

# University of Bedfordshire ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates    Stage 1: 25 April 2016    Stage 2: 26 September 2016

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

The inspection draws on evidence from each phase and separate route within the ITE partnership to make judgements against all parts of the evaluation schedule. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees.

## Inspection judgements

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

	<b>Early years ITT (EYTS)</b>	<b>Primary QTS</b>	<b>Secondary QTS</b>	<b>ITE in FE</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	2	4	2	2
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	2	4	2	2
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	2	4	2	2
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	2	4	1	2

## Overview of the ITE partnership

The overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership is good in early years ITT; inadequate in primary; good in secondary; good in further education.

Inspectors judged provision in the primary phase to be inadequate. This is because leaders have not ensured that the primary physical education specialist postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) course complied with all of the Secretary of State's criteria for initial teacher training (ITT). Specifically, the course is not meeting:

- criterion C2.1(a), which requires ITT partnerships to ensure that the content, structure, delivery and assessment of programmes are designed to: enable trainee teachers to meet all the standards for QTS across the age range of training, in this case 5–11 and
- criterion C2.2 that they prepare all trainee teachers to teach within one of the following age phases, typically 3–5, 5–11 or 7–11, and that trainees should be assessed as meeting the standards in the specified age range.

### Key findings

- The partnership plays a key role in meeting the urgent need of local schools and education providers, in training effective teachers.
- School and local authority leaders speak very positively about the 'genuine partnership' developed since the appointment of the associate dean. The physical and human resources of the university are used effectively to support professional development for teachers and lecturers in the area.
- Central training at the university is highly regarded across the provision.

### To improve the ITE partnership must

- ensure that all programmes of ITE comply with the Secretary of State's criteria

#### and should:

- improve the consistency and quality of mentoring in early years and further education to match that found in schools.

## Information about this ITE partnership

- The University of Bedfordshire partnership offers postgraduate certificates in education (PGCE) in primary and secondary teacher training. It also offers undergraduate routes for primary teacher training and for physical education

(PE) teachers in secondary. Local schools are able to work in partnership with the university through the School Direct programme.

- In further education, the partnership comprises the university and five general further education colleges: Central Bedfordshire; Bedford; Tresham; Grantham; and Barnfield College. The partnership offers one-year full-time and two-year part-time programmes validated by the university. The programmes lead to either the certificate in education, or the professional graduate certificate in education (PGCE).
- The partnership offers a part-time employment-based route to early years teacher status (EYTS) through either study at the university campus in Bedford or the Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base. Successful trainees achieve a professional graduate certificate in early years teaching (with EYTS). The partnership also offers a PGCE (birth to five EYTS).

## **The early years ITT phase**

### **Information about the early years ITT partnership**

- The University of Bedfordshire works in partnership with 60 settings across 10 local authorities. The programme is planned, delivered and reviewed in partnership with the Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base in Corby, Northamptonshire.
- The partnership offers a part-time employment-based route to early years teacher status (EYTS) through either study at the university campus in Bedford or the Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base.
- Successful trainees achieve a professional graduate certificate in early years teaching (with EYTS). A total of 29 trainees undertook the employment-based study route in 2015–16 and from September 2016 there are 20 trainees training on this route.
- A three-month assessment only route is available for those with considerable skills and experience of working with children across the early years age range. Two trainees undertook this route to gain EYTS in 2015–16.
- During 2015–16, the partnership offered a full-time postgraduate certificate in education (birth to five with EYTS). One trainee undertook this route. From September 2016, there are five trainees on this route.

### **Information about the early years ITT inspection**

- This inspection was undertaken by one inspector who observed trainees' and former trainees' teaching in five different early years settings. One trainee was observed at both stages of the inspection. Three observations were made jointly with tutors from the partnership. The inspector held discussions with trainees' mentors.
- The inspector met regularly with representatives of the partnership throughout the inspection. The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence including: reviews of how well the partnership is doing; plans for improvement; programme documentation and evidence of compliance with safeguarding and early years ITT requirements.
- Through a range of meetings, setting visits and telephone calls, the inspector spoke with almost all trainees from the 2015–16 cohort to discuss their learning, their experience of placements and the impact of support from mentors. The inspector reviewed 20 trainees' responses to Ofsted's trainee online questionnaire.

- The inspector reviewed a sample of trainees' portfolios and targets set for trainees' professional development in their employment context.

## **Inspection team**

Tim Vaughan HMI	lead inspector	Stages 1 and 2
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## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

### The key strengths of the early years ITT partnership

- The programme develops skilled, professional early years teachers who are knowledgeable and evaluative about early years education and the improvement of teaching and learning.
- Arrangements for the recruitment and selection of trainees are well considered and thorough, and this results in most trainees achieving well, and completing their studies successfully.
- Almost all former trainees remain working in early years settings; many of them have successfully achieved new or enhanced roles.
- Strong links with partners, including the Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base, have successfully contributed to the positive impact of the programme on trainees and former trainees.
- The significant investment made by the university in the provision of early years teacher training demonstrates a clear commitment to improving the qualifications and expertise of the early years sector.

