

Teach First West Midlands ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 5 May 2015

Stage 2: 16 November 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 participants.

Inspection judgements

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

	Primary QTS	Secondary QTS
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for participants?	1	1
The outcomes for participants	1	1
The quality of training across the partnership	1	1
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1	1

Overview of the ITE partnership

The Teach First national programme

- Teach First is an independent charity, founded in 2002, with a mission to improve the life chances of children and young people from the most deprived backgrounds. One of its activities is the Teach First Leadership Development Programme. This is a national programme delivered regionally with university partners. The number of regions is expanding. At the time of the inspection there were nine. Separate inspection judgements were made for each region.
- Training is provided through an employment-based route. Trainees on the Teach First programme are known as participants. During their period of training, participants work as unqualified teachers, teaching a reduced timetable of 80% of the timetable of a qualified teacher, from the first week of the school year. Those accepted onto the programme commit themselves to working for two years in a school in challenging circumstances. Year 1 of the programme, covering the first 13 months, leads to qualified teacher status (QTS) and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) from one of the participating universities. Participants who successfully complete their two years in school and fulfil the requirements of the Leadership Development Programme become Teach First ambassadors.
- Schools apply to be part of the programme. To meet Teach First's aim of addressing educational disadvantage, these schools are all in challenging circumstances (schools with half of their pupils in the bottom third of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) of social and economic disadvantage) and have the capacity to offer training and support for participants, with additional support if necessary.
- Participants undertake a period of national selection through a central selection centre. This was visited by inspectors. Successful applicants also attend a six-week summer institute before starting work in their allocated schools. This summer institute provides an intensive training experience and an additional element of the selection process before participants begin work at their employing schools. The summer institute was visited by inspectors.
- The recruitment and selection process is administered nationally. Teach First staff begin a nurturing relationship with participants long before the beginning of the training year. Applicants who meet Teach First's demanding criteria are invited to an assessment centre. Recruitment processes at the assessment centre are rigorous. There is an explicit competence framework against which applicants are assessed. The range of assessment tasks during the assessment centre days includes group activity, problem-solving tasks, mini-teaching and assessed self-evaluation of candidates' performance. In addition, the staged recruitment process includes online assessment. Assessors are well trained and their judgements are quality assured and are subjected

to statistical analysis. Initial recruitment processes inform the first stages of training to ensure that individual applicants have personalised training from the outset. Applicants find the process highly challenging and rigorous. This view is confirmed by current participants. Mentors and headteachers are convinced that this thorough process ensures that participants are of a very high calibre.

- Participant training begins with a high-quality six-week summer institute. Participants spend four weeks in their region and two weeks at a national summer institute. During this time, they get to know their employing schools and colleagues in their Teach First region. They develop their understanding of educational inequality and their role in addressing it, and develop their teaching skills for their phase and specialist subject. Sessions are carefully designed to match the training and development needs of new participants and ensure that they are very well prepared for teaching in their employing schools. Many of those delivering the national training are competent and enthusiastic Teach First 'graduates' themselves. During week two of the national summer institute, new participants attend sessions where participants who have recently been awarded QTS present convincing evidence about the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Participants who have completed their training year also complete action plans for their continuing development as year 2 participants.

Key findings

- The programme has expanded rapidly to supply effective teachers in areas of social and economic disadvantage around the country. During this rapid growth, leaders have ensured that, in all regions, outcomes for participants and the quality of training are at least good and usually outstanding.
- The professionalism of participants and the unrelenting focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils are hallmarks of the training in all regions.
- Very effective recruitment and selection procedures ensure that participants are in a position to make rapid progress in their training.

To improve, the ITE partnership should:

- Continue to review the effectiveness of the second school experience, to ensure that all participants have ample opportunities to develop their practical teaching skills in contrasting schools.
- As the programme continues its rapid expansion, ensure that best practice is shared among all regions to support further improvements in the South East region and in the primary training phase in Yorkshire and the Humber.

The Teach First West Midlands partnership

The overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership is outstanding in primary and outstanding in secondary.

