

# Teach First London ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates    Stage 1: 5 May 2015    Stage 2: 16 November 2015

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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
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for participants?	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The outcomes for participants</b>	1	1
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	1	1
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	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 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 where half of the pupils are 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 to 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 is 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 activities, 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 the 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 an 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 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 an 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 London partnership**

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

During the charity's 13-year history, many of the schools in which it has placed participants have improved markedly, sometimes from an Ofsted evaluation of inadequate to one of outstanding for overall effectiveness. Headteachers of these schools are convinced that Teach First has been one of the crucial elements of that improvement. The partnership makes a significant strategic contribution to the quality, supply and retention of new teachers in London and the surrounding areas, especially in schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances.

### **Key findings**

- Everyone involved with the partnership is highly committed to the vision and mission of Teach First so that participants, schools and programme leaders make a highly positive contribution to the educational outcomes, aspirations and life chances of disadvantaged pupils in London and the surrounding area.
- Leaders have taken extremely prompt and effective action to tackle aspects of the partnership's work which were identified as possible areas for improvement at stage 1 of the inspection.
- Participants demonstrate consistently high levels of professionalism, playing an important role in the life of the schools in which they are employed.

### **To improve, the ITE partnership should:**

- Evaluate the recent improvements to the contrasting school experience to ensure that it is even more worthwhile and effective in contributing to participants' training.

## The primary phase

### Information about the primary partnership

- The London region of Teach First began a primary programme in 2011. It was extended in 2013 to include a 3–7 early years pathway.
- At the time of stage 1 of this inspection, there were 161 primary and 30 early years participants enrolled on the programme.
- Teach First local area management works in partnership with programme leads and their teams from Canterbury Christ Church University and University College London's Institute of Education to validate the award of PGCE and to provide centre-based training. The partnership includes approximately 120 schools located across 27 local authorities.

### Information about the primary ITE inspection

- During stage 1, inspectors visited eight schools and observed 16 participants (Year 1) on the early years and primary pathways teaching. They spoke to headteachers, school mentors and 16 participants. They also met with a further group of 14 participants, five mentors and five professional tutors at the Teach First offices. They held discussions with the programme leaders, a representative from the Institute of Education and members of the strategic partnership board. Inspectors observed centre-based training at the Institute of Education. They also spent time observing recruitment and selection procedures while attending the assessment centre for potential participants. They took account of the 71 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- During stage 2, inspectors visited seven schools. They observed 13 Year 2 participants (newly qualified teachers) teaching. They spoke to headteachers, school mentors and induction tutors and 16 Year 2 participants while in school. They also met eight Year 2 participants, six Year 1 participants and seven former participants who are in their second year of teaching. Meetings were held with the programme leader, an additional representative from the Institute of Education and a representative from Teach First. Inspectors took account of the 146 responses to Ofsted's online survey.
- In both stages of the inspection, inspectors evaluated a range of evidence including participants' files, the work in pupils' books and pupils' progress information. They also considered a range of documentation provided by the partnership, including information on participants' attainment, employment and completion rates. They reviewed the partnership's website and checked safeguarding arrangements and compliance with the initial teacher training (ITT) criteria.

## Inspection team

Joanne Olsson	Her Majesty's Inspector	Primary phase lead inspector
Michelle Winter	Her Majesty's Inspector	Assistant lead inspector (stage 1)
Chris Campbell	Her Majesty's Inspector	Assistant lead inspector
	(team inspector stage 1 and assistant lead inspector stage 2)	
Andy Maher	Ofsted Inspector	Team inspector (stage 1)
Robin Hammerton	Her Majesty's Inspector	Team inspector (stage 2)
Jeremy Loukes	Her Majesty's Inspector	Team inspector (stage 2)

