

# The Cambridge ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates    Stage 1: 12 June 2017    Stage 2: 9 October 2017

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This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's 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>Primary and Secondary QTS</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	2
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	2
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	2
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	2

## Primary and secondary routes

### Information about this ITE partnership

- The Cambridge Partnership offers primary and secondary school-centred initial teacher (SCITT) training for graduates. Programmes cover four main training routes: SCITT, School Direct, School Direct salaried and School Direct non-supported. Trainees who complete their training successfully are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS) and some gain a postgraduate certificate in education accredited by the University of Cumbria.
- The partnership was established in 2001, as a collaborative venture between the university and three local authorities. In 2008, a new independent management structure was created. Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust became the accredited body responsible for the provision in April 2014.
- Between 2016 and 2017, the provider trained 16 primary trainees and 57 secondary trainees. In September 2017, the number of primary trainees increased to 30 and there were 60 trainees following secondary routes.
- The partnership is also involved in the Researchers in Schools programme. This is a salaried route for aspiring teachers who have completed a doctorate in philosophy.

### Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- At stage 1 of the inspection, inspectors visited six schools and observed two primary trainees and four secondary trainees teaching. During stage 2, they visited a further eight schools, observing three primary and five secondary newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teaching. Inspectors also spoke, separately, with three secondary NQTs on the telephone.
- Inspectors held meetings with trainees, NQTs, members of the partnership's senior leadership team, the executive committee, employing headteachers and the chief executive of the trust. They also met with school-based trainers, programme managers and subject tutors. Inspectors reviewed NQTs' career entry profiles and the actions taken by leaders and managers to address the issues arising from stage 1 of the inspection.
- Across both stages of the inspection, inspectors considered a wide range of documentation. This included programme guidance, handbooks, external examiner reports, partnership agreements, the partnership's self-evaluation, improvement plans, and information about trainees' outcomes, including employment and completion rates. They also took account of the 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey for trainee teachers and checked that the partnership was compliant with statutory requirements, including safeguarding and the initial teacher training criteria.

## **Inspection team**

Christine Dick, Her Majesty's Inspector (lead inspector)

Ruth Brock, Her Majesty's Inspector (assistant lead inspector)

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **The key strengths of the primary and secondary partnership are:**

- Trainees' high standards of professional conduct and good understanding of their roles and responsibilities as members of the teaching profession.
- Highly reflective trainees who are quick to form positive working relationships and who work hard to promote good standards of behaviour in their lessons.
- Good subject knowledge development in the secondary training and effective teaching of early reading and mathematics for primary trainees.
- Trainees' active engagement in wider school life and the useful contribution this makes to ensuring that they are rapidly integrated into the whole-school community.
- The well-planned programme of central training, which makes a good contribution to teacher supply in the region and which leads to consistently high employment rates.
- The responsive academic and pastoral support for trainees from the central training team and in partnership schools.
- The central leadership team's strong focus on the changing landscape of initial teacher education. A clear understanding of what is working effectively across the partnership and close attention to the things that need to improve.

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

#### **The partnership should:**

- Secure the systems already in place so that mentors and tutors, across the partnership, make consistently accurate judgements about the quality of trainees' teaching, by:
  - ensuring that the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' learning and progress over time underpins decisions about how well they teach

- making sure that there is a common understanding of the criteria for judging trainees' teaching over time, especially teaching that is considered to be outstanding
- increasing opportunities for mentors and professional tutors to share best practice and to ensure that mentor support for trainees is of consistently high quality.
- Continue to review the reasons why some trainees leave the course early, so that any potential barriers to completion are identified quickly and timely interventions put in place.
- Ensure the sufficiency and quality of evidence related to secondary trainees' experience of teaching in the sixth form and of primary trainees' experience of teaching subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Increase the engagement of key stakeholders, across the partnership, in evaluating and improving the quality of provision, in particular ensuring that any competing priorities between the needs of employing schools and trainees' development needs are addressed.

## **Inspection judgements**

1. The overall effectiveness of The Cambridge Partnership is good. Leaders and managers demonstrate good capacity to improve and so they are successful in realising their vision to provide high-quality training. Schools value the partnership's contribution to teacher supply across the region. The headteachers who inspectors spoke with, at both stages of the inspection, were very positive about the strategic importance of the partnership and, as one of them said, 'the mutual trust'. This high regard is mirrored appropriately in the high NQT employment rates at the end of the training and in the comment from another headteacher who said, 'My school would not function effectively without the partnership'.
2. While outcomes for trainees are good overall, employed trainees typically attain at a higher level than those trainees who are not directly employed by schools. There are no other significant differences between the performance of groups, or across the primary and secondary phases.
3. Most trainees' practice exceeds the minimum level expected for QTS by the end of the training. Trainees and NQTs provide positive role models. They work hard to establish good working relationships with pupils and school staff. Consequently, they become valued members of the school community very quickly.
4. Completion rates have typically exceeded the national average, but dipped for cohorts of trainees completing their training in 2016 and 2017. This was because a higher proportion of trainees withdrew early from their training for health or personal reasons.