Key findings

- The partnership makes a very strong contribution to meeting local needs for high-quality teachers in areas where barriers to educational achievement are high.
- Highly effective recruitment attracts high calibre graduates with outstanding personal qualities.
- Participants are skilled in meeting the needs of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- A consistent focus on pupils' progress underpins all aspects of training.
- Participants make a very strong contribution to the wider life and ethos of their placement schools.
- Participants have a very strong understanding of their duty to promote fundamental British values and protect pupils from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Strong and effective partnership working between schools, Teach First representatives and staff from Birmingham City University ensures coherence and high quality across all aspects of training.
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning by senior leaders is rigorous and effective, and demonstrates the partnership's strong capacity to improve further.

To improve, the ITE partnership should:

- In the primary phase, ensure arrangements for the contrasting school experience are confirmed earlier, so that participants and those who support them can plan how it will contribute to their training more strategically.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The West Midlands Teach First initial teacher training (ITT) consists of an employment-based programme in both the secondary and primary phases. Successful completion leads to PGCE accreditation and the award of QTS. During their training, participants work in schools serving low income communities in the region.
- At the time of the last inspection, the West Midlands was part of a Midlands Teach First region. Training providers were part of a consortium led by Nottingham Trent University and included Birmingham City University,

Newman University College (now Newman University), the University of Wolverhampton and the University of Worcester. Since September 2013, Birmingham City University has been the sole university partner.

The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- The partnership has offered a primary programme since 2012, with numbers accepted onto the programme increasing each year. In 2014–15, 41 participants were recruited to the programme. There are 61 participants in the 2015–16 cohort.
- An early years QTS programme was introduced to the primary phase in 2015.
- The partnership works with 57 primary schools in seven local authorities in the West Midlands.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- There were two inspectors in the primary team at both stages of the inspection.
- During stage 1, inspectors visited seven schools and observed seven participants teach. They also interviewed four other participants and held meetings with programme leaders, headteachers, school-based mentors, university tutors and leadership development officers.
- During stage 2, inspectors visited six schools, and observed six second-year participants teach. In addition, inspectors interviewed programme leaders, headteachers, school-based mentors and university tutors.
- In both stages of the inspection, inspectors considered a wide range of evidence, including participants' files, course handbooks, development plans, data on participants' progress, completion and employment rates and the partnership's self-evaluation document.

Inspection team

John Nixon	Her Majesty's Inspector	Lead inspector (stage 1)
Andrew Maher	Ofsted Inspector	Lead inspector (stage 2)
Sandra Hayes	Her Majesty's Inspector	Assistant lead inspector (stages 1 and 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- The partnership's strong contribution to meeting local needs for high-quality primary teachers, in areas where barriers to educational achievement are high.
- The extremely effective recruitment programme that selects high calibre participants, who share in the partnership's strong vision for pupils' success regardless of their socio-economic background.
- The partnership's rigorous and reflective self-evaluation, which leads to well-focused action planning. This has driven significant improvements in outcomes for participants within the partnership.
- Participants' strengths across the teachers' standards, and particularly in managing pupils' behaviour. Participants have a strong understanding of how to apply the National Curriculum for primary mathematics and how to effectively develop literacy across the curriculum. Participants are skilled in teaching systematic synthetic phonics.
- The partnership's 'triad' model of support for participants, where mentors, trainers and leadership development officers, combine to provide high quality mentoring and training tailored well to meet the needs of individual participants.
- Participants' willingness to take all opportunities to develop their skills, and the quality and accuracy of their personal reflections about their teaching. Participants demonstrate very high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- The Teach First vision, which is shared by all stakeholders, and pursued relentlessly and effectively to meet the needs of local schools in challenging circumstances.
- The very effective systems in place to assure the quality of all aspects of the training.

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

The partnership should:

- Strengthen the impact of participants' contrasting school experience, by ensuring that arrangements are confirmed earlier so that participants and those who support them can plan how it will contribute to their training more strategically.

- Deepen the link between the contrasting school experience and subsequent training, to ensure that the gains intended from this contrasting school experience are assessed explicitly through lesson observation.