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

### The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- High employment and completion rates, with almost all participants choosing to teach in local schools. As a result, the partnership is ensuring good and better teachers are recruited to schools where they are needed most.
- Participants emerge from the programme as well-rounded, confident and highly competent teachers who share a common moral purpose and a desire to teach in schools facing challenging circumstances.
- The exceptional professional attributes of participants, which are a hallmark of the programme. Participants are reflective, resilient practitioners who seize every opportunity to immerse themselves in school life. They respond very well to support, act on advice and take responsibility for their own professional development.
- Participants form extremely positive professional relationships with pupils and manage behaviour very well through a range of tried and tested strategies. Consequently, classrooms are calm and harmonious, and learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour.
- A highly personalised training programme, which is driven by the individual needs of participants. The summer institute, expert centre-based training, relevant assignments and effective mentoring all blend seamlessly to help participants exceed the teachers' standards and become good or outstanding teachers.
- Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures ensure high calibre participants, with the right attitudes, aptitudes and skills to succeed as teachers and future leaders, join the programme.
- A clear vision for excellence, strong partnerships and the absolute commitment of everyone to the Teach First core values, underpin every aspect of the programme.

- The relentless drive from leaders to ensure the programme leads to well-equipped teachers for local schools. Leaders tirelessly seek out feedback, listen to views and take quick and decisive action to ensure all participants can flourish.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- Raise participants' attainment even further by:
  - ensuring participants are all equally skilled in challenging the most-able pupils
  - continuing to reduce the number of participants who choose to leave the programme before the end
  - evaluating the recent improvements to the quality assurance systems to ensure that every school training experience matches the very best on offer in the partnership.

## **Inspection judgements**

1. An explicit moral purpose, enshrined in the Teach First core values, is a rich vein that runs throughout every aspect of the partnership's work. Everyone is wedded to the fundamental principle of improving the life chances of disadvantaged pupils. This common goal drives all partners and participants to strive for excellence. Nothing but the best will do. As a result, no one is content to stand still and rest on past triumphs. Priorities for improvement are very accurate and improvement planning is comprehensive and ambitious.
2. Leaders, mentors and participants share a common trait of searching self-evaluation and a willingness to listen to feedback and take rapid action to tackle shortcomings. Criticism is viewed as a positive and constructive tool. It is used to launch new strategies or strengthen existing systems so that participants have the best possible training experience. A breathtaking response to the findings from stage 1 of the inspection means that all the identified weaknesses are being tackled in earnest and with great success. Leaders listen carefully to the views of participants and schools and constantly reshape provision in response. Both the early years and the primary programmes have undergone extensive overhauls to ensure they are hitting the mark and preparing participants to succeed in modern classrooms. This relentless focus on improvement, coupled with the sustained exceptional outcomes for participants, mean that the partnership has outstanding capacity to improve further.

3. Despite their complexity, partnerships are seamless. The triumvirate relationship between Teach First officers, university staff and school leaders works extremely well. This is because everyone is crystal clear about the part they play in the training programme. Expectations of each and every partner are high and outlined explicitly in the exceedingly comprehensive partnership agreement.
4. The relatively new strategic board is an effective vehicle for ensuring school leaders and mentors have a voice in the design and delivery of the training. Members are using their collective expertise increasingly well. They are beginning to cast a critical eye over participants' outcomes and satisfaction surveys. As a result, they make a valuable contribution to the partnership by offering well-informed challenge and support to programme leaders.
5. Leaders track participants' progress across the teachers' standards rigorously. They are quick to spot weaknesses and swift to unleash support. Participants' attainment is assessed accurately. Information from a variety of sources, including pupil progress information, is used effectively to reach secure judgements which focus on the success of participants' teaching over time.
6. A plethora of support is readily available as soon as any barrier to participants' success in the classroom is spotted. A whole host of professionals are on hand to offer their services. Last year, almost seven out of every 10 participants accessed some form of extra help. No one is afraid to call for help because of the positive and open culture leaders have created. Reducing withdrawal rates and increasing attainment all signal the very positive impact of these effective support strategies.
7. Close and personalised support does not end once participants gain QTS. The information supplied to employing schools is detailed, accurate and very useful in setting the scene for future professional development. The work of the leadership development officers (LDOs) is particularly useful in helping Year 2 participants to set up effective classrooms and establish clear routines so that learning time is maximised. The very small number of participants who did not exceed every single teachers' standard receive excellent help to ensure their progress accelerates during their first year of teaching.
8. Rigorous recruitment procedures probe each candidate's knowledge, attitudes and aptitudes for teaching extremely well. This ensures high-calibre participants are selected, with the stamina, resilience and shared moral purpose to meet the demands of the programme. All statutory safeguarding procedures and the ITT criteria are met in full.



