

University of Chester ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 9 May 2016 Stage 2: 17 October 2016

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 upon 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

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

Overview of the ITE partnership

The overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership is good in early years ITT, outstanding in primary, outstanding in secondary and good in further education.

This is because effective leadership and good training ensure that all trainees exceed the minimum expectations of the teachers' standards (early years), the teachers' standards or the professional standards for further education teachers and trainers, as appropriate. Overall, effectiveness in the primary and secondary phases is stronger. Leadership in these phases is exceptional, leading to an extremely high-quality training experience for all trainees. Consequently, primary and secondary trainees emerge as at least consistently good and often outstanding teachers who are sought after within partnership schools and the local region.

Key findings

- High employment rates across all phases indicate the strong regard that leaders in schools, early years settings and colleges hold for the different training programmes. It also demonstrates the value they place on the contribution that former trainees and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) make to the settings in which they are employed.
- The personalised approach to training, coupled with close individual support, ensures that trainees across all phases, regardless of any additional challenges they may face, have an equal chance to become good or better practitioners.
- Strong professional attitudes, plus a willingness to seek out and act on advice, are common characteristics of all trainees across each phase.
- Reflective and committed former trainees and NQTs are prepared well to put their training into practice and to take responsibility for their own future professional development.
- Leaders across all phases share a vision for excellence which has the trainee at the core. Ensuring that schools, colleges and early years settings benefit from well-prepared and highly-skilled practitioners underpins all of their work.
- The swift and robust action taken to address the issues raised at stage one of the inspection signals the ability of all leaders to take decisive steps to bring about positive change.

To improve the ITE partnership should:

- Use an analysis and evaluation of trainees' outcomes and other information more strategically to gain a precise overview of the quality of training and trainees' attainment.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The University of Chester, in partnership with early years settings, schools and colleges provides training routes for early years initial teacher training, the primary and secondary phases, and for teachers and trainers in further education and skills.
- The partnership has expanded since the previous inspection. It covers a number of local authorities within the North West, the West Midlands and Wales. The partnership includes a broad range of settings, colleges, schools and teaching school alliances.
- In 2015/16, the partnership began offering early years initial teacher training (EYITT) routes. On successful completion, trainees are awarded a postgraduate certificate in early years practice and early years teacher status (EYTS).
- The primary partnership offers a three-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree and postgraduate certificate in education. Trainees specialise in the early years or primary age phases.
- The secondary partnership offers a one-year PGCE route with qualified teacher status (QTS). Trainees specialise in the 11 to 16 age range.
- School Direct salaried and training routes are a feature of the primary and secondary phases. Both partnerships offer Assessment Only routes to a small number of candidates.
- Further education and skills provision is a two-year part-time programme leading to a certificate in education or a professional graduate certificate in education.

The early years ITT phase

Information about the early years ITT partnership

- The University of Chester provides three early years ITT routes for graduates: the graduate employment-based route, the graduate entry route and the Assessment Only route. These training routes were being offered for the first time during the academic year 2015/16. The university previously provided early years professional status (EYPS) training, as part of a consortium of North West university providers.
- Trainees who complete the part-time employment-based and one-year full-time, graduate entry routes are awarded early years teacher status (EYTS) and gain a postgraduate certificate in early years practice.
- During stage one of the inspection, there were four early years trainees: one on the graduate entry route and three on the employment-based route. There were no trainees on the Assessment Only route. Sixteen trainees have been recruited for 2016/17: fourteen on the employment-based route and two on the graduate entry route.
- The early years ITT partnership consists of sixteen early years settings and schools and a number of local authorities: Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Wirral, Warrington, Halton, Manchester and Shropshire.
- The early years ITT training routes share common documentation, mentor training and quality-assurance procedures with the primary and secondary qualified teacher status (QTS) programmes at the university.

Information about the early years ITT inspection

- At stage one, the inspector visited two settings and observed two trainees teaching in their contrasting placement settings. The inspector also observed two centre-based training sessions. One focused on transition, the national curriculum and mathematics. The second focused on professional development when working with children from birth to two.
- The inspector reviewed recruitment and selection procedures, trainee tracking and assessment documentation and the partnership agreement. Statutory safeguarding and compliance checks were made against the early years ITT requirements.
- The inspector met with strategic partners, leaders and managers and had discussions with individual trainees, mentors and university tutors. The inspector also took into account responses to the trainee online survey, which trainees completed in June 2015.

- At stage two, the inspector visited three settings and observed two former trainees teach in the schools in which they are employed. Two trainees were observed teaching at both stages of the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed trainees' transition documentation and the targets provided for former trainees. The inspector held discussions with former trainees, setting-based managers, headteachers and setting- and school-based mentors, university tutors, leaders and managers, and members of the recently formed early years ITT steering group.
- The inspector reviewed the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement planning documents and actions taken by leaders and managers to improve training and outcomes between the two stages of the inspection.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan	Her Majesty's Inspector	phase lead inspector (stage 1)
Angela Milner	Her Majesty's Inspector	phase lead inspector (stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the early years ITT partnership are:

- The development of new early years training routes is underpinned by a clear vision and firm commitment to raising the quality of the early years workforce. The partnership has established firm foundations for further growth and development and has a growing reputation for the quality of its early years ITT programmes with employers.
- Graduate entry trainees gain employment and those already employed work in enhanced roles as early years teachers (EYTs).
- Tailored training and high levels of pastoral, academic and professional support, from knowledgeable and passionate university staff, meet individual trainees' needs well and ensure that trainees successfully complete their training.
- The university's ongoing support and aftercare for former trainees and employing schools and settings ensure a seamless transition from initial training to employment and continuing professional development.
- Trainees and former trainees have a good understanding of the teachers' standards (early years) and willingly take responsibility for their own professional development.
- High-quality, developmental centre-based training prepares trainees and former trainees well to work across the early years age range.
- Trainees spend a substantial amount of time working in a diverse range of schools and settings with children from birth to five – ensuring that trainees

and former trainees are very well prepared with the practical skills they need most as early years teachers.

- Trainees' and former trainees' good teaching skills are rooted in their specialism, children's learning and development, and their ability to evaluate their own teaching and its impact on children.

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

The partnership should:

- increase the engagement of partners in the strategic leadership and management of the partnership
- sharpen improvement planning to provide greater clarity about how the impact of actions taken will be measured
- reduce variations in the quality of target-setting and the end-of-training transition documentation
- ensure that there is a rigorous moderation process at the end of the training to assess how well trainees exceed the minimum expectations of the teachers' standards (early years) overall.