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

#### The partnership should:

- strengthen engagement between the university and settings used for placements so that the support for trainees and mentors matches their individual needs well
- make sure that trainees are visited and assessed by tutors during one of their contrasting setting/school placements so as to give the partnership the fullest overview of trainees' developing teaching skills and knowledge
- improve quality assurance procedures to ensure that the quality of mentors' written targets and trainees' own career entry targets meets trainees' professional development needs
- strengthen the accuracy of judgements about trainees' attainment:
  - where they are considered to be achieving beyond the teachers' standards (early years)
  - by checking more closely how strong an understanding of key elements of early years practice the trainees have, including the

'Prevent' duty and stretching the learning of more able children in early mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

1. The provision of teacher training leading to the award of early years teacher status (EYTS) at the University of Bedford is rooted in a clear and ambitious vision to develop the skills of the early years workforce. There is a well-informed understanding of the needs of the sector and a passionate commitment to raising the status of those who work with the youngest children. The programme team are experts in early years education, skilled at developing and improving the skills and knowledge of adult learners. The partnership is linking well with schools, early years settings and childminders to provide training which meets the need for early years staff to be better qualified.
2. Course leaders and departmental managers work in close partnership with the Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base. This collaboration has ensured that the new early years ITT programmes enable trainees to make strong links between theory, research and practice. In 2015–16, the partnership successfully attracted a number of childminders to the programme. Their participation was valued highly by tutors and fellow trainees. The inspector agrees with the evaluation of the partnership and the trainees themselves that this innovative aspect of the programme signifies the importance and value of childminding within the modern early years workforce.
3. The partnership is engaged actively in local authority and national networks. The university hosts meetings for local early years practitioners. By connecting to national and international networks already established at Pen Green, the partnership is learning from wider initiatives at the forefront of early childhood education. As a result, leaders are continually improving the quality of the programme. Careful evaluations of provision are undertaken with a continuous eye on further improvement. One exciting opportunity planned for this year is a series of practitioner seminars at the university and Pen Green, to which all trainees and former trainees are invited.
4. A large and increasing number of early years settings, childminders, maintained schools, independent schools and academies are engaging with the programmes. The levels of applications, trainee recruitment and completion are good and improving. Arrangements for trainees undertaking the assessment only route are well managed and rigorous.
5. Trainees benefit from a good balance of training across the early years and key stages 1 and 2. Increasingly good use is made of settings that are less

than good to benefit trainees, as well as to share learning more widely of these contexts within the programme. During 2015–16, some trainees found it difficult to make arrangements for their own placements. This created some anxieties and obstacles which were overcome once the partnership became aware of the issues. The partnership now has clear arrangements in place to support trainees with making arrangements for placements.

6. The quality of mentor support is too variable. Trainees are not always set clear targets for their professional development. New arrangements are in place for 2016–17 to ensure that all mentors understand and fulfil their support role. It is too early to be certain of the impact of these changes. However, the partnership is aware that it needs to keep these new arrangements under close review so that trainees receive the individual support required.
7. The partnership is currently trialling the introduction of a profile of trainees' skills and development needs as they move into their new careers as early years teachers. Some completed profiles underplay what trainees have achieved across the teachers' standards (early years). Some targets identified by former trainees for their own ongoing development lack the precise detail required to fully guide their professional development.
8. Reviews by leaders of the overall success of the programme are accurate and well considered. There is a strong ambition and commitment to improvement and a deep willingness to continually enhance the quality of the provision. Leaders have a good knowledge of how to develop teacher training programmes and of adult learning more generally. They use their insights well to continually plan, review and refine the early years ITT programmes. Plans for programme improvement are realistic and achievable. Leaders have given careful attention to planning and working in line with all guidance and expectations for early years ITT, hence the course is fully compliant with national requirements. To enhance trainees' experience, the programme exceeds what is required, for example by ensuring that trainees spend a substantial amount of time training and teaching in settings and schools.
9. Safeguarding requirements are met through careful initial checks and vetting of trainees. While study of safeguarding is carefully threaded throughout the programme, some former trainees developed only an adequate knowledge of the government's 'Prevent' duty and how to keep children safe from radicalisation and extremism. Former trainees have been invited to an autumn term event to enhance their knowledge and understanding of this aspect of safeguarding and the development of fundamental British values, alongside the 2016–17 cohort.
10. The university values the new early years ITT programme highly. Funding provided to draw in additional early years practitioner expertise from nursery



schools, childminding and adult learning is already being used well to enhance trainees' learning about children from birth to age three years.

11. A key impact of the early years ITT programme is that trainees and former trainees are developing as thoughtful and reflective professionals. They are evaluative about their teaching and their impact on children's learning. They respect the contributions and expertise of fellow trainees with different backgrounds to themselves. For those trainees and former trainees working in settings with other staff, they are strengthening their skills in leading the improvement of early years practice. For example, one former trainee has supported staff to re-organise the indoor and outdoor learning areas for children at Nursery in systematic and thoughtful ways.
12. Importantly, all trainees have developed a broad understanding of how to work with children from birth to age three years. Even trainees with much experience of this age group say that they have improved their awareness of children's learning and development and use this greater understanding to improve their teaching. Well-taught sessions include not only information about the progress check for two-year-olds, but examples of how this is being used well to enhance children's progress and learning.
13. Typically, most trainees have extensive previous and ongoing experience of working with children in the early years. The partnership makes good use of trainees' existing expertise, by promoting shared practice between trainees at taught sessions. Trainees welcome this respect for their existing skills. They benefit from partnership expectations that all trainees successfully complete academic study linked to improvements they are making within their current workplace/main placement.
14. While learning about teaching in schools has initially been unfamiliar to many trainees, they gain useful new skills and knowledge from placements in primary schools. This includes opportunities to teach groups of children in the Reception Year as well as first-hand insights into the teaching of pupils at key stages 1 and 2. Consequently, former trainees graduate with a good understanding of what children need in order to be ready for the next stage of their learning. The assessment of trainees, during these contrasting placements, has been mostly undertaken by on-site mentors. To gain the fullest and most accurate picture of trainees' teaching skills, the partnership is aware of the need for moderation visits to observe trainees' teaching during one of their placements.
15. Trainees achieve well in relation to the teachers' standards (early years) and show particular strengths in their knowledge of early learning, planning and adapting teaching to meet the needs of children. They know how to meet the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, they gain valuable experience by working closely with speech and

language therapists. Trainees and former trainees have a secure understanding of the role and purpose of assessment and they refine their assessment skills successfully throughout the programme. The number of trainees on each training route is small and makes meaningful comparisons difficult. It is, however, clear that trainees studying at the university on day-release achieve equally well as those studying in week-long blocks at Pen Green.