9. The quality of training stands out in this partnership because it is tailored closely to individual participants. Participants may have different training experiences, but all have an equal chance to thrive because the programme bends to their particular needs. School- and centre-based training are bound together tightly to ensure consistency and cohesion. Participants get off to an exceptional start during the summer institute. It prepares them very well to meet the demands of a considerable teaching commitment which begins almost as soon as they step foot into school. Additional training days throughout the year, including Saturday conferences, match this excellent start and equip participants with the skills to become effective early years and primary practitioners.
10. Centre-based training, plus comprehensive subject audits, ensure that participants have a good grasp of the early years and primary curriculum and an impressive range of teaching techniques. Assignments are meaningful and serve participants well in linking theory to practice. The remarkably detailed reflective journals enable participants to be self-critical, to identify gaps in their knowledge and to seek out appropriate support to tackle weaknesses.
11. The highly regarded professional tutors form an effective bridge between centre- and school-based training. They play a key role in assuring the quality of the training experience in each school. They are the eyes and ears of the partnership. They identify concerns quickly and ensure support is triggered when necessary. Recent improvements to the quality assurance of school-based experience have strengthened their role further. Consequently, they act as a gatekeeper, ensuring that all participants teach the full breadth of the curriculum and that everyone benefits from timely and valuable contrasting school experiences.
12. School mentors are ambitious and exacting; they set the stakes high. They are instrumental in helping participants to exceed all of the teacher's standards to a high level by the end of the programme. They take full account of initial targets to shape a professional development programme that reflects the strengths and weaknesses of each participant. Almost all mentors follow the process for lesson observations, assessment and training opportunities to the letter. They are supported well in their role through excellent documentation, highly effective mentor training and clear lines of communication. Mentors' coaching skills are particularly strong. They are very effective in helping participants to reflect and identify their own next development steps. However, not all mentors are as accomplished in making sure that written targets reflect the strong oral feedback which typically follows all teaching observations.

13. Participants have ample opportunity to teach English and mathematics, including systematic synthetic phonics. Their skills in each area are tested rigorously to ensure they are well equipped to teach these key areas well. This is bearing fruit. Participants who teach older pupils continue to use their strong knowledge of phonics to support spelling activities and to help less-able pupils to catch up with their reading skills. The diverse range of schools in the partnership offers a wealth of opportunities for participants to work with pupils from different minority backgrounds. They are unperturbed about teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language. This is because the training enables participants to harness and use a wide range of successful strategies.
14. Stage 1 of the inspection identified some less-than-perfect aspects in the training. Not all participants had the opportunity to plan, teach and assess physical education (PE), music and modern foreign languages. While everyone was having a second contrasting school experience, these were happening too late for some participants to gain maximum benefit. This goes some way towards explaining the dissatisfaction some participants expressed in their responses to the trainee online questionnaire. Leaders accepted these criticisms without question and set about tackling shortcomings with incredible speed. They took immediate remedial action to ensure that every participant had appropriate opportunities to teach the full range of subjects before they embarked on their second year. They also made sure all contrasting school experiences took place according to the agreed guidance. Robust systems to check this does not happen again have been implemented well. Schools are fully aware of these changes for the better and most participants' views no longer reflect the earlier findings in the online trainee questionnaire. However, it is too early to see the full impact of these recent changes on current participants.
15. Employment and completion rates are consistently high. Almost all participants who gain QTS choose to remain for the second year of the programme. As a result, partnership schools benefit from good and outstanding second-year participants. An increasing proportion of former participants choose to remain in teaching. Many move to leadership roles or take on the mantle of mentoring new recruits. The number of participants who choose to leave the programme before gaining QTS is relatively small and falling over time, but remains an issue for the provider to address further.
16. Attainment is high and rising steadily each year. All participants surpass the minimum expectations and two thirds leave the first year of the programme having reached the highest level. Participants achieve well across all of the teachers' standards. There are no marked weaknesses because the flexible training programme enables participants to demonstrate their prowess across the full range of criteria. There are no differences in the outcomes for different groups. Participants who choose to follow the early years pathway do as well as their primary colleagues.