Inspection judgements

1. The overall effectiveness of the early years ITT partnership in securing consistently high-quality training and outcomes is good. New early years ITT training routes have been successfully established and recruitment to the second, 2016/17 cohort of trainees has increased substantially. Trainees' and former trainees' good teaching skills are rooted in their specialism, children's learning and development, and their ability to evaluate their own teaching and its impact on children. The partnership has a clear vision and commitment to raising the quality of the early years workforce. It has established firm foundations for further growth and development and has a growing reputation for the quality of its early years ITT training with employers.
2. The partnership recruits and trains a small number of early years teachers. Trainees' qualifications and their suitability to work with children are checked and recorded appropriately. Thorough selection procedures ensure that well-qualified applicants, with appropriate experience, knowledge and professional attributes are selected for the different training routes. This process, together with a detailed review of trainees' previous and current workplace experiences at the start of the training, ensures that the partnership carefully plans bespoke training to meet individual needs. This tailored training and high levels of pastoral, academic and professional support, from knowledgeable and passionate university staff, meets individual trainees' needs well.

3. During the first year of the programme, all four of the trainees who began their early years ITT training completed successfully and gained EYTS. The three graduate employment-based trainees continue to work in their schools and setting, but in enhanced roles as early years teachers. The graduate entry trainee gained employment in a private nursery as a result of her training. Inspection evidence confirms that former trainees are well prepared for their roles as early years teachers and are able to work effectively with other colleagues in their workplaces.
4. There is some variation in the quality of targets set for former trainees' professional development at the end of their training. However, the university's ongoing support for former trainees and employing schools and settings ensures a seamless transition from initial training to employment and continuing professional development. Former trainees and employers are very appreciative of this aftercare. Former trainees have been invited to the university's 'newly qualified teacher (NQT) matters getting started' conference and early years foundation stage mastery workshops. The partnership has already carefully evaluated employers' views about the impact that former trainees are having on children's learning, the schools and settings in which they are employed and the progress they are making against their transition targets.
5. Trainees and former trainees have a good understanding of the teachers' standards (early years) and willingly take responsibility for their own professional development. Clear documentation makes constant reference to the standards and provides a useful structure for mentors and tutors to use when assessing trainees. All areas of the standards are regularly assessed in weekly mentor meetings and at three formal review points during the training. Leaders and managers keep a careful eye on this information to assess whether additional support or intervention is required for individual trainees. In addition to the required standards, the partnership places a strong emphasis on trainees' personal and professional conduct, including the appropriateness of their professional dress and use of professional language. Heads of employing schools and settings stated they were impressed by former trainees' professionalism.
6. Trainees and former trainees indicated they received much advice and assistance from experienced and expert university staff in developing their professional journey files and portfolios of standards evidence. Inspectors confirmed that all trainees' attainment exceeded the minimum expectations of the teachers' standards (early years) and that there were no differences in outcomes for trainees on the different training routes. Although the partnership's judgements of trainees' attainment, in relation to individual areas of the standards, are accurate, they are overgenerous in relation to the overall standard achieved at the end of the training. This is because mentors and tutors are rewarding trainees' progress, rather than their attainment, and

rewarding their increased confidence, rather than their competence, in relation to the standards.

7. Trainees and former trainees are highly committed and effective early years teachers. They understand age-related expectations and use their good observational skills to plan activities which broaden children's experiences and meet their holistic education and care needs well. They understand that every child is unique and are skilled at identifying and providing additional support when necessary. There is, however, scope for trainees and former trainees to make greater use of assessment information, gained from their observations, to extend children's thinking and use this information to help children progress to their early learning goals. Trainees and former trainees know how to use the early years foundation stage framework and its statutory assessment arrangements. They have been involved in baseline assessment activities, the progress checks at age two and regularly contribute to children's learning journals.
8. Trainees and former trainees provide a safe environment and stimulating activities which interest children and develop their curiosity and independence. They are very skilled at communicating with babies, toddlers and children. Well-developed skills of listening and responding to children's ideas help former trainees to build effective relationships, establish expectations and induct children into new settings and classroom routines at the start of the academic year. Former trainees deal very effectively with children who do not conform to expected behaviours. An example is when dealing with children who drop resources on the floor, rather than tidying them away, which helps to ensure that the area is safe for other children to use.
9. There is a strong emphasis throughout the training on critical reflection, theories about how children learn and develop and around attachment theories. Trainees and former trainees draw on their well-developed skills in analysing early years provision and improving their practice. They gain a huge amount of subject knowledge from their reading of academic journals, completion of specific tasks, written assignments and poster presentations completed as part of their training and assessment. A number of former trainees already attend local early years conferences and are keen to network with other early years teachers and to learn more.
10. High-quality, developmental centre-based training prepares trainees and former trainees well to work across the early years age range. Trainees on both early years ITT training routes receive the same centre-based training. Up-to-date, highly relevant training promotes excellent levels of knowledge about children's learning and development and the quality of early years practice. The content covers the continuum from the early years foundation stage to key stages 1 and 2 and is very well designed to provide a secure foundation for trainees' and former trainees' future roles as early years teachers.

11. Centre-based training draws on the strengths of the wider early years and primary teaching team at the university and a small number of external speakers. The partnership is aware that there were limited opportunities for the first cohort of trainees to visit specific types of early years provision, such as forest schools, or to observe outstanding practitioners in action in their settings and schools. Former trainees are, however, extremely positive about their training, describing it as 'overwhelmingly helpful' and indicating how they felt 'inspired' by their tutors' 'passion for excellence in early years teaching', which they now share.
12. Two training sessions, observed by the inspector at stage one, were planned carefully to meet the needs of the cohort of trainees. Tutors skilfully shared their subject knowledge, provided clear explanations and many practical ideas that engaged trainees fully in sessions. Good use was made of the teachers' standards (early years), the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory requirements and recent research to prompt trainees' thinking and reflection. Trainees particularly valued the opportunity to share insights from their employment settings and placements.
13. The training places a strong emphasis on how activities can be adapted for children with additional needs and for those who speak English as an additional language. The impact of this training was seen clearly in former trainees' practice. One headteacher described how a former trainee's detailed knowledge and understanding of child development helped identify one pupil's barriers to learning and provided appropriate learning experiences to meet his individual needs. A former trainee was working extremely well with two-year-olds who speak English as an additional language. She carefully modelled specific vocabulary and used actions and gestures effectively to support children's play and learning and to develop their social and communication skills. The children responded well to her encouraging manner, appropriate use of praise and were able to follow basic instructions and the class routines with increasing confidence.
14. Trainees spend a substantial amount of time working in a diverse range of contrasting schools and settings, including some that are in challenging socio-economic circumstances. Centre-based training includes sessions on working with disadvantaged children and the early years pupil premium. The first cohort of trainees did not, however, gain experience of early years settings or schools judged to require improvement.
15. Well-chosen contrasting placements help trainees gain an understanding of different organisational strategies, teaching and learning approaches, and how adults work with children of different ages from birth to five years and in key stage 1. Former trainees drew on these useful experiences and their understanding of the importance of supporting children through transitions, in their employment settings, at the start of the academic year. They are very well