16. From taught sessions and school placements, trainees develop a strong knowledge of teaching literacy. They know how to teach children through a broad range of experiences, such as by learning rhymes and rhyming words, as well as how to systematically teach children phonics. Trainees understand how to begin teaching children to write and communicate verbally with confidence. One trainee explained clearly an example from her practice, where she uses a wide range of attractive fiction and non-fiction books to stimulate children's conversations and to support their writing skills.
17. Trainees are not always as confident about how to stretch the needs of the more able children in mathematics. In these cases, tutors' judgements about trainees' attainment being high were not matched by trainees' teaching skills and knowledge in mathematics.
18. Where teaching by trainees and former trainees is strongest, they make maximum use of the Nursery environment to make learning for children enjoyable, they engage children well with questions and comments and adapt their interventions well to different children's abilities. They also manage children's behaviour well.
19. Partnership work with Pen Green and other partners is strong. This means that schools and early years settings are involved well in the development and delivery of the training. A well-balanced combination of taught sessions, placements and study is improving the quality of trainees' teaching. Trainees benefit from the combined expertise of the programme team. Consequently, trainees and former trainees are developing a well-informed understanding of early learning and development.
20. Applications from prospective trainees from a range of early years contexts are increasing. The partnership has clear plans to increase applications from minority ethnic groups and from men working in the early years sector. The partnership actively promotes the early years ITT programme within the region. Tutors work very closely with prospective trainees to make sure that they are ready for study or for the assessment only route. The proportion of trainees who complete the programme successfully is high. Almost every former trainee remains working in early years. An increasing proportion of former trainees are being recognised for their extended expertise, with

several securing new roles within schools, settings and as educators on cruise ships.

### **Annex: Partnership settings**

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

Anna-Ca-Soo Nursery, Peterborough  
Childminder EY409458, Kettering  
Jak's Playgroup, Irthlingborough  
Little Thetford Acorns Pre-School, Ely  
The Learning Tree Kindergarten, Peterborough

## **The primary phase**

### **Information about the primary partnership**

- The partnership comprises over 100 primary, middle and lower schools spread across Bedfordshire and adjoining counties. The university offers three main routes to qualified teacher status (QTS), a three-year BA course, a four-year BEd course (which is currently being phased out) and the PGCE. For trainees wishing to follow the PGCE route into teaching the university also offers a primary specialism in physical education.
- The university works in close partnership with schools and academy trusts to deliver School Direct routes into teaching. The partnership also offers the assessment only route into teaching.
- 178 trainees completed courses leading to QTS in 2016 – 120 undergraduates and 58 through a PGCE route.

### **Information about the primary ITE inspection**

- During the two stages of the primary phase inspection inspectors visited 23 schools. They observed lessons taught by 23 trainees during stage 1 and 14 newly qualified teachers (NQTs) during stage 2 of the inspection. Most of the trainees' teaching was observed jointly with mentors and, in most cases, the feedback provided by these mentors was also observed.
- Inspectors met with the trainees and NQTs that they had observed teaching. During stage 1 of this inspection, an inspector met with a group of trainees to discuss their training and the impact it had had on their teaching. Inspectors observed lectures at the university.
- Inspectors scrutinised trainees' teaching files to see how effectively they planned lessons and how they reviewed the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Inspectors looked at how trainee progress is tracked against the teachers' standards and the information which is shared between the university and schools at the end of the training.
- Inspectors met with senior staff from the university and other senior staff from the partnership, including headteachers, school-based mentors and tutors. They scrutinised a wide range of evidence including the primary phase self-evaluation document and improvement plan. Inspectors looked at course handbooks and information relating to recruitment and selection, school placements, completion data, external examiners' reports and statutory compliance with the initial teacher training criteria. Surveys of the views of trainees and newly qualified teachers were considered.

## Inspection team

Paul Tomkow HMI	lead inspector	Stage 1 and 2
Helen Wiseman Ofsted Inspector	assistant lead inspector	Stage 1
Andrew Mayer Ofsted Inspector	assistant lead inspector	Stage 2
Jan Connor HMI	team inspector	Stage 1
Terry Russell Ofsted Inspector	team inspector	Stages 1 and 2
Emma Hollis-Brown Ofsted Inspector	team inspector	Stage 2

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 4**

### The key strengths of the primary partnership

- Almost all of the trainees who completed the course gained employment in 2016.
- Rigorous selection procedures, effective training and good pastoral support help to ensure that completion rates have improved and are now good.
- NQTs value the centre and the school-based training that is provided in mathematics, science and English, which helps them to become confident classroom practitioners in the core subjects.
- Trainees use a range of strategies that promote good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate high levels of professional conduct.

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

Inspectors judged the partnership to be inadequate because it is not meeting all of the Secretary of State's criteria for ITT in respect of the primary physical education specialism PGCE.

Specifically, it is not meeting:

- criterion C2.1 (a) which requires ITE partnerships to ensure that the content, structure, delivery and assessment of programmes are designed to: enable trainee teachers to meet all the standards for QTS across the age range of training, in this case 5–11 and
- criterion C2.2 that they prepare all trainee teachers to teach within one of the following age phases, typically 3–5, 5–11 or 7–11, and that trainees should be assessed as meeting the standards in the specified age range.