17. Participants' teaching over time is at least good and much is exceptional. There are a significant number of outstanding traits which are shared by all participants. They are highly reflective, resilient and have a steely determination to succeed. All are driven by a common desire to raise the educational achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, they have a strong understanding of the barriers that can halt pupils' progress and they are well armed with successful strategies to tackle underachievement.
18. Participants' expert subject knowledge, particularly in the core subjects, means they teach well-structured, exciting and purposeful lessons which build on pupils' prior learning. They use probing questions to check understanding and to iron out any misconceptions. Positive relationships, well-established routines and high expectations all lead to calm and welcoming classrooms in which pupils flourish. Behaviour is managed extremely well through tried and tested strategies. There are few instances of learning being disrupted.
19. Mathematics is taught very well. Participants use visual images and models effectively to help pupils understand new concepts. Some participants are very skilled in ensuring pupils are fluent mathematicians. Most participants who follow the early years route are skilled in shaping learning to meet children's needs and interests, deploying other adults effectively. This is due to their strong grasp of the early years curriculum and a good understanding of how young children learn. Participants are not fazed by changing arrangements for assessing pupils. They are steeped in checking pupils' progress from the start and they are accustomed to using whole-school assessment systems.
20. Participants meet the needs of different groups well because they understand starting points and the progress pupils need to make to reach age-related expectations. They are particularly skilled in pitching their teaching at just the right level for pupils with special educational needs or those pupils who need to catch up. Although they plan challenging activities for the most-able pupils, participants are not always as successful in deepening the learning of this particular group.
21. Participants have a deep understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm and from prejudice-based bullying. They are fully aware of their role in protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Furthermore, they are well prepared to spot and act on any signs which could indicate a risk of forced marriage or female genital mutilation. Their strong understanding of the diverse make-up of the pupils in their class means they are effective in promoting positive role models from different ethnic backgrounds. Through topics such as Black history, participants go a long way in exploring differences, promoting respect and tolerance and helping pupils to take their place in modern Britain.

22. Participants' professional attitudes and behaviour are second to none. They quickly immerse themselves into the life of the school, seizing every opportunity to hone their skills and make a real difference to the pupils in their care. They adopt a teacher persona from day one. They become valued and valuable members of staff. Headteachers are overwhelmingly positive about the calibre of Teach First participants and the difference they make to the school and pupils' achievement. Consequently, the programme is held in high regard and schools are keen to be part of the partnership.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe participants' teaching:

ARK Globe Academy, Southwark  
Berrymede Junior School, Ealing  
Brampton Primary School, Newham  
Comber Grove School, Southwark  
George Mitchell School, Waltham Forest  
George Spicer Primary School, Enfield  
Harris Primary Free School, Southwark  
Kelvin Grove Primary School, Lewisham  
Mandeville Primary School, Hackney  
Millbank Academy, Westminster  
Oasis Academy Hadley, Enfield  
St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Tower Hamlets  
St Stephen's Primary School, Newham  
Wellington Primary School, Tower Hamlets

## The secondary phase

### Information about the secondary partnership

- The secondary partnership trained 415 participants last year.
- Training was offered in the following subjects: business, design and technology, English, geography, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, religious education and science.
- Partner schools were located across London, and in Slough, Essex, Suffolk and Thurrock.
- This is the second inspection of Teach First's secondary training in the London region. When inspected in 2011, Teach First's regional partnership worked with Canterbury Christ Church University. The partnership now works with Canterbury Christ Church University and University College London's Institute of Education.

### Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited 13 secondary schools during stage 1 of the inspection and a further 11 secondary schools during the second stage of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of 15 Year 1 and 12 Year 2 participants (newly qualified teachers) during the two stages. The teaching of participants in their first year was observed jointly with their mentors. Inspectors then observed the feedback given by mentors to participants.
- During the visits, inspectors also held discussions with groups of participants and met with their mentors, other trainers, subject tutors, senior leaders and headteachers. Inspectors visited the assessment centre to observe recruitment and selection processes and visited university-based subject training in mathematics.
- Inspectors took account of responses to recent newly qualified teacher (NQT) surveys and to Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors also took account of the partnership's own participant evaluations of the programme and information on the Teach First website, and documentation provided by Teach First.
- Inspectors held meetings with course and programme leaders and school leaders from the partnership. They considered a wide range of documentary evidence, which included participant tracking and assessment data, participants' teaching files and evidence about how well participants are meeting the teachers' standards. Inspectors also scrutinised the partnership's analysis of participants' attainment data, completion and employment outcomes over time, and the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement plan.

## Inspection team

Adrian Lyons	Her Majesty's Inspector	Overall lead inspector
David Storrie	Her Majesty's Inspector	Assistant lead inspector
Debbie Clinton	Her Majesty's Inspector	Team inspector (stage 1)
Janet Peace	Her Majesty's Inspector	Team inspector (stages 1 and 2)
Simon Rowe	Her Majesty's Inspector	Team inspector (stage 1)
Diana Choulerton	Her Majesty's Inspector	Team inspector (stage 2)
Julia Wright	Her Majesty's Inspector	Team inspector (stage 2)

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

### The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- The partnership produces large numbers of consistently good, and often outstanding, teachers who significantly enhance the quality of education in London schools.
- Participants contribute very strongly to the rising achievement of pupils through helping to raise the aspirations of those they teach.
- Participants are very effectively supported in a coherent way, by the unusually large range of tutors and mentors, to improve their impact on pupils' progress.
- Employment rates are consistently high. Newly and recently qualified participants play a significant role in their schools and have contributed to the rapid improvement in the quality of education in London schools in recent years.
- The exceptionally strong recruitment and selection procedures that result in the enrolment of participants who are able, early on in their programme, to deliver effective lessons. They reflect critically on their performance so that they make rapid improvement.
- The work on subject knowledge since the last inspection is just one example of the partnership's responsiveness to its on-going feedback from partner schools and external reports. The response to issues raised at the end of stage 1 of the inspection shows the partnership's agility in adapting and changing to better meet the needs of participants.
- The moral purpose of improving the life chances of children from the most deprived backgrounds that is clearly evident amongst all involved in the partnership.

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

### The partnership should:

- Improve the quality of training even further by evaluating the impact of recent improvements to the programme, particularly participants' experience of primary schools and the contrasting school experience, to ensure that these experiences always contribute effectively to training and preparing participants for their future employment.

### Inspection judgements

23. Teach First is highly successful in meeting the aims of its mission to recruit exceptional graduates to teach and lead in schools in challenging circumstances.
24. Participants are prepared well to be more than good classroom teachers. They often run after-school clubs or lead aspects of staff training. For example, this year's new participants have already contributed to the development of other school staff through sharing their learning about the Prevent agenda.
25. Second-year participants in all the schools visited had received effective Prevent agenda training from a number of sources. The ITE provider checks attendance and there is a requirement for participants to revisit the training online if they were not present. Second-year participants demonstrated a very secure understanding of the specific issues that may arise in different cultural settings and the importance of understanding the risks of radicalisation within their own school. It was clear that second-year participants were able to have an open discourse with their pupils and this led to the pupils being confident about expressing their views. For example, all participants in one school had taken the opportunity to talk with pupils about recent acts of terrorism with great empathy. Participants in all schools also address spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) themes through form periods and assemblies. Inspectors described a 'golden thread of SMSC' running through planning and delivery, but for some participants, the spiritual aspect was the least well-understood element of SMSC.
26. It is apparent that British values are given a high profile in all of the schools visited and in participants' training and practice. For example, in some English lessons observed by inspectors, second-year participants were focusing on a set text from the British literary heritage, including discussion of traditional and modern attitudes to Christmas, as an aspect of fundamental British values.