prepared with the practical skills they need most as early years teachers. Trainees and former trainees, observed by inspectors, demonstrated strong early childhood knowledge and effective teaching skills when supporting children's learning in both planned and spontaneous ways.

16. Trainees spend a substantial period of their training working with children from birth to two years. This ensures that trainees gain a clear insight of how to plan learning activities for babies and how staff working with babies and toddlers can be managed. For example, one trainee observed in a baby room was skilful in her interactions – speaking softly, modelling language well and making good eye contact and friendly facial expressions.
17. Trainees and former trainees demonstrate a well-developed understanding of systematic synthetic phonics and know how commercial phonics programmes can be used with different age and ability groups in early years settings and in schools. During one stage one observation by the inspector, three- and four-year-olds were exploring initial letter sounds hidden in the sand tray. The trainee made good use of planned and spontaneous opportunities to enhance children's learning. She prompted the children to identify the sounds made by the letters they found, emphasising the correct enunciation of the sounds. In discussion, the trainee showed a good understanding of how such activities linked to children's physical development of fine motor skills and could see how this activity could be extended to children's writing.
18. Trainees and former trainees indicated that they had learned a great deal about the key stage 1 programme of study for mathematics, including how to develop key vocabulary, a range of practical resources and learning opportunities. They also understand how to use appropriate strategies to teach early mathematics. Trainees explained that they would have liked additional input on early mathematics earlier in their training. The university responded swiftly to this request and trainees in the 2016/17 cohort have already received a number of early mathematics training sessions. The training also includes good input on the development of children's scientific and information and communication technology skills and the use of relevant educational technology in the early years.
19. Phase-specific mentoring is provided by school- and setting-based mentors, who provide effective day-to-day support for trainees. The partnership's own evaluations have identified the need to build early years ITT mentoring capacity and to reduce existing variations in the skills, knowledge and expertise of mentors. Evidence from stage one of the inspection indicated that mentors in contrasting placement schools and settings had a limited understanding of the teachers' standards (early years) and that there were variations in the quality of targets set for trainees' next stage development. The partnership has acknowledged the need to provide additional support, time and training to develop mentors' roles in early years ITT.

20. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are an important part of the early years ITT training. As a result, trainees have a clear understanding of early years welfare and care requirements, health and safety, safeguarding arrangements, the importance of e-safety and the 'Prevent' duty.
21. The partnership agreement is detailed and sets out clearly how settings and schools contribute to recruitment and selection procedures and the training and assessment of trainees. The agreement makes clear the mentor's role and the university's expectations. This document effectively guarantees trainees' entitlement to high-quality training on the different early years ITT training routes.
22. During the first year of provision, responsibility for the early years ITT programme rested with an operational cohort leader and the primary steering group. Leaders and managers focused on developing and delivering high-quality centre- and school-based training. Between stages one and two of the inspection, the leadership team was strengthened with the appointment of a programme leader for strategic partnership who works alongside the cohort leader. This has enabled the partnership to move swiftly on strategic developments and to action a number of improvements for the second cohort of trainees. A separate early years ITT steering group has been established to increase the engagement of school- and setting-based partners in the strategic leadership of the partnership.
23. Thorough quality assurance and self-evaluation processes, including evaluations from a range of stakeholders and a report from an external examiner, ensure that the partnership has a good understanding of what it needs to do to continue to improve. Inspection evidence indicates that leaders and managers are very responsive to internal and external feedback. The partnership's improvement plan contains suitable actions, but it is unclear how these actions will be effectively measured to evaluate their impact on the quality of training or the outcomes for trainees. Emerging areas for improvement, identified at the end of stage one of the inspection, have been quickly addressed. Improvements have been made to the quality of training, mentor training and development and the strategic leadership of the partnership. It is, however, too early to judge the impact of these recent changes.
24. The partnership complies with the early years ITT requirements, including the additional employment-based requirements, and meets all the relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity, and eliminating discrimination.

Annex: Partnership schools/settings

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

Dandelions Day Nursery, Farndon

St Martin's Academy, Chester

Tinies Stanlaw Day Nursery, Ellesmere Port

Waverton Pre-School, Chester

Woodlands Primary School, Ellesmere Port

The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- The partnership offers a number of training routes which lead to qualified teacher status (QTS). Trainees can choose to study a three-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) undergraduate programme or a one-year programme which leads to a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE).
- Within the postgraduate route, trainees can follow a School Direct or School Direct (salaried) training route. A small number of trainees opt for an Assessment Only route. Trainees can specialise in early years (3–7 years) or primary (5–11 years) education.
- During stage one of the inspection there were 301 undergraduates and 136 postgraduates following the primary or early years route. Sixty-nine of the postgraduate trainees were following the School Direct route, including one trainee who was salaried. There were no trainees on the Assessment Only route.
- There are approximately 260 schools, across 19 local authorities and three regions, within the primary partnership.
- School Direct is organised through 15 teaching school alliances. This is arranged through three different models, with some teaching school alliances choosing to design and deliver the majority of the training programme.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- During stage one, inspectors visited 12 schools and observed 18 trainees teaching, across different routes and age-phases. They spoke to headteachers, school mentors and 23 trainees. They also met with groups of trainees across different training routes, mentors, quality assurance leaders, university tutors and professional academic tutors at the university. They held discussions with the programme leaders, trainers, members of the strategic partnership board and representatives from the School Direct partnerships. Inspectors observed centre- and school-based training. They took account of the 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for trainees.
- During stage two, inspectors visited 11 schools. They observed 15 newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teaching. They spoke to headteachers, school mentors and induction tutors while in school. They also met 18 NQTs from different training programmes at the university. Meetings were held with the programme leaders. Inspectors took account of the 84 responses to Ofsted's online survey.