### **The partnership must:**

- ensure that trainees on the primary physical education specialism PGCE route have the opportunity to develop their practical teaching skills and to be assessed against the teachers' standards across the specified age range of their training, 5–11.

### **The partnership should:**

- ensure that the assessments that are made on trainees' attainment, particularly on the good/outstanding boundary, are always accurate
- improve the quality of information contained in the career entry plan so that the targets set help NQTs to make the best possible transition into their teaching career.

## **Inspection judgements**

21. Through the cycle of self-evaluation, improvement planning and associated actions, partnership leaders have overseen improvements over recent years which are reflected in the improved outcomes in employment and completion rates. However, leaders have not ensured that the primary physical education PGCE course is compliant with initial teacher training criteria. As a result, some trainees have not had sufficient practical experience of teaching across the 5–11 age range or being assessed fully against the teachers' standards across their specified age range. They have not been sufficiently well prepared to teach across the age range for which they have trained.
22. With the exception of primary physical education PGCE course, the partnership is accurate in the judgements that it makes regarding whether or not trainees meet the standards required to achieve qualified teacher status. However, too often the grades that are awarded to trainees are too high and do not accurately reflect the level that the trainees are demonstrating across the standards. This is particularly the case at the boundary between trainees who are judged to be good and those whose are judged to be outstanding. Where this occurs the over-inflation undermines the confidence that school leaders have in the judgements made by course leaders.

23. The partnership works with trainees during their placements to document a summary of strengths and areas that require further development. This information is made available to the schools in order to support their transition into teaching. However, too often the areas that are identified are not specific enough to help the school to work with the NQT on areas that require development.
24. NQTs are well prepared to teach English, mathematics and science. They receive good training at the centre which helps them to understand the new national curriculum. For example, during stage 1 of the inspection, a highly effective mathematics lecture was observed, during which trainees engaged fully in discussion and activities involving algebra. The activity not only raised awareness of the requirements of the national curriculum but also deepened trainees' understanding of the subject matter and helped them to develop a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.
25. Trainees spoken to during this inspection spoke positively about the training that they had received at the university, saying that it prepared them well to teach early reading and writing. The teaching of phonics is given a high priority and many trainees said that it was a particular strength. Effective training at the centre, coupled with a wide range of experiences in schools, ensures that by the time they have finished their training trainees are able to use systematic synthetic phonics in their teaching with increasing confidence and competence.
26. Trainees and NQTs on the primary training programme and the PE specialist programme value the training sessions in physical education held at the university. This training is supported well by the opportunities that schools give to trainees to observe and teach PE during placements. As a result of this experience, most NQTs feel well prepared to teach PE and understand the importance of this subject in pupils' development.
27. Trainees and NQTs acquire good knowledge and awareness of safeguarding policies and procedures during their training. They understand the need to take prompt and appropriate action in response to any safeguarding issues that they may encounter. They understand the importance of keeping pupils safe from all forms of bullying, including those associated with social media. Schools across the partnership ensure that trainees and NQTs are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and know who to contact if they have any concerns.
28. Trainees value highly the contribution made to the course by external speakers, many of whom work in partnership schools. A wide range of lectures are provided on subjects such as behaviour management and the government's 'Prevent' duty, which seeks to protect pupils from extremism and radicalisation. Trainees' awareness and understanding of these issues,

including the promotion of fundamental British values, is heightened as a result. One trainee said that she had been inspired to become a special educational needs coordinator following a talk from a teacher in a local school about this role and the impact it can have.

29. The partnership's work to improve completion rates has been successful. Careful monitoring by senior leaders, improvements to the quality of training and better pastoral support have all contributed to this improvement and resulted in the number of withdrawals significantly reducing. The process of recruitment and selection has also become more effective. Senior staff from partnership schools are involved in this process and describe it as rigorous and professional. As a result of these improvements, trainees are now in a much better position to make good progress in their training and are far more likely to complete it successfully.
30. The partnership monitors outcomes for different groups of trainees closely to ensure equality of opportunity. There is currently no significant difference between outcomes for male and female trainees. However, senior leaders are aware that a disproportionately low number of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds complete their training. This is also the case for trainees with a disability. Leaders have already recognised the need to address this issue and have effective plans in place to improve matters.
31. The quality of communication between the provider and schools in the partnership is strong. Information is shared in a timely manner and headteachers, school mentors and trainees know what is expected of them and who to contact if they are experiencing difficulties. Clear timescales are in place and enable those involved with trainees and NQTs in schools to know when observations and tasks are to take place.
32. Trainees and NQTs understand their role as professionals and the importance of demonstrating high standards of personal and professional conduct. The vast majority of trainees and NQTs quickly form positive relationships with their pupils and their colleagues. They work well as part of the school team and show a willingness not only to learn from colleagues in school but also to share their expertise, for example in computing and PE. They often make a valuable contribution to the wider life of the school by getting involved in after-school clubs and activities.
33. A particular strength of trainees and NQTs across the partnership is their high expectation of pupils' behaviour and attitude to work. Inspectors saw clear evidence of good relationships having been established in the vast majority of classrooms visited during this inspection. As a result, pupils were keen to learn and trainees and NQTs were helping them to develop positive attitudes to learning. Trainees and NQTs recognise the link between effective teaching and good behaviour. In the lessons observed, they were also adept at using



effective behaviour management techniques to intervene early when there were any signs of pupils going off task or disrupting the learning of others.