27. Participants often take on leadership roles early in their careers. For example, inspectors met a second-year participant who was leading on an academically based research project entitled 'Closing the gap champion, White British' and has presented training to 40 members of staff and the senior leadership team. Another Year 2 participant leads French in the languages department and another is responsible for A-level provision within a science department in a school recently judged outstanding.
28. The relentless focus on the progress made by pupils taught by participants was a strength from the previous inspection and continues to be central to the assessment of participants' progress through the course. Participants feel a personal responsibility for the quality of their pupils' learning, while school-based trainers feel a similar sense of responsibility for the progress of participants. Trainers have high aspirations for the participants, who in time have high aspirations for the pupils they teach. Participants are excellent role models. One participant observed by inspectors represented the passion of her peers as follows: 'With Teach First I'll be able to fulfil my lifelong dream to become a leader who makes a positive and lasting difference to the lives of others. In particular I want to help, teach and inspire those who need inspiration most. Teach First provides me with the platform to instil confidence in the next generation so that they can go on to achieve their dreams'.
29. Teach First ensures that best practice is spread rapidly through the various physical and virtual networks to which participants belong. Mentor training is taken very seriously. The overwhelming majority of school-based mentors have received formal training. Teach First is aware of the need for universal mentor training and this is a key priority. The range and frequency of central training support are greater than normal. The different professionals involved in giving participants support form a cohesive partnership, so enabling participants to make rapid progress.
30. Subject and wider professional training is highly effective. Second-year participants have a number of opportunities to learn from good and outstanding practitioners. For example, in one school they are required to observe good or outstanding practice of other teachers on a weekly basis. All are involved in NQT projects, which involve collaborative work to develop best practice. In another school, the second-year participants have access to training matched to their specific developmental needs. One example includes the use of coaching to improve the teaching of a triad or pair of teachers. Another second-year participant is part of the middle leader group and has been trained in lesson observation.

31. School leaders explained how, as one of them put it, when a participant requires additional support 'the partnership really comes into its own'. Teach First's recognition that a participant needs additional support is triggered unusually early and reflects the constant monitoring both within the employing school and by the partnership.
32. Professional mentors secure consistency across their teams of mentors through very regular moderation of lesson observations, mentor session observations, journals and assignments, with effective, coordinated leadership. They themselves praise Teach First for its centralised training and strong professional networks for professional mentors.
33. Subject mentors know their subjects very well, mentor their trainees very skilfully and are held rigorously to account by professional mentors and, sometimes, by participants. The skills observed in lesson observation feedback were strong, diagnostic and rooted firmly in coaching and professional development. Effective use is made of links with subject associations. In many ways the subject knowledge of participants is extremely strong, but sometimes there is a distinction between pedagogical knowledge and subject breadth. So, for example, in English the focus may be on 'how to teach' a topic rather than building upon the wider reading which would prepare participants for increasingly challenging texts. This is a particular limitation where participants teach a subject that is not their degree specialism.
34. Behaviour management is a strength. All second-year participants were able to give a good account of the support they had been given with behaviour and were using the school strategies effectively. Some have had to work harder to achieve good behaviour at Key Stage 3, but inspectors were impressed by the positive climate for learning in the lessons observed, which resulted from strong professional relationships. Participants have had excellent training on safeguarding and bullying, both from the ITE provider and also from schools. All schools and the ITE partnership have provided appropriate support and training to ensure that these are well developed. The ITE partnership has also addressed e-safety training and all participants were aware of their professional responsibilities in this area.
35. There is an absolute coherence at the root of the partnership's training. Trainers are impressive in terms of their confidence, knowledge, consistency and, as noted by one inspector, 'in how utterly loyal and protective they are about the Teach First mission'. Evidence from journals, lesson observations and interviews with subject and professional mentors and participants indicates a coherent marriage of central- and school-based training.