- In both stages of the inspection, inspectors evaluated a range of evidence including trainees' files and the work in pupils' books. They also considered a range of documentation provided by the partnership, including information on trainees' attainment, employment and completion. They reviewed the partnership's website and checked safeguarding arrangements and compliance with the ITT criteria.

Inspection team

Joanne Olsson	Her Majesty's Inspector	phase lead inspector
Terry Holland	Ofsted Inspector	assistant lead inspector
Fiona Manuel	Her Majesty's Inspector	team inspector
Janet Lunn	Her Majesty's Inspector	team inspector (stage 1)
Lesley Butcher	Her Majesty's Inspector	team inspector (stage 1)
Rajinder Harrison	Ofsted Inspector	team inspector (stage 2)
Andy Maher	Ofsted Inspector	team inspector (stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- All trainees attain highly, so they are ready to make a swift start to their career and an immediate positive contribution to the schools in which they are employed.
- Employment rates are high for all groups; the considerable proportion of NQTs who gain employment in partnership schools signals the value that headteachers place in the training programmes.
- Professional and resilient trainees and NQTs share a passion for teaching, an appetite for further development plus a desire, and ability, to improve the life chances of pupils in their care.
- Exceptional centre-based training equips trainees and NQTs with the skills and knowledge to teach well across the early years and primary curriculum.
- High-quality and diverse school placements, complemented by the work of committed mentors, ensure that trainees and NQTs are prepared well to work in a wide range of different schools.
- The care, support and nurture for trainees in this partnership is of the highest quality and everyone is known as an individual; consequently, training is tailored to different needs to help everyone excel.

- Ambitious, reflective and responsive leaders work as a cohesive team to deliver their core purpose of nurturing trainees to become excellent teachers.
- Careful planning and highly effective quality assurance procedures mean that all trainees, regardless of the training route they follow, have an equal chance to, and do, thrive.

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

The partnership should:

- improve trainees' outcomes even further, by:
 - building on the support systems for male trainees to help more gain the highest grades by the end of the programme
 - enhancing the training programme to extend the strategies that trainees use to challenge the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged
- review the vast range of evaluation information to ensure that leaders are able to gain a precise understanding of the impact of their work.

Inspection judgements

25. 'Partnership with the learner at its heart' sums up the leadership of this highly successful partnership perfectly. Ensuring that trainees and NQTs are exceptionally well equipped to make a difference to primary education in the region, and beyond, is at the very core of leaders' work. Consequently, the quality of training and trainees' outcomes are outstanding. High employment and above-average completion rates are complemented by trainees' strong attainment. Trainees emerge from their different training programmes as consistently good and often outstanding teachers.
26. The tight-knit leadership team are highly reflective, insightful and ambitious. They listen carefully to the views of stakeholders, keep abreast of national initiatives and take decisive action to bring about positive change. The drive for excellence, alongside the sustained and excellent outcomes for trainees, means that the partnership has outstanding capacity for further improvement.
27. Searching self-evaluation, based on a wide range of evidence, underpins precise and comprehensive improvement planning across all training programmes. However, the sheer weight of this information sometimes hinders leaders from gaining a quick and easy-to-access view of their work.
28. Despite a substantial growth in trainee numbers since the previous inspection and the complexity of School Direct partnership arrangements, relationships within and across the partnership are positive and productive. Many schools

have long-established links with the university. They remain loyal because they are listened to and have a genuine role in shaping the training programmes.

29. School leaders and mentors are represented on a wide range of committees to look at every aspect of training. They have been influential in helping to reshape or deliver central training. Members of the strategic board make a strong contribution to the leadership of the partnership. They have a good insight into trainees' views and outcomes. As a result, they offer well-informed challenge and support that is welcomed by programme leaders.
30. The expansion of the programme, to include school-based training routes, has been managed seamlessly. This is due to the exceedingly strong quality assurance systems which cut across all training programmes. The carefully considered, well-structured and consistently applied multi-layered approach ensures that all trainees receive the same high-quality training and an equal chance to flourish. Although trainees may encounter different experiences, they are prepared fully for the challenges that lie ahead.
31. The partnership covers a wide geographical area. It includes a rich assortment of schools which enable trainees to gain a broad experience of diverse settings. Schools facing challenging circumstances, either due to high levels of deprivation or because they have been judged less than good by Ofsted, are well represented. This helps trainees to deepen their understanding of the factors which cause some pupils to be disadvantaged and how this can limit their educational achievement and personal development.
32. Trainees' progress is tracked meticulously. Swift and effective action is taken at the first sign of anyone who may be struggling. Similarly, equal notice is taken of the most able trainees to help them excel. The assessment of trainees' attainment, against the teachers' standards, is very accurate, because judgements are carefully moderated. Leaders take their responsibility as gate-keepers for the profession very seriously.
33. The systems to support trainees who may face difficulties during their training are a stand-out feature in this partnership. Trusting relationships, excellent communication and a cohesive relationship between university link tutors, professional academic tutors and school mentors mean that concerns are spotted early. Support is swift and effective. This is particularly true for those trainees who interrupt their studies. Almost all are back on track to become good or better teachers.
34. NQTs make a smooth start to their teaching career because the information passed to employing schools is accurate, helpful and personalised. It enables school leaders and NQTs to set clear targets to aid their continuing professional development.