Inspection judgements

1. The overall effectiveness of the West Midlands Teach First partnership is outstanding. Well qualified recruits use their strong personal and leadership qualities to learn quickly from their very effective training. As a result, they rapidly develop into skilled teachers.
2. Leaders and managers take action to ensure the quality of training across the partnership is monitored closely and effectively so that outcomes for participants are high. As a result, all participants exceed the minimum level of practice, as defined by the teachers' standards, at the end of their training and the majority meet each of the teachers' standards exceptionally well. There are no significant differences in attainment between different groups of participants, either by age, ethnicity, gender or disability. All first and second year participants demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.
3. Employment rates are higher than the national average. All those who completed the programme in 2015 are in employment, with almost all employed in the schools in which they trained. This high rate of initial employment following participants' award of QTS is followed by a sustained commitment to teaching and rapid promotion into leadership roles.
4. Recruitment and selection of participants is robust and helps explain the programme's high completion rates. Participants demonstrate the resilience necessary to deal with the challenges of taking on a significant teaching load early in their training and make rapid progress towards meeting the teachers' standards.
5. Managers, tutors and leadership development officers meet every week to review participants' progress. They provide excellent pastoral support for participants experiencing personal or professional difficulties and act quickly when difficulties arise. Intervention includes a range of extra support, counselling or additional training. These procedures provide a strong and effective mechanism of support and help explain further the strong completion rates.
6. Participants are thoroughly prepared for their first teaching experiences through detailed audits of their competences and accurate identification of their training needs. Appropriate and effective action is taken to tackle any development needs identified and training is tailored carefully to meet individual needs. The training places a strong emphasis on the importance of high quality, personal reflection. As a result, as well as analysing their own teaching forensically,

participants are also quick to identify where they need additional training and support.

7. Participants demonstrate very high standards of professional conduct in their teaching and in the strong working relationships they cultivate with more experienced colleagues. They are excellent role models for the pupils they teach. Participants respond extremely well to feedback from their mentors and tutors and adapt their practice quickly to meet the targets which result from lesson observations. They receive a broad theoretical basis in their training, which enables them to make progress rapidly towards achievement of the teachers' standards. High-quality planning, preparation and lesson delivery is a common feature of participants' teaching and reflects the strong progress they make.
8. Participants are confident and skilled in supporting and challenging disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They make good use of teaching assistants and other adults to ensure that all groups of pupils make good or better progress.
9. All participants receive extensive training in safeguarding and the national Prevent strategy. As a result, they are well informed about their duty to keep pupils safe from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. This training was enhanced to ensure that participants are aware of any local risks.
10. Participants demonstrate considerable strengths across the teachers' standards. They are well prepared to teach and particularly so for the challenging contexts in which they are employed. Participants have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and significant aspirations for what pupils can achieve. They demonstrate good subject knowledge, particularly in their English and mathematics teaching.
11. The participants observed demonstrated particular strengths in developing pupils' literacy. They were adept in including literacy development in their teaching across a range of curriculum areas, and made good use of a wide range of strategies, including using and displaying complex technical language and devising activities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Participants also demonstrated their good understanding of how to teach systematic synthetic phonics effectively. They have a good understanding of the physical education (PE) curriculum and how to teach it.
12. Participants are self-confident, pro-active, resilient and reflective. They share the Teach First vision that disadvantage should not be a barrier to educational achievement. The high standards they demonstrate and expect of pupils reflect their strong understanding of how this vision can be realised.