34. Trainees and NQTs understand the importance of meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged. They plan their teaching well, paying close attention to those pupils who are in danger of underachieving. They ensure that regular assessments are made of how well pupils are learning, through effective questioning and marking work.
35. The partnership plays a key role in meeting the urgent need of local schools for successful and well-trained teachers. School leaders spoke positively about the partnership and the role of the university in developing good teachers for schools in the area. Over the past three years an increasing number of trainees who completed their course at the university secured teaching posts. In 2016, almost all trainees gained employment. Many members of staff in partnership schools are former trainees, with several now holding middle and senior leadership roles. They value the partnership strongly and are keen to work with the university to provide high-quality training experiences for trainees.
36. The partnership has ensured that appropriate arrangements are in place to check trainees' qualifications and their suitability to work with children in line with the most recent requirements.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Kettering Park Infant School, Kettering  
Houghton Conquest Lower, Bedfordshire  
Kings Oak Primary, Bedford  
Elstow School, Bedford  
Oakley Lower School, Bedford  
Putnoe Primary School, Bedford  
Kings Hedges School, Cambridge  
Hadrian Primary Academy, Dunstable  
Westoning Lower School, Bedfordshire  
Hopping Hill Primary School, Northampton  
Hunsbury Park Primary, Northampton  
Newnham Middle School, Bedford  
Offord Primary School, Cambridgeshire  
Middlefield Primary Academy, St Neots  
Thomas Johnson Lower School, Bedford  
The Hills Academy, Bedford

Crosshall Junior School, St Neots  
Crosshall Infant School Academy, St Neots  
South End Infant School, Northants  
Loddington CofE Primary School, Kettering  
Lavendon School, Buckinghamshire  
The Round House Primary Academy, St Neots  
Derwent Lower School, Bedfordshire  
Aspley Guise Lower School, Bedfordshire  
Denbigh Primary School, Luton

## The secondary phase

### Information about the secondary partnership

- The secondary partnership trained 85 students last year, on courses leading to a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) for the 11–16 age range or the four-year BA with QTS in PE. Five secondary trainees were on a School Direct self-funded programme. The partnership offers assessment only to a very small number of teachers.
- Training is offered in the following subjects: art and design, design and technology, English, drama, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education, religious education, science (biology, chemistry, physics) and social science. Most of these subjects had very small numbers of trainees. Partner schools are located across Bedfordshire stretching to Milton Keynes.

### Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited 10 secondary schools and one middle school during both stages of the inspection. Inspectors observed the teaching of 12 trainees and 10 NQTs. Trainees' teaching was observed jointly with their mentors. Inspectors then observed the feedback given by mentors to trainees.
- During their visits, inspectors held discussions with groups of trainees from the undergraduate, PGCE and School Direct programmes, and met with trainees' mentors, professional tutors, senior leaders and headteachers. Inspectors observed central training at the university.
- Inspectors took account of responses to recent NQT surveys and to Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors also took account of the partnership's own trainee evaluations of the programme and information on the university website.
- Inspectors held meetings with course and programme leaders and school leaders from the partnership. They considered a wide range of documentary evidence, which included trainee tracking and assessment data, trainees' teaching files and evidence about how well trainees are meeting the teachers' standards. Inspectors also scrutinised the partnership's analysis of trainees' attainment data, completion and employment outcomes, over time, and the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement plan.

### Inspection team

Adrian Lyons HMI    lead inspector

Stages 1 and 2

John Lucas HMI	assistant lead inspector	Stage 1 and 2
Mark Simms HMI	team inspector	Stage 1 and 2

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

### The key strengths of the secondary partnership

- Leaders took prompt and effective action to tackle aspects of the partnership's work that were identified as emerging areas for improvement at stage 1 of the inspection.
- Leaders' actions to manage and adapt dwindling resources in order to maintain a supply of high-quality teachers to the region, in response to national changes in the allocation of trainees.
- The high standard of trainees' and NQTs' personal and professional conduct, which leads to a positive reputation within schools in the region and high employment rates for NQTs.
- The clear understanding of the teachers' standards on the part of both trainers and trainees, which leads to accurate trainers' assessment of trainee performance.
- The highly coherent training across different routes with evidence of effective mentor training, which leads to good provision for trainees' needs, together with effective communication and rapid response from strong relationships and effective partnerships.
- The wide range of experiences gives trainees a good introduction to the role of being a teacher. The undergraduate PE programme results in trainees having a particularly clear understanding of the educational and relevant pedagogical issues.

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

#### The partnership should:

- further improve retention rates and address the small differences in outcomes between male and female trainees
- ensure that the recently improved systems to promote subject-specific pedagogy and the increased focus on pupils' progress have the required impact.

## Inspection judgements

37. Since the previous inspection, the number of secondary trainees has fallen to around a third of the previous total. This is not due to any reduction in popularity, but results from national changes in the way teacher training numbers are allocated. This has put great pressure on the partnership's resources to meet the needs of local secondary schools. The partnership has responded in a highly imaginative way and as a result is effectively changing the teacher training landscape while improving the quality of teachers entering the profession. A typical comment of an induction tutor was that NQTs are 'great examples of what starting teachers should be'.
38. Outcomes for trainees across the secondary partnership are good. The provider has a formidable reputation for providing schools with effective teachers of PE. Trainees and NQTs from the BA QTS PE course were very assured in discussing current educational issues. The strengths of the PE provision have been spread to the other subjects. As a result, all trainees who complete the course meet the teachers' standards, and in most cases exceed the minimum requirements.
39. The partnership has judged that the overwhelming majority of its trainees are good by the end of the programme. Over the last three years, at least six out of 10 have been assessed as outstanding each year. Inspectors agreed with the partnership's judgements, finding the assessment of trainees to be rigorous and robust. Most importantly, schools are confident of employing high-quality NQTs when recruiting from the partnership. A typical comment about NQTs is that they are 'confident in their craft'. As a result of the partnership's high reputation, employment rates are above average with 100% of trainees on the undergraduate PE course securing employment in 2016. Many former trainees are now mentors and leaders in local schools.
40. The partnership has found it more difficult to recruit potentially outstanding trainees to some subjects where there are national, regional and local shortages. In the 2015–16 cohort, this was most notable in modern foreign languages, but this was not the case in previous years. There are strong and robust recruitment and selection processes, but leaders have taken the principled position to continue to offer these subjects in order to contribute to the acute local and regional need for teachers. The partnership has rightly identified as a development point increasing overall retention rates on the course, which are broadly average. It has also been working with some success to reduce the difference in outcomes between men and women in some subjects. For example, overall the proportion of female trainees assessed as outstanding is, and historically has been, higher than that of male trainees. The difference in proportions has reduced in 2015–16 because of better outcomes for males on the undergraduate course.