35. The procedures for selecting potential trainees are rigorous and effective. School and partnership leaders across all training routes, including School Direct, work in unison to test out candidates' skills, attitudes and attributes. The success of these systems is evident in the small and reducing number of trainees who choose to withdraw from the training programmes.
36. All safeguarding procedures and ITT requirements are met in full.
37. Training is of the highest quality. This is evident in trainees' and NQTs' strong teaching skills. Regardless of the route or age phase that trainees opt to follow, the training experience is carefully structured to maximise trainees' subject knowledge and teaching techniques. The programmes offered by those School Direct partners who opt to provide their own training are checked rigorously. Quality assurance leaders, employed by the university, ensure that no trainee is disadvantaged or held back from achieving their very best.
38. Centre-based sessions are especially strong. Expert trainers equip trainees with a firm grasp of every subject delivered in the early years and primary classrooms. Recent and relevant research underpins content as well as pedagogy. Assignments are carefully planned to help trainees strengthen their practice through an understanding of theory. Trainees become critical thinkers who are able to compare and contrast different teaching approaches. For example, NQTs trained to teach younger children have a firm grasp of what works best and why this is so.
39. Training sessions ensure that trainees gain a secure grounding in the early years and primary national curriculum. As a result, NQTs understand age-related expectations and how to build on what pupils already know and can do. They are very well prepared to teach across different year groups. Training is enriched with visiting speakers, visits to different schools plus enhancement experiences. These varied learning opportunities give trainees a real understanding of the challenges and rewards they will meet in their chosen career.
40. School- and centre-based training blends together seamlessly for the most part. However, at stage one, inspectors spotted that a few trainees had to wait too long to put their strong phonics learning into practice. The use of sports coaches in many placement schools was hindering some trainees from planning, teaching and assessing physical education. Leaders took immediate action to ensure that all trainees gained these vital experiences by the time they completed their different programmes. Changes to the training programme mean this oversight will not be allowed to happen again in the future.
41. School-based learning complements the different central-training models well. High-quality and diverse placements, supported by dedicated mentors, ensure that trainees have valuable opportunities to hone their teaching skills. Very

effective placement documentation, plus exceptionally comprehensive partnership agreements, ensures that everyone has clarity about their role. University link tutors keep a close eye on trainees' experience in school. They also play a key role in moderating judgements on trainees' attainment. Mentors' warm and professional approach is the key to trainees' success against the teachers' standards. Trainees are confident to seek advice, observe good practice and take risks because they know mentors have their best interests at heart.

42. During stage one of the inspection, some small variation in the quality of mentors' feedback to trainees was uncovered. Partnership leaders set about tackling this relative weakness in earnest. Considerable time and resources have been spent in reshaping the mentor training programme. It is well structured to meet the size and dynamic nature of the partnership, using online tools as well as face-to-face sessions.
43. The most recent NQT survey, and to some extent Ofsted's online questionnaire, point to some levels of dissatisfaction with the training programme. However, this was not borne out in discussions with trainees and NQTs, who speak very highly about all aspects of their training. The provider's own exit surveys, which capture the views of a much larger sample, confirm that there is no major discontent among trainees and NQTs about their experiences or preparation for teaching. This is due to the swift and positive action that leaders took in response to the feedback from their trainees and NQTs.
44. All trainees surpass the teachers' standards by the time they complete their different training programmes, with an increasing number gaining the highest grade. They achieve well across every aspect. There are no marked differences in attainment between different groups or training routes. A successful support programme for male trainees has raised their attainment in recent years. Nonetheless, the proportion of male trainees who achieve the highest level is declining over time.
45. Trainees and NQTs are skilled and accomplished teachers. They have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. The work in pupils' books is a clear indicator of the strong start that NQTs have made in schools. Exciting, age-appropriate activities which build on pupils' starting points are beautifully presented and carefully marked. Headteachers are delighted with the excellent contribution that NQTs are already making to school life.
46. Trainees' and NQTs' strong understanding of the mastery curriculum means that they teach mathematics with confidence and accuracy. They are equally competent in planning, teaching and assessing phonics to ensure that pupils gain a firm grounding in early reading. Similarly, trainees and NQTs promote pupils' writing skills in English lessons, and across the curriculum, very well. All NQTs are able to plan and teach physical education to different groups of

pupils. Strong subject knowledge, good use of resources, quality questioning and carefully planned lessons make learning lively, successful and a joy to observe.

47. Trainees and NQTs meet the needs of almost all groups very well. Good use of additional adults and an understanding of different learning needs mean that they cater very well for pupils who have a special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, the activities they offer the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, lack real challenge and can cause this group to tread water. This has already been spotted by leaders. Changes are afoot to ensure that current trainees have a wider range of strategies to deepen pupils' learning.
48. Recent improvements in the training programme are beginning to develop trainees' and NQTs' ability to meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Nonetheless, not all are as confident in the steps they would take to ensure that this group make the same swift progress as others.
49. Keeping pupils safe is a cross-cutting theme in the training programme. Consequently, trainees and NQTs are well aware of the signs that may indicate abuse, radicalisation or extremism. They are equally adept at tackling and preventing different forms of bullying. The warm relationships that trainees and NQTs foster with pupils create safe, calm and secure classrooms in which pupils are free to soar. Trainees model respectful behaviour, which in turn pupils emulate as they work with their peers. Trainees and NQTs are well aware of their role in promoting pupils' understanding of British values. Many are forging ahead with this work already; for example, organising events to raise money for national charities.
50. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Trainees and NQTs have a vibrant range of strategies to promote good behaviour. However, for the most part, these are not needed. Pupils like their new teachers, they feel valued and typically they are too busy enjoying their learning to waste time.
51. Trainees emerge from their different programmes as well-rounded, resilient and enthusiastic NQTs. They share a zeal for teaching and a desire to make a difference to the schools in which they work and the pupils in their care. They immerse themselves in school life, attending training events, leading extra-curricular clubs and sharing their subject-specific expertise with school colleagues.
52. 'Self-starters' is an apt phrase used by headteachers to describe trainees and NQTs from this partnership. They are highly reflective practitioners, who take full responsibility for their own development.

53. Employment rates are consistently above the sector average. A very high proportion gain their first teaching post within the region, many in partnership schools. This signals the trust and confidence that headteachers have in the training programmes. Completion rates are also above average. Few trainees choose to withdraw. This figure is decreasing over time, especially for male trainees who in the past were more likely to not stay the course.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and newly qualified teachers' (NQTs') teaching:

Acresfield Primary School, Chester

Barrow CofE Primary School, Chester

Cherry Grove Primary School, Chester

Crowton Christ Church CofE Primary School, Northwich

Eaton Primary Park, Tarporley

Elleray Park School, Wallasey

Greasby Junior School, Greasby

Great Meols Primary School, Meols

Halton Lodge Primary School, Runcorn

Kelsall Primary School, Tarporley

Meadow Community Primary School, Ellesmere Port

Mickle Trafford Village School, Chester

St Bernard's Roman Catholic Primary School, Ellesmere Port

St George's Primary School, Wallasey

St James CofE Primary School, Farnworth

The Cobbs Infant and Nursery School, Warrington

Tyldesley Primary School, Tyldesley

Upton Heath CofE Primary School, Chester

Urmston Infant School, Urmston

Whitby Heath Primary School, Ellesmere Port

Winnington Park Primary School, Northwich

Winsford High Street Community Primary School, Winsford

Woodlands Primary School, Ellesmere Port

The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The partnership provides training in secondary initial teacher education leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) through the award of a postgraduate certificate in education. This qualification includes 60 credits at Masters level. The provision includes a university-led postgraduate certificate in education core programme and school-led postgraduate certificate in education School Direct training and salaried programmes. Both programmes cover the 11 to 16 age range. A 14 to 19 programme is offered in some subjects via the School Direct programme only.
- The following subject specialisms are offered either through one or both routes: art, business studies, computer science, design and technology, drama, English, history, geography, mathematics, media studies, modern foreign languages, music, physical education, religious education, social studies and science (biology, chemistry and physics).
- The partnership consists of 97 schools covering 20 local authorities.
- At stage one of the inspection in May 2016, 167 trainees were on the course: 106 on the core programme; 56 on the School Direct training and four on the School Direct salaried programmes. One trainee was following the Assessment Only route.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited 16 schools, two of which were visited at both stages of the inspection. They observed 13 trainees during stage one and 10 newly qualified teachers (NQTs) at stage two. At stage one, they observed mentors giving feedback to trainees.
- Over the course of the two-stage inspection, inspectors met with trainees, NQTs, school staff with responsibility for teacher training and NQT induction, headteachers, programme leaders, university subject tutors and school-based subject mentors.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including: self-evaluation and improvement planning documents; trainees' files; information on trainees' attainment, employment and completion; the results of the NQT survey and Ofsted's online trainee questionnaire. In addition, inspectors carried out checks to determine whether the partnership meets all statutory criteria and requirements in relation to the ITT criteria.

Inspection team

Janet Palmer	Her Majesty's Inspector	phase lead inspector (stage 1)
Anne Seneviratne	Her Majesty's Inspector	assistant phase lead (stage 1)
		phase lead inspector (stage 2)
John Nixon	Her Majesty's Inspector	assistant lead inspector (stage 2)
Bernard Campbell	Her Majesty's Inspector	team inspector (stage 1)
Diana Choulerton	Her Majesty's Inspector	team inspector (stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- Outstanding leadership has led to very strong outcomes for trainees over recent years against a backdrop of expansion in both numbers and the subjects offered.
- Leaders are highly reflective, responsive and emotionally intelligent. They model these qualities to their trainees who, in turn, become highly reflective and resilient practitioners.
- Trainees benefit enormously from the positive relationships and effective communication that are at the heart of this partnership. As newly qualified teachers, they are equipped with the skills to form these same positive relationships quickly with their pupils.
- Leaders are driven by a philosophy of continuous improvement. They have very high expectations of themselves and their trainees. This ethos contributes significantly to trainees developing into at least good and many into outstanding teachers.
- The pastoral care of trainees is exemplary. The personalised support that trainees receive has a significant impact on the outstanding progress they make.
- High-quality training and mentoring, that focuses on meeting individual needs, means that trainees are very well prepared to enable their pupils to learn well and make good progress.
- Leaders' development planning is very effective and their self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Robust systems of quality assurance are in place, which secure sustained and improving outcomes for trainees.
- The partnership is committed to working with schools in challenging circumstances and raising the achievement of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.

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

The partnership should:

- give greater priority in training to ensure that all trainees understand how to challenge the most able, including the most able disadvantaged, pupils
- continue to improve communication across the partnership to ensure that there is consistent understanding of the training priorities that leaders have identified.

Inspection judgements

54. The attainment of trainees is outstanding. All trainees who successfully complete their course of study gain QTS, and exceed the minimum required by the teachers' standards. Over the last three years, the quality of teaching of over half the cohort has been judged to be outstanding by the end of the training programmes.
55. The employment rate is equally impressive. It has been well above the national average for the last three years. Partnership schools are well aware of the high calibre of Chester trainees and are keen to offer them employment at the end of their training. A high proportion of NQTs this year have taken up employment in those schools in the partnership that are in challenging socio-economic circumstances. This reflects the high priority that the university gives to working with these schools.
56. Assessment of trainees against the teachers' standards is rigorous and accurate. During the inspection, inspectors agreed with the partnership's judgements about the quality of teaching of both trainees and NQTs.
57. Recruitment and selection processes are rigorous. They lead to highly suitable trainees being admitted onto appropriate training programmes. Clear and detailed recruitment and selection guidance ensures that there is consistency across the partnership and different training routes.
58. The attention given to the pastoral care of all trainees is exemplary and this has a significant impact on the progress they make. Leaders provide extremely effective support to the small number of trainees that encounter problems with their health or personal circumstances during their training. Consequently, completion rates remain high. For the small number of trainees who take time out of their training, this highly effective personalised support means that the considerable number who return gain success and attain as highly as others.
59. There are no significant differences between groups in trainees' attainment, completion and employment. However, leaders are aware that male trainees are not as well represented in the cohort whose teaching is judged to be

outstanding by the end of the course, and have taken action to try to address this. For example, some male trainees' attainment has improved when they have been given male mentors. Trainees over the age of 25 are more likely to take time out of their training. In response to this, there is now a dedicated member of the university team who is responsible for coordinating specific support for this group.

60. Trainees and NQTs are extremely reflective practitioners, a quality that is modelled for them by leaders in the partnership. Consequently, they are able to identify accurately their own strengths and areas for development. The training they receive focuses their attention on the impact their actions have on their pupils' progress.
61. A particular strength of trainees and NQTs is their ability to form positive relationships with their pupils in a short space of time. They know their pupils well which enables them to meet and, often, anticipate their needs. This in turn is leading to pupils' strong progress over time.
62. High-quality training on behaviour management means that trainees and NQTs effectively deal with any low-level disruption in their classes. The positive relationships that they form with their pupils are based firmly on mutual respect which also helps them to manage any potential behaviour issues in a calm and confident manner. Trainees and NQTs understand how important it is for pupils to feel safe and valued in their learning environment.
63. Trainees and NQTs have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Observations during the inspection show that they challenge their pupils to make the best possible progress to achieve their full potential. They use effective questioning to probe and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, not all trainees and NQTs are providing enough challenge for their most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
64. Most trainees and NQTs ensure that their teaching meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well, helping this group to make strong progress. This is due to the good-quality training in this area.
65. As a result of high-quality training, all trainees have a clear understanding of issues relating to bullying and safeguarding, including the importance of their own personal and professional online safety. There is, however, some inconsistency in the priority given to, and the quality of training relating to, equalities for those trainees following the School Direct route.
66. The expertise of university tutors is very strong, and informed by recent and relevant pedagogical research. Coherent links between subject-specific and pedagogical training enable trainees to link theory to practice. The training to develop trainees' understanding of how to teach their subjects is outstanding.