13. In the lessons observed, participants demonstrated strong behaviour management skills, using a range of strategies very effectively to ensure that all pupils worked hard and learned well. Participants quickly develop effective learning routines with their classes, so pupils know what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour, conduct and effort. As a result, the pupils they teach work hard; they want to do well and are inspired to do their best.
14. Participants use effective teaching strategies to meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This is because they are skilled in applying the theory they learn in their practice.
15. Participants have constant access to good quality learning resources, through a dedicated web portal. They use the rich content on the portal regularly to access academic research and other resources to support their written assignments and their teaching. The portal also provides good opportunities for interactive training in 'virtual schools'. These are tailored well to meet the needs of participants' teaching in different phases.
16. Extremely effective monitoring by university tutors and leadership development officers means that timely and effective support is offered to participants if they encounter problems with their placements. Managers employ a range of strategies to ensure participants experiencing difficulties are able to meet the teachers' standards well. This includes moving a participant to a new partner school, where necessary, to ensure that progress towards meeting and exceeding the standards is maintained.
17. The six-week summer institute provides a broad basis of theory to underpin the practical experience that follows. Nine additional training days, known as 'call-back days', provide timely and well regarded training which strengthens important aspects of participants' teaching. The call-back days are constantly reviewed to ensure that they meet emerging needs. Participants speak very highly of this and the other aspects of training provided.
18. All participants gain early experience of teaching in another setting as part of the summer institute. They are also required to complete a four-week placement, working in a different key stage. This ensures that they gain valuable experience of teaching across the age range in which they qualify to teach. In most cases, this experience provides a placement which contrasts well with their main school placement.
19. Additional arrangements are made to ensure that participants experience a further contrasting placement, organised by the employing school. While this usually works well, on a few occasions participants and partner schools reported that arrangements for making this contrasting school experience are burdensome. They reported that they would appreciate the placements being planned more strategically and earlier in the programme. While all participants

and staff who support them were able to describe the impact of the contrasting school experience, and participants are required to evaluate its impact on their teaching, this is not formally assessed through lesson observations when they return to their main school. This reduces the overall effectiveness of the contrasting school experience.

20. The broad range of high-quality resources and effective training provided throughout the programme makes a major contribution to participants' subject knowledge and teaching skills. It equips them to meet each of the teachers' standards well, including their duty to promote fundamental British values.
21. Partnership working between staff from Birmingham City University and Teach First is extremely effective. Leaders and managers across the partnership are strongly committed to the Teach First vision. All partners are dedicated to providing high-quality teachers in challenging schools, which often struggle to recruit staff. This high-quality partnership working contributes strongly to the success of the programme.
22. Mentor training is of high quality, is well attended and includes a good balance between information giving and training. Mentors' 'review and analysis' forms are collected and evaluated to ensure mentors' advice and target setting is appropriately developmental and challenging. The mentors who spoke with inspectors reported that centre-based tutors are always readily available to discuss any concerns and respond quickly when contacted.
23. The Teach First model requires nearly all trainee teachers to continue to be employed in the school in which they trained and achieved QTS. As a result, targets that are devised at the end of the training programme are carried seamlessly into the induction year and mentors and managers are very well informed about the development needs of their newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Appropriate, sharply focused targets result, because they are also devised collaboratively by participants and all partners who work to support them.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe participants teaching:

Anderton Park School, Birmingham
 Blakesley Hall Primary School, Birmingham
 Courthouse Green Primary School, Coventry
 Montgomery Primary Academy, Birmingham
 Northfield Manor Primary Academy, Birmingham
 Oasis Academy Woodview, Birmingham
 Peters Hill Primary School, Brierly Hill
 Queen's CofE Academy, Nuneaton
 Stretton CofE Academy, Coventry
 St Chad's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham
 Welsh House Farm Community School, Birmingham
 Wilkinson Primary School, Wolverhampton

The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The partnership has provided secondary training since 2009. In 2014–15, 138 participants were recruited to the secondary programme. In 2015–16, 147 secondary participants began their training.
- Postgraduate participants specialise in one of nine subjects: English; mathematics; science; computer science; geography; history; music; modern foreign languages and religious education.
- The partnership works with 64 secondary schools, in 12 local authorities, within the region.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 participants teach during stage 1. They held meetings with those observed and with groups of first and second year participants and observed mentors providing feedback following lesson observations. Meetings were also held with headteachers and other staff in partnership schools, including mentors and professional tutors. Inspectors met with a range of leaders and managers from the partnership, including the programme director, subject tutors and leadership development officers. Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the participants' pen portraits, course handbooks, training materials, assessment information and the provider's self-evaluation document and improvement plan. They checked that the provider met the ITT criteria for the award of QTS.
- During stage 2, inspectors observed 10 second year participants teach and held meetings with groups of participants. They also met with headteachers and other staff in each of the schools visited. Further meetings were held with

staff from Teach First and from Birmingham City University. A range of additional documentation was considered, including final assessments of participants' teaching against the teachers' standards, transition documentation and the provider's revised self-evaluation document and improvement plan. Inspectors also considered how well the partnership had responded to the emerging areas for improvement identified during stage 1 of the inspection.