41. At the end of the academic year, leaders hold a training day with the aim of helping trainees prepare for their NQT year. While NQTs commented on how much they valued sessions such as time management, and well-being, they told inspectors that they would have welcomed this much earlier in their training programme.
42. By the time trainees become NQTs, their teaching demonstrates strong subject knowledge which leads to very confident performance in the classroom. During stage one of the inspection, inspectors were concerned that the very small numbers in some subjects may have restricted the partnership's ability to develop deep subject-specific knowledge in trainees. In stage two, inspectors were clear that across a range of subjects, NQTs' knowledge and understanding was deep. For example, an NQT said that his 'training on assessment without levels and the new BTec specifications' stood him in very good stead in job interviews.
43. Due to the effective training they receive, NQTs are confident in promoting equal opportunities, and in promoting literacy in their subject teaching. They have the confidence to ensure good behaviour. NQTs are adept at establishing highly effective professional relationships very quickly. In a short period of time, they were able to demonstrate their good level of skill when using assessments to inform their planning of learning, helping pupils to make progress.
44. During stage 1 of the inspection, inspectors were concerned that the partnership's documentation lacked clarity in focusing mentors' feedback on the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' progress. During stage 2, inspectors saw much improved documentation that, as a school leader put it, was 'clearer, sharper and more directive' and as another put it, 'aligns to what the school is focusing on'. School leaders were pleased that 'the partnership took our views and listened' in developing the revised documentation. The partnership shows a very strong capacity to improve based on the effective response to recommendations in stage 1.
45. Trainees and NQTs observed are all reflective and demonstrated a palpable commitment to improvement. They respond well to and are hungry for feedback. A representative comment from a school leader was that NQTs 'come from a culture where reflection and target setting are second nature'. Trainees' and NQTs' professional conduct was excellent. Trainees' reflection goes wider than just the lessons they have taught; for example reflecting on primary school experience and the good practice that would be incorporated into secondary history teaching. Other notable strengths include trainees' and NQTs' promotion of literacy, with particularly good examples seen across a range of subjects.

46. Training is good and prepares trainees very well. It ensures that trainees are well prepared for wider aspects of being a teacher; for example the university training on tutoring included 'what to do if' scenarios. School leaders agree. For example, a school leader commented of NQTs employed at the school, 'the university covers things that chime with what we want them to do'. The combination of theory and practice has prepared the trainees and NQTs well. They welcome the variety of activities including the scenarios in tutoring and safeguarding. Trainees also value the specialist training provided by national experts.
47. The transition points between placements are planned effectively. Information from the previous school experience is used well to plan for transition to the next. There is a good sense of getting trainees to move on swiftly in their second placement. Contrasting school placements are used well. Support for the transition from the training programme to the NQT year is usually good. Headteachers employing NQTs receive information on how well the new employee has attained in each of the teachers' standards and their strengths and areas for further development as they begin their careers. Information is used well by the receiving school. Targets are used to good effect, to inform the career development priorities, continuing professional development and mentoring in the employing schools.
48. Trainees are well prepared to support the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils who are disadvantaged, and to provide challenge for the most able pupils. Given the locality of the partnership, staff work hard to provide trainees with as wide an understanding of different contexts as possible, for example through a visit to a successful school in inner London with a very ethnically diverse pupil population. There is effective training for supporting pupils who speak English as an additional language, but opportunities to put the training into practice are variable depending on the placement schools.
49. NQTs have a good knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities under the government's anti-radicalisation 'Prevent' duty. They are less clear about how to promote fundamental British values positively through their teaching.
50. Undergraduate PE trainees informed inspectors that there is a strong sense of community among trainees. They, and NQTs, were all of the view that a key strength is the cohesion of the course. Inspection evidence supports this view.
51. Across the secondary programmes, trainees could not find fault with their mentors, with typical comments such as 'I adore my mentor', or 'my mentor is amazing', and 'there was not a day when I was not supported'. Mentors are strong practitioners who are organised and go the extra mile to support

trainees. Trainees see themselves as satisfied customers, with comments such as 'people we pay do their job well, we get value for money'.

52. The leadership and management of the secondary partnership is outstanding. The pursuit of excellence is central to the partnership's activities. Leaders and managers are able to base their actions on a deep and accurate understanding of local and regional needs because of the highly effective partnership that exists with local schools. There has been a sustained, uncompromising and successful drive to improve outcomes so that the large majority of secondary trainees attain outcomes at the highest levels.
53. The opportunities afforded by Schools Direct teacher training has enabled the university and school partners to work together to find imaginative ways of meeting local teacher supply needs. At the same time, the partnership is uncompromising in ensuring that both university-based and school-based trainees receive the same high-quality training. The partnership makes effective use of a wide range of schools to give trainees a broad experience, including those in challenging circumstances and those that have been judged by Ofsted to require improvement.
54. The progress of trainees and groups of trainees is monitored well. The rigorous quality assurance of placements through on-site visits is taken very seriously by partner schools.
55. The partnership has taken very seriously all requirements in relation to the checking of trainees' qualifications and their suitability to work with children in line with current requirements. In the secondary phase, all statutory requirements and ITT criteria are met.