36. Participants are 'drilled' very effectively in self-evaluation and self-reflection. Inspectors' lesson observations and their scrutiny of the weekly reflection records evidenced intelligent and searching analysis of their own performance by participants.
37. All participants and mentors have an inquisitive awareness of all pupils' needs. Participants are quick to pick up emerging learning needs in pupils, even in very transient pupil populations, and they know where to go or who to ask for additional support or resources for those pupils. For example, Year 1 participants talked confidently about their knowledge of school inclusion teams and of the diverse range of support they are able to access for their pupils via those teams. Similarly, participants are very skilled in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, such as those with disabilities or special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). By the third term, participants had a strong awareness of EAL and all praised recent phonics training. Where effective primary experience had been secured, this had further strengthened participants' practice in this regard. A relatively less well-developed area is sometimes the provision of sufficient and appropriate challenge for the most-able pupils.
38. Year 1 participants have a very well-developed knowledge of the causes of underachievement. Their academic appreciation of this is well developed in central and school-based training and evidenced through assignments. This is complemented very well by their comprehensive understanding of their school communities and demonstrated in a key assignment.
39. All participants are confident in their awareness of, and skills in, the teaching of literacy via their subjects. Many of the partnership schools focus on literacy development as a whole-school priority. The development of numeracy through subjects other than mathematics is less well done.
40. School leaders value highly their partnership with Teach First. They very firmly believe that it offers a high-quality brand that they recognise and trust for their workforce. They speak of a regular supply of exceptional new staff who then bring new thinking regarding pedagogy and improve the culture and ethos of their schools. They welcome access to a powerful and effective set of networks which then contributes in turn to their own school's improvement. School leaders praised the participants and previous Teach First alumni for the 'transformative effect' they had had upon the culture of their schools. They bring with them a 'can-do' culture of resilience, ambition and passion for achievement which is felt tangibly in the schools in which they work.

41. School leaders also value the access to a wide range of partners to enhance the education and careers information of their pupils, for example with global banks and investment companies that they would otherwise have been unlikely to access. This is a result of the Teach First ambassador programme. Having completed the two-year participant programme, the minority who choose not to remain in teaching still support the Teach First educational mission within their different careers.
42. Headteachers are fully involved in consultation with Teach First leaders and help to shape the strategic direction of the organisation. Leaders have built a training programme that responds rapidly to feedback. Inspection feedback at the end of stage 1 was accepted and responded to very quickly. Part of this feedback was a concern regarding the effectiveness of the contrasting school experience and the primary school experience. By stage 2 of the inspection, leaders had not only ensured that quality assurance processes were in place to give much greater priority in these areas for 2015/16 for Year 1 participants, but had worked speedily to ensure that 2014/15 participants received improved provision before the end of the initial training year. However, there has not yet been time to judge whether, given the duration of this component, the impact of recent improvements is enabling participants to get the maximum possible benefit from a contrasting school experience. The same is true of the primary school experience.
43. The partnership is aware of the need to develop these components of the programme and has a track record demonstrating its capacity to deliver and improve. For example, a question mark at the end of stage 1 feedback, around some participants' understanding of the Prevent agenda, led the partnership to make excellent use of the two-year element of the training in providing very highly regarded input over the summer which has been adopted for whole-staff training in some partnership schools.
44. Decisive leadership and management, together with very thorough and demanding training, beginning with exceptional recruitment and selection processes, all lead to very high retention and employment rates. Outcomes are very high, with around seven out of 10 participants assessed as outstanding and virtually all participants exceeding the teachers' standards at a good level. Teach First is fully compliant with all criteria for initial teacher training, including arrangements for safeguarding. Thorough assessment processes ensure that the judgements of participants' attainment are accurate.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe participants' teaching:

Bethnal Green Academy, London  
Bow School, London  
Burlington Danes Academy, London  
Buxton School, London  
Cardinal Pole Roman Catholic School, London  
George Green School, London  
George Mitchell School, London  
Harris Academy, Bromley  
James Hornsby School, Basildon  
Lister Academy, London  
Loxford School, Ilford  
Morpeth School, London  
Mulberry School for Girls, London  
Paddington Academy, London  
Parliament Hill School, London  
Plumstead Manor School, Plumstead  
Preston Manor School, Wembley  
Saint Gabriel's College, London  
Sarah Bonnell School, London  
St George's Catholic School, London  
Swanlea School, London  
Westminster Academy, London

## ITE partnership details

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Lead inspector	Adrian Lyons HMI
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Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	6–15 June 2011
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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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