Inspection team

Daniel Burton	Her Majesty's Inspector	Lead inspector (stage 2)
Ian Hodgkinson	Her Majesty's Inspector	Lead inspector (stage 1)
Zarina Connolly	Her Majesty's Inspector	(stages 1 and 2)
Charles Lowry	Her Majesty's Inspector	(stages 1 and 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- The partnership's very strong contribution to meeting local needs for high-quality teachers, including in shortage subjects, in areas where barriers to educational achievement are high.
- The effectiveness of recruitment, in attracting high-calibre graduates with strong subject knowledge and outstanding personal qualities. Participants' relentless work ethic, their ability to quickly take on board advice and reflect forensically on the quality of their teaching, result in teaching of a consistently high quality.
- The strength of participants' commitment to the Teach First vision, that no child's educational success should be limited by their socio-economic background. Participants are highly skilled in meeting the needs of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Much of their teaching has a very significant impact in raising the educational achievement of underperforming groups.
- The consistent focus on pupils' progress which underpins all aspects of the training. This ensures that participants' lesson planning, their self-reflection and high-quality training focuses participants relentlessly on pupils' progress.
- The very strong contribution participants make to the wider life and ethos of their employing schools. Participants' high expectations for their own teaching and their commitment to developing teaching within their schools mean they are highly sought-after by partnership schools. Many former participants take on leadership roles early in their careers.
- Participants' tenacity in seeking opportunities to constantly improve their practice, for example by observing the outstanding teaching of experienced teachers and by ensuring that experiences in contrasting settings meet their individual professional development needs well.

- Participants' very strong understanding of their duty to promote fundamental British values and protect pupils from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- The coherence and quality of all aspects of training, which benefits from strong and effective partnership working, between schools, Teach First representatives and staff from Birmingham City University.
- The quality and rigour of self-evaluation and improvement planning by senior leaders. This ensures that any weaknesses are quickly tackled and has had a clear and positive impact in raising participants' attainment.

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

The partnership should:

- Strengthen the link between the contrasting school experience and subsequent training to ensure that the gains intended are assessed explicitly through lesson observation.

Inspection judgements

24. Teach First West Midlands produces teachers of very high quality. This is because participants' excellent personal attributes combine very effectively with consistently high-quality training.
25. In 2015, virtually all participants exceeded the minimum level of practice as defined by the Teachers' Standards, with the large majority attaining exceptionally well against almost all of the standards. The proportion of participants judged outstanding rose in 2015, as a result of strong improvements in the quality of mathematics and science teaching. Attainment in English, history and religious education is consistently strong.
26. Completion and employment rates are high. This year, 97% of participants attained QTS and, of these, 100% are currently employed as NQTs. Previous gaps in attainment between participants who begin their training with first class degrees and others have narrowed as a result of a rise in the attainment of those who begin the course with upper second class honours degrees. There are no significant gaps in participants' attainment by gender, ethnicity, age or disability.
27. The participants' high-quality teaching is underpinned by their strong subject knowledge. Participants take full advantage of the high-quality subject training, provided by Birmingham City University, to continually refresh and renew their knowledge. They tackle any gaps in their subject expertise and devise teaching strategies which ensure their love of their subject is transmitted to, and very often shared by, the pupils they teach. Such practice is enhanced through feedback from lesson observations, provided by subject mentors, which

regularly include subject-specific targets. Participants' subject expertise is reflected in their ambitious lesson planning, which is informed by high expectations of what pupils should know, understand and be able to do.