Trainees' subject, curriculum and pedagogical knowledge are developed extremely well and they are able to apply this effectively in their teaching. They demonstrate a very good understanding of the requirements of the national curriculum for their subjects. They assess pupils' learning accurately and confidently. Trainees and NQTs successfully develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through their subject teaching.

67. Trainees have nothing but praise for the support and guidance they receive from their subject mentors. Outside of the formal scheduled sessions, trainees value enormously the availability of their mentors and their willingness to provide support when it is needed. Several NQTs explained to inspectors how their subject mentors are continuing to provide very helpful support and advice during this year.
68. Training has a strong focus on developing important skills and qualities such as resilience, reflection and emotional intelligence, alongside subject and pedagogical knowledge. This means that NQTs are well prepared to cope with any challenges they may face. NQTs speak very positively about their training. They feel they have been supported to develop all aspects of the teachers' standards well and equipped with the skills to apply their training now they are in post.
69. The transition documentation containing NQTs' agreed targets for their induction period is valued by induction tutors. It provides an effective baseline for further development. All induction tutors and senior leaders in those schools visited during the inspection spoke very highly of the NQTs' professionalism. They felt that the NQTs' teaching was having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Inspection evidence confirms this to be true. They also gave examples of how they were contributing to the work of their departments and the wider life of the school.
70. While almost all of the school-based mentoring is of a very high standard, it was noted at the end of stage one of the inspection that a small number of trainees were not benefiting from high-quality feedback from their mentors or set well-focused targets to improve their teaching. Leaders responded swiftly to these concerns to bring about improvements for current trainees by enhancing further the procedures for mentor training. A key feature of this is the new online mentor training programme.
71. A distinctive feature of both the core and School Direct routes is the creative and innovative enrichment programme. The two periods of enrichment activities are tailored to ensure that each trainee has access to experiences which match their needs. This can be about filling any gaps in trainees' skills and knowledge or providing opportunities for a more in-depth experience. For example, there are opportunities to develop expertise in meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language for those trainees who

know that the school where they will be working has a high proportion of these pupils. Some of these enrichment opportunities enable trainees to gain international educational experience.

72. Leaders are absolutely committed to, and successful in securing, continuous improvement. This accounts for the high-quality outcomes for trainees. Leaders respond swiftly to any areas of concern that are raised through either external or internal review. For example, they responded with alacrity to the small number of areas for improvement identified at the end of stage one of the inspection. They have taken actions to ensure that all trainees, regardless of which route they are following, benefit from high-quality experiences throughout the training programmes. They have also made changes in response to some concerns raised by trainees. For example, changing the timing of academic deadlines to help trainees organise their workload more effectively. This willingness and ability to respond to emerging issues rapidly means that trainees quickly benefit from any improvements made.
73. Leaders have very high expectations of themselves and their trainees. The ambition they have for their trainees has a positive impact on their progress and attainment. Open and honest professional relationships and effective communication are at the heart of this partnership. The collaborative way that leaders work with all their partners and trainees contributes significantly to the success of the partnership.
74. Leaders know their individual trainees and schools very well, despite the size of the partnership. They combine this detailed knowledge with a clear strategic focus that ensures the partnership continues to develop and improve further. Leaders' development planning is very effective and their self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. They ensure that strong systems of quality assurance are in place. Outstanding strategic leadership means that a high priority is given to succession planning to ensure the considerable strengths in leadership across the partnership are sustained.
75. The partnership has a strong track record of working with schools in challenging circumstances, the benefits of which are two-fold. This engagement prepares their trainees to teach effectively in similar types of schools. It also confirms the partnership's commitment to contributing to raising the achievement of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.
76. The partnership complies fully with all aspects of the ITT criteria. It has robust systems in place to check and verify this. Safeguarding requirements are met fully. Equality of opportunity is threaded through all areas of provision, including recruitment and selection, and support for trainees. For example, there is a dedicated member of the team who has strong expertise in the area of special educational needs, particularly dyslexia, who provides effective support in this area.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and newly qualified teachers' (NQTs') teaching:

Bishop's Blue Coat Church of England School, Great Boughton

Christleton High School, Chester

Hartford High School, Chester

Kingsway Park High School, Rochdale

Lymm High School, Lymm

North Chadderton School, Oldham

Saint John Plessington Catholic College, Wirral

Saint Mary's Catholic College, Wirral

Shavington Academy, Crewe

Sir John Deane's College, Northwich

South Wirral High School, Birkenhead

Tarporley High School, Tarporley

The Catholic High School, Chester

The Fallibroome Academy, Macclesfield

Upton-by-Chester High School, Chester

Wade Deacon High School, Widnes

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the FE in ITE partnership

- The University of Chester provides a two-year part-time FE in ITE programme leading to a certificate in education or a professional graduate certificate in education. Most trainees are in-service and currently hold teaching posts in the further education and skills sector.
- The partnership is made up of the university and two general further education colleges located in the North West. A third college left the partnership at the end of 2015/16. There are currently 42 trainees enrolled on the ITE in FE phase of whom 21 are in Year 1 and 21 are in Year 2. At the end of 2015/16, 43 trainees completed the programme.

Information about the FE in ITE inspection

- During stage one and two of the inspection, two inspectors carried out 13 observations of trainees and former trainees at different stages of their programme in three colleges, an independent school and a pupil referral unit. They also observed training sessions at one of the colleges.
- Inspectors interviewed trainees and former trainees to evaluate the impact of their training on the quality of their teaching and on their progress. They also interviewed tutors, mentors and managers of the programme. They looked at trainees' learning plans, progress records and written assignments and examined training materials and records of observations of trainees' lessons.
- They completed checks to determine if the partnership met the statutory requirements in relation to the ITT criteria.

Inspection team

Steve Hailstone
Anne Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

phase lead inspector
assistant phase lead inspector

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the FE partnership are:

- Trainees gain the skills and professional knowledge that they need to be effective teachers.
- Trainees gain a wide range of teaching skills and this enables their learners to make good progress.

- Most trainees gain or sustain employment as teachers on completion of their programme.
- The structure and content of the training prepares trainees well for teaching in the further education and skills sector.
- Tutors and mentors provide good support that helps trainees to quickly develop their teaching skills and enhance their knowledge and understanding of the sector.
- Assessment of trainees' academic work is thorough and accurate.
- Leaders and managers accurately evaluate the quality of training across the partnership and intervene quickly to make improvements when necessary.

