

Teach First South East 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted inspector 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 the primary and secondary phases 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 and Secondary QTS
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for participants?	2
The outcomes for participants	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	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 between 60% and 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.

Primary and secondary routes

Information about this ITE partnership

- The Teach First programme expanded to include the South East region in 2012. Teach First South East works in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University to provide primary and secondary routes into teaching.
- At stage 1 of the inspection, there were 26 schools in the partnership. The number of schools has increased so that, in the current academic year, the provider works in partnership with 42 schools covering parts of Kent, Medway and East Sussex.
- At stage 1 of the inspection, there were 20 participants training to teach the primary age range. These included 6 participants focusing on the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- At stage 1, secondary core training (11–16) was provided in English, mathematics, science and geography. There were 45 secondary participants in their first year. These included 18 English, four geography, 11 mathematics and 12 science participants. History and modern foreign languages have been added in this academic year.

Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- There were two inspectors on the stage 1 inspection team. They visited eight schools. During these visits they observed nine participants jointly with their mentors, met with other participants in the schools, scrutinised teaching files and evidence of participants' achievements against the teachers' standards, and discussed these achievements with their mentors and school leaders.
- During stage 2 of the inspection, the same two inspectors visited six schools and observed eight second-year participants who were, therefore, newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The inspectors also met with other participants from both the first and second year of the programme.
- Inspectors met with leaders, tutors, leadership development officers and partnership school colleagues. They considered a wide range of documentary evidence, including evidence of self-evaluation and improvement planning, cluster plans, course handbooks, and employment and completion information.
- They also took account of 42 responses from participants to Ofsted's online participant survey and the partnership's own surveys of the views of participants.

Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald
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Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

Lead inspector
Assistant lead inspector

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the primary and secondary partnership are:

- Leaders, managers and participants are improving the quality of education for pupils in the most disadvantaged communities in the south-east region.
- Leaders are proactive and also extremely responsive to feedback from schools, tutors and participants. Their detailed analysis of information about how well participants teach, and their understanding of the partnership schools' strengths and weaknesses, inform planning and result in rapid actions which drive improvements.
- Very effective recruitment and selection procedures secure high-quality entrants to the teaching profession who are wholly committed to Teach First's vision. Senior leaders in schools are extremely positive about the quality of participants and about the valuable contribution that they make to their schools.
- Participants are exceptionally professional. They have a strong focus on ensuring that pupils make good progress and they make a positive contribution to the wider lives of their schools.
- Participants develop a deep understanding of the importance of building positive relationships with colleagues and with pupils. They manage behaviour, including some challenging behaviour, very well indeed.
- High-quality centre-based training enables participants to reflect on, and make effective use of, research to drive improvements in their own practice and their pupils' learning.
- Effective partnerships with the higher education partner, schools, multi-academy trusts and local authority colleagues, and extensive networking arrangements, enhance the quality of the provision.
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined so that support and training are well targeted and responsive to participants' individual needs.

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

The partnership should:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the revised and more rigorous arrangements regarding the second school experience, so that all participants get sufficient breadth of experience and developmental feedback on their teaching in more than one school.
- Enhance the support, and challenge, offered to schools new to the partnership as early as possible, in order to build effective relationships, clarity of purpose and consistently effective mentoring.
- Build on the current strategies to reduce further the number of participants who withdraw before achieving QTS.
- Encourage participants to use a wider range of teaching strategies to inspire and challenge pupils to achieve as well as possible, particularly the most able.

Inspection judgements

1. The overall effectiveness of primary and secondary initial teacher education is good. Leaders' very strong vision for excellence is articulated by all colleagues and participants, and is clear throughout the documentation. The mission to close attainment gaps and make a positive difference in socio-economically disadvantaged areas is very evident.
2. Teach First South East is providing good-quality entrants to the teaching profession and to schools which serve some of the most disadvantaged areas in the region. In addition, some of the partnership schools have been judged by Ofsted to require improvement or are in a category of concern. School colleagues, particularly those who have been involved for several years, are extremely positive about the impact of Teach First. Many of these schools have difficulty in recruiting teachers, particularly to shortage subjects, and the partnership with Teach First is enhancing the quality of education in their schools.
3. Leadership and management are excellent. Leaders are single-minded in their determination to ensure that the partnership goes from strength to strength. They are imaginative in finding solutions to difficulties such as the long distances and travel involved, a selective policy among Kent and Medway secondary schools, and working with schools in challenging circumstances. As a result, the quality of training and outcomes on this rapidly expanding partnership are good.