28. Participants plan and prepare lessons thoroughly and the resources they typically use to secure high-quality learning are carefully designed, attractively produced and pitched well to meet the needs of individual pupils. Lesson planning is well informed by participants' excellent knowledge and understanding of any potential barriers to learning faced by the pupils in their classes.
29. All aspects of training place strong emphasis on pupils' progress. Hence, participants are well aware that the most important measure of their teaching is the impact it has on pupils' achievement. Participants' evaluations of their teaching, in their reflective journals, are rooted in analysis of the impact of their teaching on pupils' academic progress. Feedback from lesson observations always includes an assessment of the impact of the participants' teaching on outcomes for pupils and mentors are expected, routinely, to identify how the participants' teaching could have accelerated pupils' progress further. The Teach First national progress tracker – to which participants upload their pupils' achievement data – adds an additional layer of accountability and reinforces participants' understanding of their responsibility to secure rapid gains in pupils' achievement.
30. Most participants are very skilled in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly those who face potential barriers to learning, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Their understanding of how best to meet different needs is enhanced by the good quality and contrasting placements they experience. Assessed written assignments require participants to explain how their practice in meeting specific needs has been shaped by academic research. Occasionally, participants are less skilled in knowing how best to challenge higher attaining pupils.
31. Virtually all participants are highly skilled in managing pupils' behaviour, including in challenging settings. Behaviour management forms a key strand throughout the training, and participants who met with inspectors spoke highly of their preparedness to tackle challenging behaviour. Participants are skilled in establishing very productive and positive working relationships with the pupils they teach. Their classrooms are orderly and learning is purposeful. During both stages of the inspection, some of the participants who were observed demonstrated outstanding behaviour management. In these instances, pupils who had previously underachieved or behaved poorly at other stages in their education were seen to make significant gains in their learning.

32. Participants are also skilled in developing pupils' literacy. This aspect of learning is given a high priority in nearly all lesson plans. Participants use a range of strategies to help secure improvements to pupils' literacy skills, including through the use of strategies to improve pupils' knowledge and application of subject-specific language, regular marking of spelling, punctuation and grammar and through creating opportunities for high-quality discussion and debate.
33. Participants' training is enhanced by the high-quality written assignments they produce. These ensure that participants have a strong understanding of academic research about teaching and apply this knowledge to their teaching. The assignments are marked extremely rigorously and make a significant contribution to the quality of participants' teaching and their ability to reflect accurately on how it might be improved.
34. Participants have high regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being. They receive good quality training in identifying and tackling bullying and are well informed about bullying associated with sexual orientation, through training they receive on tackling homophobic bullying and on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues. Participants are well aware of the risks to them and their pupils associated with the internet. They benefit from e-conduct training, which makes clear to them their professional responsibilities when using social networking sites.
35. Extensive focus is given in the training to the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. All participants receive training on the national Prevent programme as part of Professional Studies. Subject training days include a module on fundamental British values and, during stage 1 of the inspection, a highly effective training session seen, equipped geography participants with a strong understanding of the rationale and legislation which underpins this duty and showcased a range of good practice. Examples were seen of participants leading on initiatives within their subject departments to strengthen this aspect of the curriculum in their placement schools.
36. The intensive programme of induction through the summer institute programme prepares participants well for their first teaching experiences in their main placement schools. Most participants hit the ground running in September because of the high-quality training they have received in preparation. This initial training ensures participants have a strong understanding of the Teach First vision and many of the skills needed to help realise the vision through their own teaching. This training, built on throughout the year, also includes a strong focus on subject-specific pedagogy. A crucial aspect of initial training, given the high demands that the Teach First model places on participants, is its focus on developing personal resilience. This helps explain the high completion rates seen for Teach First West Midlands participants.