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

The partnership should:

- closely monitor the impact of recent actions to improve the quality of training at the partner college where trainees' progress was disrupted in 2015/16; ensure that the recent improvements are sustained and that the remaining trainees continue to make good progress and complete the programme successfully
- ensure that the overall assessment of trainees at the end of their programme accurately reflects the quality of trainees' teaching and the level of their professional knowledge; ensure that all trainees are fully aware of their current level of attainment
- ensure that all mentors carry out the mandatory training so that they provide consistently high-quality support for trainees; evaluate the impact of the training by closely reviewing the quality of mentoring, particularly for those new to the role
- improve the analysis and use of data on retention and completion to evaluate the impact of training and identify actions for improvement.

Inspection judgements

77. The University of Chester partnership provides good training for teachers in the further education and skills sector. Leaders and managers at the university ensure that training across the partnership is of high quality, and this results in good outcomes for most trainees.
78. The majority of trainees complete their training programmes successfully. A significant minority have had to leave their programmes in the last two years for personal reasons, and this has resulted in a decline in the overall completion rate. Most of these trainees have now returned to their programme and are making good progress.

79. Trainees quickly acquire the skills and professional knowledge that they need to be effective teachers. All trainees who completed the programme in 2015/16 had good or outstanding attainment against the professional standards for teachers in further education. A high proportion of trainees secure employment as teachers or continue successfully in their current job roles on completion of their programme.
80. Trainees and former trainees demonstrate good practice in their teaching. They successfully apply the skills and knowledge they gain from their programmes and the guidance they receive from their trainers and mentors. Trainees and former trainees ensure that their teaching challenges and supports learners well, including the most able. Most trainees and former trainees use questioning skilfully to check and extend learning. They are skilled in managing behaviour and they successfully promote British values, such as democracy and respect, and an inclusive learning environment.
81. The content of the training programme is comprehensive, relevant and up to date. It provides trainees with good opportunities to extend their understanding of theory and to reflect on their practice. It covers current priorities in the sector well, including safeguarding and developing learners' English and mathematics skills, ensuring that all learners are challenged to achieve their full potential. Managers and tutors make effective use of the professional standards for teachers in further education to plan and design training. Trainees use the standards well to develop their practice and monitor their progress on the programme.
82. The majority of trainees gain experience of teaching in a range of settings. Managers provide opportunities for trainees to teach at different levels and to different age groups in their college, and to shadow other trainees and experienced teachers in other curriculum areas. Many trainees visit other colleges and settings to gain a broader experience. However, a few trainees do not extend their experience beyond their current job roles that involve teaching in a specific setting or with a particular age group. Managers recognise this and have begun to take action to broaden trainees' experience where needed.
83. Tutors provide good individual support for trainees through frequent individual reviews and through meetings with trainees after each lesson observation. Pastoral support is effective, particularly in supporting trainees who, for personal reasons, need to take a break from their training.
84. Trainees value the support they receive from their mentors. Most mentors have carried out training recently to improve their understanding of the role and their skills in providing mentoring support. Mentors liaise well with tutors, and they carry out joint observations and reviews of trainees' progress. However, a few mentors have insufficient understanding of the training programme, including the partnership's criteria for measuring trainees' progress and attainment.

Managers do not always check that all mentors have carried out the partnership's mandatory training.

85. Tutors and mentors provide detailed and largely accurate feedback about trainees' progress in developing their teaching skills. As a result, trainees know the strengths of their teaching and the areas they need to improve. Tutors assess trainees' written assignments accurately and thoroughly. They provide helpful and constructive feedback that helps trainees to improve their understanding and consider how they can apply their learning to their practice. In a few instances, the assessment of trainees' overall attainment at the end of their programme is over-positive and is not based on a sufficiently accurate evaluation of the quality of their teaching and the level of their professional knowledge. Trainees are not always sufficiently clear about their overall progress during their training and when they complete their programme.
86. At the end of their training programmes, trainees agree specific and helpful targets for further improvement in their first year as qualified teachers. They use these well to monitor their continuing professional development. Former trainees continue to receive good support and feedback from mentors when they become qualified teachers.
87. The evaluation of the quality of the training programme across the partnership is largely accurate and identifies many key areas for improvement. Specific improvements implemented last year are beginning to have a positive impact. These include the introduction of a professional journey file that brings together all of a trainee's targets and evaluations into one document that is regularly reviewed and updated. There are also improved arrangements for the observation of lessons and reviewing trainees' progress. Leaders and managers gather comprehensive data on retention and completion, but their analysis of this data does not provide them with a fully accurate evaluation of outcomes for trainees. In a few instances, judgements made following observations of trainees' lessons are over-positive.
88. Leaders and managers at the university intervene quickly and effectively to improve provision. As soon as they became aware, in January 2016, of difficulties at one of the partner colleges where trainees' progress had been disrupted due to staffing issues, they intervened to minimise the impact on trainees. The management, structure and delivery of the programme at this college are now much stronger and trainees are making good progress. Trainees, who were concerned about the disruption to their training last year, are now positive about the quality of the programme and the support they receive.
89. The recruitment and selection process is now rigorous, following significant improvements made at the beginning of 2015/16. It accurately identifies trainees' suitability for the programme and their specific strengths and areas for

development at the beginning of the programme. Trainers make good use of the evaluation of trainees' starting points in their planning.

90. The partnership complies with legislation relating to equality and diversity and safeguarding including the 'Prevent' duty. It meets all of the ITT criteria requirements. Trainees benefit from training on safeguarding, preventing radicalisation, promoting British values and providing an inclusive learning environment. They successfully apply this understanding in their practice.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The following colleges and schools were visited:

Tameside College
West Cheshire College
Warrington Collegiate (up to August 2016)
The Hammond School, Chester
The Highfields Inclusion Centre, Stockport

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70132
Inspection number	10010231
Inspection dates	09/05/2016
Stage 1	
Stage 2	17/10/2016
Lead inspector	Joanne Olsson, Her Majesty's Inspector
Type of ITE partnership	HEI
Phases provided	EYITT, primary, secondary and FE in ITE
Date of previous inspection	November 2010
Previous inspection report	https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70132
Provider address	Faculty of Education and Children's Services Parkgate Road Chester CH1 4BJ



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