4. Leaders took immediate and effective action following stage 1 of this inspection. These actions are already resulting in improvements. For example, they have introduced earlier planning for, and tracking of, the second school experience to ensure that there is a better match of experience to participants' requirements and greater opportunities for them to teach in different contexts.
5. Completion rates have been relatively high in the past, particularly for primary participants. However, last year, a higher number of participants withdrew from the course before achieving QTS than was the case previously. The partnership has identified completion rates as an area for improvement, and has developed more rigorous and timely systems to highlight early concerns and particularly to support the well-being of participants. The evidence suggests that this work is successful. So far this year, there have been far fewer withdrawals than at the same time last year. Planned returns are already happening for participants who took some time off for personal reasons.
6. Employment rates are consistently higher than national norms and an increasing proportion of participants remain in employment beyond the Teach First two-year programme. Many of these become Teach First Ambassadors and take up posts of responsibility in their schools.
7. Recruitment and selection procedures are extremely robust and, as a result, all participants are highly capable and motivated to become good and outstanding teachers. All exceed the minimum level of practice as defined by the teachers' standards, and all are judged to be at least good by the time they complete year 1. The provider carefully analyses the outcomes between different groups and is alert to those who may require additional support. As a result, there are no significant differences between the outcomes of different groups of participants.
8. In the past, the proportion of participants judged to be outstanding has been around two thirds or higher. Last year, this remained true for primary with three quarters of them judged to be outstanding. However, the proportion of secondary participants judged to be outstanding dropped to about half. Many participants have the potential to be outstanding teachers. However, inspectors found some of the judgements that participants were outstanding to be too generous. In some cases this was because participants had limited opportunities to have practical experience of teaching most-able pupils or pupils who are learning English. Sometimes participants have too few opportunities to observe outstanding teaching. This means that they do not have the chance to see how strategies work in practice. Therefore, the theory in their planning does not always work as well in practice.

9. Participants are ambitious for themselves and for their pupils. They demonstrate exceptionally high levels of personal and professional conduct and are keen to make sure that their pupils achieve well. They make a positive contribution to the wider life of the school and the community and, in many cases, are going above and beyond their normal duties to support developments across the schools they are working in. For example, some take on whole-school responsibilities, organise events, provide clubs and are involved in activities such as presenting at new parents' meetings.
10. Behaviour management is another significant strength for most participants. They have a very good understanding of the importance of establishing positive relationships with pupils and colleagues. They develop excellent relationships with pupils in some very challenging schools. They develop good routines which help pupils feel secure and confident. When behaviour goes off task, participants show patience, firmness and persuasion to get pupils back on task. Participants spoke very positively about the support they receive from tutors, mentors and leadership development officers in developing strategies to deal with challenging behaviour.
11. There is a strong focus on assessment and tracking pupils' progress throughout the course, and participants are able to discuss in detail how well pupils and groups of pupils are achieving. By the time they are in their second year, participants can show that most of their classes and groups are making at least expected and often good progress. They plan well-structured lessons that generally engage the pupils. They are able to adapt lessons 'on the hoof' to meet the needs of pupils when prior learning is higher or lower than had been assumed. Planning to develop key open questions and challenge pupils' thinking is less well developed and is an area which most participants need to develop further. Secondary English and early years participants were concerned that assessment was not well covered in early training and they felt under-equipped to assess pupils' performance and achievements at the start. The course has been amended in the light of this feedback.
12. High-quality centre-based training is developmental and often inspiring. Participants are very positive about the training even though, in some cases, they have to go a long distance to experience it. Various activities and assignments promote deep reflection and enable participants to use theory and up-to-date research to develop their practical teaching skills. The summer school prepares participants well to start in school, although many participants commented that they felt very much thrown in at the deep end. Most seem to relish this challenge. Participants' subject knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning are generally very good and supported through 'Super Saturdays' and subject development days. Where secondary participants are teaching in subjects other than their main subject, their subject knowledge and confidence are weaker.

13. The centre-based training supports and develops very well participants' understanding of how children learn, and there is a valuable focus on the needs of pupils with different special needs and how they can be supported. As a result, participants are knowledgeable about special educational needs and they get good practical experience of teaching lower-ability pupils and those with special needs. In the schools where there are pupils who are learning English as an additional language, the participants gain valuable experience of practical strategies to help support these pupils. However, when they are in schools with few pupils learning English, they are not able to develop strategies and put their training into practice. Similarly, participants in secondary modern schools do not always get sufficient experience of teaching most-able pupils.
14. Primary participants are knowledgeable about early reading, literacy, mathematics and physical education. High-quality centre-based training supports their deepening understanding and promotes their confidence in teaching these subjects. The online survey showed that participants were less confident than normal about teaching early reading. However, the timing of the survey was completed before some participants had further practical experience in Key Stage 1. Many have undertaken enhanced training to further develop their understanding and skills, sometimes related to the particular phonics programmes used in schools, others more generally related to the teaching of reading. Primary participants confidently plan and teach well-structured, lively and engaging lessons in all of these subjects and across the wider curriculum.
15. The centre-based training also covers aspects such as safeguarding, modern British values and developing an understanding of the dangers of extremism. Participants also benefit from school-based training in these areas and are confident and knowledgeable about safeguarding issues, bullying and harassment. They demonstrate considerable understanding and confidence in how these aspects influence their teaching and their work in schools. They are all particularly knowledgeable about equality issues and are clear about their responsibility to reduce barriers to learning, particularly those related to poverty and deprivation.
16. Primary participants find their alternative key stage placements valuable, particularly when these happen during the year rather than right at the end. Participants who are working in schools which are part of multi-academy trusts often benefit from enhanced training experiences which include training and opportunities to observe outstanding practice in several schools. However, a weakness of the training has been the timing and effectiveness of the second school experience. Participants find the experiences useful, but often these placements have not been planned as well as possible to maximise the quality of the experience for participants. Nor have participants always been expected to demonstrate, or receive feedback on, their teaching across different groups, abilities or in contrasting settings in these second placements.