37. Another strength of ongoing training is the quality and range of support participants receive. University subject and professional tutors and school-based staff work very effectively together to ensure that participants make rapid progress, are set appropriate, challenging targets and are assessed accurately throughout the programme. Participants particularly value the role of the leadership development officers, who provide an additional layer of support and challenge, including by helping participants articulate and then realise their personal vision as teachers and by monitoring their progress.
38. Leadership development officers play a key role in providing pastoral support for participants, including at times when they need additional help. Any participants who are struggling are identified quickly with clear 'early help' procedures put in place by university tutors to ensure that they are given every chance to succeed. The small number of participants who have needed additional support through this mechanism reported to inspectors how effective it had been in helping them to achieve QTS. 'Early help' procedures are effective because they identify very clearly who is accountable for each aspect of additional support provided and sets out precisely what is expected and by when.
39. Participants make good use of the contrasting school experience to tackle any gaps in their knowledge and teaching experience. Though it is short, the contrasting school experience is planned very effectively to ensure that it meets participants' different needs well. Participants are required to justify their choice of placement in written submissions to Teach First and university staff. These submissions identify how the placement will increase their attainment against the Teachers' Standards. The programme of activities for the contrasting school experience is monitored closely to ensure that it is appropriate. Participants are required to write a detailed reflection, which explains how their teaching practice has developed as a result of this contrasting experience. However, participants do not always receive formal feedback in their contrasting school experience context and their assertions of how their teaching has developed are not subsequently tested when they return to their employing school.
40. Transition arrangements at the end of the first year of training are extremely effective. Participants are set good quality targets, which, in most cases, reflect well their various strengths and areas for development. Occasionally, targets are not stretching enough for the most-able second year participants as NQTs. However, a unique feature of transition is the requirement for participants coming to the end of their training to deliver a presentation to the next year's cohort setting about how they have realised their vision to be the best teachers they can be. This, and other initiatives, such as the summer 'impact conference', ensure that second year participants continue to be monitored, trained and supported as their careers develop.

41. First and second year participants benefit from an extraordinary range of training opportunities. This training draws on local and national expertise and is tailored, year-on-year, in response to changing national and local priorities and the changing needs of participants, identified through the partnership's rigorous self-evaluation.
42. Very close and effective partnership working between staff from Teach First and Birmingham City University is a key strength of the programme. The partnership agreement sets out very clearly the roles and responsibilities of each partner and very strong monitoring ensures that all partners fulfil their roles well. Action is taken quickly on the rare occasions that participating schools do not meet their commitments fully.
43. Strong leadership and rigorous self-evaluation has resulted in very significant improvements in completion rates and in the quality of participants' teaching. Last year, concerted efforts to raise attainment for mathematics and science participants resulted in significantly higher proportions of participants exceeding the Teachers' Standards at an outstanding level. Not only did attainment for mathematics participants rise to be more closely aligned with other subjects, but completion rates in mathematics rose from 85% in 2014 to 100% this year. Leaders' and managers' high aspirations for participants and the pupils they teach are reflected by the continued focus on raising attainment in mathematics further, to be more closely aligned with the sustained high attainment seen in English and other high performing subjects. This rapid improvement, based on high quality evaluation and planning, demonstrates the partnership's very strong capacity to improve further.
44. All aspects of training are subject to regular and effective quality assurance. The partnership takes action very quickly if ever weaknesses are identified and ensures that the quality of school-based support for all participants is regularly checked. Assessment procedures are rigorous and lead to accurate judgements. High-quality and well-attended training ensures that mentors understand their roles and responsibilities well; participants reported consistently their high levels of satisfaction with the mentoring arrangements.
45. Leaders and managers ensure that the programme is fully compliant with the criteria for ITT, including for safeguarding.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe participants teaching:

Aldersley High School, Wolverhampton
Bishop Challoner Catholic College, Birmingham
Campion School, Leamington Spa
Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Technology College, Birmingham
Discovery Academy, Stoke-on-Trent
Greenwood Academy, Birmingham
John Henry Newman Catholic College, Birmingham
King's Heath Boys, Birmingham
Moseley School, Birmingham
North East Wolverhampton Academy
Phoenix Academy, Telford
Smith's Wood Sports College, Birmingham
The King's Church of England School, Wolverhampton
Tudor Grange Academy, Worcester
Walsall Academy, Walsall
Waverley School, Birmingham
Yardleys School, Birmingham

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70345
Inspection number	10004326-2
Inspection dates	Stage 1 5–7 May 2015
	Stage 2 16–18 November 2015
Lead inspector	Daniel Burton HMI
Type of ITE partnership	Employment-based initial teacher training (EBITT)
Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	6–15 June 2011
Previous inspection report	http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70270
Provider address	Local Area Office One Victoria Square Birmingham West Midlands B1 1BD



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