## **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Mark Rutherford School, Bedford  
Redborne Upper School, Ampthill, Bedfordshire  
Sandy Upper School, Sandy  
Stratton Upper School, Biggleswade  
Hastingsbury School, Bedford  
William De Ferrers School, South Woodham Ferrers, Essex  
St Peter's School, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire  
Beauchamp Middle School, Bedford  
Denbigh High School, Luton

# Initial teacher education for the further education system

## Information about the FE in ITE partnership

- The University of Bedfordshire ITE partnership comprises the university and five general further education colleges: Central Bedfordshire; Bedford; Tresham; Grantham; and Barnfield College. Leicester College left the partnership at the end of the academic year 2015–16.
- The partnership offers one-year full-time and two-year part-time programmes validated by the university. The programmes lead to either the certificate in education, or the PGCE.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 255 trainees, 29 of whom were on the one-year pre-service course.
- Most trainees teach in the partner colleges. Others are employed as trainers in private and public sector organisations, such as the military and the prison service.

## Information about the FE in ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 trainees teaching during their training and 12 former trainees teaching at stage 2. In addition, they interviewed trainees, course leaders, mentors and employers on the sites visited. They held discussions with individual trainees and groups of former trainees to evaluate the impact of the training on the quality of their teaching.
- Inspectors scrutinised trainees' and former trainees' assessed work, planning for teaching, lesson observation, progress and development records, and tracking information.
- Inspectors considered: the partnership's self-evaluation; data related to trainees' outcomes; improvement plans; quality assurance procedures and compliance with legislation, in particular with regard to safeguarding requirements. Inspectors reviewed trainees' responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Christine Dick HMI	lead inspector	Stages 1 and 2
Stephen Hunsley HMI	assistant lead inspector	Stages 1 and 2
Alan Winchcombe Ofsted Inspector	team inspector	Stages 1 and 2
Julie Steele HMI	team inspector	Stage 1
Pauline Dixey Ofsted Inspector	team inspector	Stage 2

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

### The key strengths of the FE partnership

- There are sustained high levels of retention, completion and achievement and a reduction in previously variable outcomes across the partnership.
- There is consistently high-quality centre-based training, which is valued by trainees and employers and which makes a significant contribution to improving trainees' outcomes overall.
- Trainees are highly reflective, committed and enthusiastic. They have good subject knowledge and are positive role models for their learners.
- The responsive academic and pastoral support for trainees contributes well to good retention and completion rates. This includes the university's responsive action which continues to improve the provision, communication, collaborative working and the sharing of good practice across the partnership.
- The strong focus on moderating trainers' evaluations of trainees' performance results in improved consistency of assessors' judgements.
- The high priority given to the changing landscape of further education is effective in developing trainees' understanding of the challenges they face.

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

#### The partnership should:

- eradicate the inconsistencies in the quality of mentor support in the workplace, so that trainees make rapid progress and more of them are able to evidence outstanding teaching and learning over time
- enhance trainees' ability to:
  - improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills in their lessons
  - reflect on the impact of their teaching on learning, over time
- secure trainees' confidence in the practical application of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty, so that it aligns with the sound theoretical knowledge they gain through the training
- ensure that trainees' final assessments lead to clear development targets, sharply focused on the professional standards for teachers and trainers, so that they continue to improve their teaching and enrich the quality of provision in their workplace.

### Inspection judgements

56. The partnership continues to provide good-quality training and has sustained the good outcomes for trainees since the previous inspection. The variations

in retention and completion rates, across centres, are diminishing. The difference in outcomes for male and female trainees has diminished for the first time this year. At the end of their training, all trainees completing the courses met, or exceeded, the 2014 professional standards for teachers and trainers. Most former trainees observed by inspectors demonstrated very effective teaching skills.

57. Well-considered recruitment processes ensure that pre-service trainees have the skills and characteristics they need to succeed. These processes, alongside the appropriately defined entry criteria for in-service trainees, contribute effectively to good retention and completion rates. Progression to employment for pre-service trainees is good. This good progression is sustained despite the funding challenges and changes in the sector.
58. Most pre-service trainees gain employment in further education settings. However, an increasing number of trainees are taking up opportunities to teach in schools at the end of the training. The partnership has taken steps to ensure that placements for pre-service trainees are appropriate. This has addressed concerns raised by a few trainees in the previous year.
59. The well-planned and cohesive programme of central training ensures that trainees demonstrate good standards of professional practice. Trainers are skilled at modelling creative approaches to teaching and learning, and promote the values of research and reflection very effectively. The central training is enhanced by well-received study days and conferences. Expert speakers from within the partnership and from external organisations make excellent contributions to the comprehensive training programme.
60. Trainees demonstrate a good understanding of theoretical concepts, related to their teaching, when in group discussions or more informal conversations about learning. They value the opportunities the central training brings for sharing their experiences with, and learning from, other trainees working in different settings.
61. Trainees are highly reflective. They speak confidently about their teaching strengths and areas for improvement. Nevertheless, this clarity is not matched as consistently well in their teaching practice files, or in the development records they take with them at the end of the training. Trainees' self-assessments against the professional standards are sometimes a cursory checklist with limited relevance to the often rich discussions evidenced during the inspection.
62. Trainees strengths, observed at both stages of the inspection, include strong subject knowledge, which is used well to engage the interest of learners. The vast majority of trainees have well-developed strategies to promote positive behaviour in lessons. They generally make learning interesting, by relating it

real life and learners' plans for the future. Trainees are good professional role models and adopt a very inclusive approach to their teaching. As a result, the vast majority gain the respect of the learners very quickly, and are successful in promoting fundamental British values, such as respect and tolerance.