17. Leaders have made the second school experience a high priority for improvement. Planning for the experience has been revised with a greater focus on complementary, timely experiences which meet the needs and interests of the participants. The importance of the experience has been stressed with all schools and participants and, already, there is evidence that planning is more focused and much more advanced this year.
18. The quality of school-based mentoring varies. In some of the longer-standing schools in the partnership, mentors have benefited from high-quality mentor training, understand very well how Teach First works, and know how best to support and supplement the centre-based training. In many schools, mentoring is at least good and sometimes excellent, providing close monitoring and support which helps to move participants on rapidly. Some schools which are new to Teach First do not always understand or implement the partnership's expectations as well as might be expected. In other schools, a changing teaching force means that some participants work with several different mentors during the year. This means that in a few schools participants have not been given appropriate or sufficient support, particularly in the early stages. Leaders have implemented more rigorous systems for making expectations explicit, ensuring that mentors receive training and developing clearer early alert systems when potential concerns are raised.
19. Participants are supported to set their own targets for development before they join the school, throughout year 1 and again as they become NQTs. These targets are usually clear and participants work hard to develop their skills, with good support from Teach First and school colleagues. Links between targets and training are usually well developed. Variability in the quality of school-based mentors means that some targets are not always sufficiently specific or developmental. Participants and tutors, however, generally use the reflective logs well to deepen understanding and to increase depth of attainment against the teachers' standards. The NQTs value the opportunities for them to develop both as teachers and leaders that come with being part of a two-year programme. These opportunities include networking with their peers and access to further high-quality training and leadership support.
20. Leaders ensure that there is well-targeted intervention and additional support for participants and for schools when necessary. Quality assurance systems are robust. The quality and amount of professional tutor, subject tutor and leadership development officer support is enhanced where necessary to make up for weaknesses in some schools' capacity to train and support participants. The contributions of these tutors are carefully managed alongside those of school mentors so that responsibilities are clear and responses are adapted to suit the needs of participants. The provider recognises that this could be improved further and the systems for early support, mentor training and personal development have been improved further this year. This is particularly important as there is slightly more than a 60% increase in the number of

schools in the partnership this year, with many new schools which do not have a history of working with Teach First.

21. Many schools are situated along the coastal fringes of the region. This causes difficulties due to distance and, in some cases, some participants felt rather isolated in the past. Leaders are developing strong and purposeful partnerships across schools and there are cluster arrangements to support school leaders, mentors and participants, particularly those in more isolated areas. Bespoke plans are in place, produced in full partnership with the schools, to address issues specific to each cluster.
22. The leaders' strong vision is supported by rigorous analysis, self-evaluation and effective improvement planning. Leaders analyse quantitative and qualitative data carefully and have used this analysis to take steps to bring about improvements to aspects of the programme. There is evidence that the improvements implemented since stage 1 of the inspection are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, the early signs are that completion rates are beginning to improve. The amended summer institute experiences for the primary early years group has also resulted in much more positive feedback and participants feeling much better prepared this year. Where enhanced mentor training has happened, the quality of mentoring is very good indeed.
23. Effective partnerships with the higher education partner, schools, multi-academy trusts and local authority colleagues, and extensive networking arrangements, enhance the quality of the provision. Leaders know the schools and participants well and this is augmented in Medway by close partnerships with the local authority so that information can be shared quickly and pre-emptive action taken when, for example, there are leadership changes in schools. School colleagues who attend the forums and the advisory group say that this gives them the opportunity to contribute to the direction of the training. School colleagues, including year 2 participants and year 3 Teach First Ambassadors, are increasingly involved in contributing to training.
24. The partnership complies with the initial teacher training (ITT) criteria and meets all the relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity, and eliminating discrimination.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe participants' and former participants' teaching:

Castledown Primary School, Hastings
Cedar Primary School, Strood
Dover Christ Church Academy, Dover
Elaine Primary Academy, Strood
Luton Junior School, Chatham
Napier Community Primary and Nursery School, Gillingham
Newington Community Primary School, Ramsgate
New Line Learning Academy, Maidstone
Oasis Academy, Isle of Sheppey
St Edmunds Catholic School, Dover
St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School, Chatham
The Baird Primary Academy, Hastings
The St Leonards Academy, St Leonards-on-Sea

ITE partnership details

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	Stage 2 16–18 November 2015
Lead inspector	Sheena MacDonald, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Previous inspection report	N/A
Provider address	Teach First South East Local Area Office Medway Campus Cathedral Court c/o 30 Pembroke Court Chatham Maritime ME4 4UF



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