both phases also compare favourably with national benchmarks. There are no significant differences in outcomes for trainees on the provider led or School Direct routes. There are also no significant differences in outcomes between different groups of trainees by age, gender or ethnicity. The profile of trainees' backgrounds matches the rich multicultural profile of learners in the partnership. The partnership helps trainees who have to defer their qualification for personal reasons

and has a good track record of successfully supporting these trainees when they return.

15. The key characteristic of a Titan trainee is their adaptability in new situations. This allows them, as NQTs, to quickly succeed in school settings that are very different to their original course, including some examples of teaching out of their phase or subject specialism. That flexibility, coupled with their personable attitude, is attractive to employers, because they can see the potential for a good teacher irrespective of their particular subject- or phase-specific training. For example, this year two secondary-trained physical education (PE) specialists are teaching in an all-through special school, one in Year 1, and one as a Key Stage 3 teacher delivering several subjects as well as PE; a primary-trained trainee is working as a nursery school teacher. All three are highly rated by their employing schools.
16. Trainees in both phases develop a strong understanding of classroom management techniques and execute them effectively. This is coupled to effective interpersonal skills, which in most cases have established good teacher-pupil relationships for NQTs. Trainees are skilled at managing pupils' and students' behaviour and use these skills well in their new schools as NQTs. They reinforce rules clearly, authoritatively and positively. Trainees know by experience that challenging and interesting learning activities pre-empt the need for managing behaviour as a separate action. Nonetheless, on the odd occasion, they find that their planned activity does not quite achieve that intention.
17. NQTs are good at performing the wider duties of teachers. This includes having their own tutor group, meeting with parents and full participation in the day-to-day working life of the school, including running after-school activities. They are well trained to deal with bullying, and how to keep pupils and students safe online.
18. Subject expertise is a key strength of both primary and secondary trainees. This is because developing subject knowledge forms a regular part of school and centre-based training. All trainees use prior knowledge of their pupils and students to plan lessons that include a suitable range of demanding tasks aimed at challenging pupils and students of every ability, including the most able. The execution of these plans is usually successful. Trainees understand the need to adapt teaching to respond to pupils' and students' learning needs; inspectors saw many examples of this happening in lessons in light of the actual responses from pupils and students.
19. In a few instances, trainees focus so much on the technical intricacies of the lesson content that pupils and students miss out on the bigger picture. For example, a well-designed lesson to teach students different

writing techniques that authors use to grab attention and provoke an emotional response (such as alliteration, onomatopoeia, short sentences, rhetorical questions) missed the opportunity for students to hear the passage read dramatically. Students had, therefore, not been 'emotionally' influenced as the writer intended, so their analysis of the passage took place without much personal engagement or interest.

20. Trainees in both phases take every opportunity to teach literacy and numeracy, and teach it well. For example in a primary school lesson, a trainee explicitly taught a range of mathematical strategies and then helped pupils to know when each is the most appropriate. They modelled the correct mathematical vocabulary and then insisted upon its use by students. Science displays also explicitly support the correct use of technical vocabulary. Trainees in both phases correct spellings effectively when marking work in all subjects. Occasionally, however, some trainees use incorrect grammar when speaking to pupils, e.g. 'What was we doing?'
21. Primary trainees are effective in teaching reading and writing using phonics (letters and the sounds they make). They also have a good understanding of what 'mastery' means in mathematics. This good understanding is shared by the secondary trainees taking mathematics as a specialism. Primary trainees receive good PE training, which includes learning how to work with professional sports coaches in schools. They also benefit from regular dialogue with their fellow PE specialist trainees in secondary schools. Much of the training on generic school issues is delivered to mixed-phase groups, and this helps to give trainees good cross-phase knowledge and an understanding of shared issues, such as transition from primary to secondary school.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and NQTs' teaching. All schools are in the Birmingham local authority area:

Anglesey Primary School
Aston Manor Academy
Broadway Academy
Cromwell Junior and Infant School and Nursery Class
Grove School
Holyhead School
Mayfield School
St Marys C of E Primary and Nursery, Academy
St Michael's C of E Primary Academy
Wilkes Green Infants School

ITE partnership details

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