63. Typically, trainees recognise the individual needs of their learners and most take appropriate account of learners' needs in their planning and in their lessons. However, too few trainees are confident in evaluating the impact of their teaching on learning, using assessments over time. In particular, trainees' experience in using assessment information to plan learning so that all groups, including the most able learners, do as well as they should, is too variable.
64. In a particularly good example of working with different abilities, a former trainee planned individual learning very effectively within a whole-class session. This ensured that focused support was given by the teaching assistant and that the learner was skilfully included within the whole group activities.
65. Most trainees expressed confidence in supporting learners' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. In practice, their confidence is less secure. Trainees' approaches to embed the functional skills of English and mathematics are often limited. Invariably, trainees tend to focus on literacy rather than numeracy in the context of teaching their specialist subject. In one example of good practice, with a photography theme, the trainee introduced mathematical concepts in a focused and meaningful way, asking learners to evaluate an image using a ruler and pencil.
66. Trainees are fully aware of their statutory duties in relation to the 'Prevent' duty and in safeguarding learners. They are sensitive to the risks raised by the threat of radicalisation and extremism. However, former trainees were less confident in interpreting their responsibilities under 'Prevent' in their teaching, for example in ensuring that learners see the relevance and importance of being alert to the risks of radicalisation and extremism in their lives and employment. Few trainees were able to give clear examples of how they had planned to integrate this aspect into their teaching.
67. Trainees are well supported in their studies and, typically, in the workplace. Trainers and mentors are responsive to their needs. Helpful feedback on written assessments gives appropriate guidance to trainees to improve their work. An increasing focus on moderating assessors' judgements has improved the consistency of assessment across the partnership.
68. Some inconsistencies in the level of challenge from mentors remain; in particular, in relation to setting clear development targets so that trainees are

supported to reflect on the impact of their teaching and assessment on planning and learning over time. Development plan targets are not focused sharply enough against the professional standards for teacher and trainers, to help trainees understand precisely what they need to do to continue to improve.

69. Current arrangements do not ensure consistently that mentors, particularly new mentors, receive early feedback on the quality of their input. Although joint observations take place, there is no system to ensure that all mentors are jointly observed in the first term. Tutors do not automatically receive copies of mentors' feedback to trainees. This means that, in a few cases, the quality of mentor feedback and target setting is not scrutinised until the second term. The partnership has plans to introduce lead mentors in the partner centres to address these issues, but the plans are at an early stage of implementation.
70. Inspectors agreed with the accuracy of the partnership's assessment of trainees' performance by the end of the training. However, it is not clear from the tracking records how many trainees perform above, or significantly above, the minimum expectations of the standards required. As a result, leaders and managers do not have a detailed understanding of the difference the training is making to the quality of teaching overall.
71. Leadership and management of the partnership are good. The partnership's self-evaluation document is open and honest. It is accurate in identifying what has gone well and what needs to be improved. All key partners are included in evaluating centre-based and overall performance. The feedback from trainees' contribution to regular satisfaction surveys is acted on. Additional workshops, for example related to literacy and numeracy, have been made available, as a result of feedback, to support key aspects of trainees' development.
72. Communication between the university and its partners has continued to improve. Partner centres are highly positive about their engagement in the partnership. They value the collegiate culture promoted through the partnership and the opportunities for continuing professional development. The sharing of good practice and ideas for further improvement is a key feature of partnership meetings. This is reflected, for example, in new proposals for early 'keep in touch' events to extend the support for recently qualified trainees.
73. Swift action has been taken to address the emerging findings from the first stage of the inspection. The partnership is fully aware that some inconsistencies in mentors' practice remain and so securing the consistency of mentoring is an improvement priority. As result, planning for further strengthening of quality improvement arrangements for centre-based

mentors is underway. The partnership is aware of the continuing need to make the best use of available technology to bridge geographical barriers to ensure that all mentors progress beyond the basic level of mentor training. The effectiveness and coherence of systems used for capturing information on trainees' progress and development needs, against the professional standards, is an aspect for further improvement. There are plans in place to address this but it is too early to evaluate the impact of new procedures.

74. In a time of particular turbulence for the further education and skills sector, the partnership has sustained its commitment to the provision of good teacher training. It has taken swift action to support partner colleges and secure the quality of provision during periods of continuing uncertainty and staff change.
75. Employers speak very positively about the impact of the training on learning within their organisations. For example, one employer spoke of how the institution's graded quality assurance evaluations of teaching and learning in the trainees' department had risen. The positive changes were linked to wider improvement, in terms of the continuing professional development of staff, for example in mentor roles, as well as the fresh ideas trainees bring to their employment settings.
76. The partnership's strong focus on the changing landscape and the national priorities in further education ensures that trainees are well equipped to teach in the sector. This focus is supported very well by good use of partnership expertise and contributes to the collegiate culture promoted. This culture and the effective leadership and management of the provision continue to ensure that the partnership has good capacity to improve further.

## **Annex: Partnership colleges**

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Barnfield College, Luton  
Bedford College, Bedford  
Central Bedfordshire College, Dunstable  
Tresham College, Kettering  
Grantham College, Grantham  
Leicester College, Leicester (to September 2016)

## ITE partnership details

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