5. The partnership is in no doubt that the need to improve completion rates for both primary and secondary trainees is a priority. While support for trainees, overall, is very strong, leaders are paying even closer attention to trainees' emotional health, well-being and workload. A new 'cause 4 care' model has been agreed, with a professional counsellor appointed, to provide timely interventions in cases of identified need. The reasons why some trainees withdraw early from the training remain a key focus of ongoing reviews.
6. Primary and secondary trainees' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, in 2017, were highly positive overall. Almost all of the trainees who responded were confident that the training would help them to become good or better teachers. A very small number of respondents highlighted issues linked to variations in the quality of placements and, in the case of primary trainees, said they were less confident in the teaching of physical education than in teaching English and mathematics.
7. Partnership schools, serving diverse communities, typically provide good-quality placements and mostly effective mentoring. Trainees' placements are planned to take account of contrasting settings and to provide useful opportunities to learn from good and outstanding practitioners. However, trainees on School Direct salaried routes told inspectors that the current, one day a week, model made their second school experience fragmented.
8. In this context, NQTs also said they felt it was difficult to get to know their pupils quickly on placement two, or to develop the very positive working relationships they experienced in the main placement school. Leaders have recognised that these concerns raise issues of inequality and so they are currently reviewing ways to address the issue of second placements with employing schools.
9. Trainees and NQTs value the good support they receive from the central team and trainers in schools. In their discussions with inspectors, they were eager to speak about the prompt action taken if they raised a concern and the effective individual support readily available to keep them on track.
10. NQTs are prepared very well to take up their teaching posts, including in schools in challenging circumstances. This is because of the effective central and school-based training. Well-structured provision allows trainees to build their skills quickly.
11. Trainees and NQTs are highly professional, good role models and demonstrate strong practice in many aspects of their work. They reflect regularly on their teaching. Consequently, they are very clear about what they do well and what they need to improve. They have high expectations of themselves and, typically, of the pupils they teach. At both stages of the inspection, strengths

were seen in their consistent ability to quickly establish productive learning environments in lessons.

12. Overall, trainees and NQTs manage pupils' behaviour in their lessons appropriately. Primary trainees and NQTs, however, were more prompt in addressing low-level chatting in lessons than some of their secondary peers. Trainees and NQTs have typically good subject and curriculum knowledge. In discussions with inspectors, headteachers commented positively about secondary trainees' understanding of new curriculum requirements.
13. Trainees and NQTs are able to give examples of potential barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and how they can help to overcome them. They are clear about the importance of good reading skills and the love of reading in laying the foundations for future learning.
14. The primary training focuses appropriately on the teaching of early mathematics, reading and the effective use of systematic, synthetic phonics to help children sound the letters in unfamiliar words. Because of the good specialist support they receive, primary trainees and NQTs teach English and mathematics confidently.
15. Good subject knowledge was a strong feature of each of the secondary trainees and NQTs visited. Support from the central team's subject leaders complements typically good subject support available to trainees in schools. This support is highly valued and, importantly, subject specialists encourage trainees to join subject associations to continue to develop their skills beyond the training.
16. Target-setting, against each element of the teachers' standards, is used to ensure that trainees are focused appropriately on the aspects of the standards they need to improve. In the lessons observed at stage 2, inspectors saw NQTs responding positively to the targets set in their career entry development profiles.
17. While inspectors agreed that trainees and NQTs show they can teach well, trainers do not routinely take enough account of pupils' progress in making judgements about the quality of teaching and learning over time. The partnership's criteria for judging the highest levels of teaching practice are not universally well-understood by school-based trainers.
18. Although many mentors are experienced and skilled in their work with trainees, this is not consistently the case. Leaders and managers are fully aware of the need to continue to improve further the consistency and quality of mentoring and mentors' judgements. Mentors and other school-based trainers do not have enough opportunities to share good practice, or to moderate each other's judgements. In recognition of this, and as a result of the findings from stage 1

of the inspection, leaders have created a new post of mentor manager to enhance further the partnership's quality assurance processes.

19. Trainees' experience of assessment over time and the use of assessment in planning for learning is too variable. Limitations in securing good progress for the most able pupils was a common feature of the less successful aspects of teaching seen in both phases and stages of the inspection.
20. While trainees and NQTs plan with the intent to offer an appropriate level of challenge for higher-ability pupils, their success rate in implementing these plans is inconsistent. For most trainees and NQTs, the ability to build on pupils' responses through skilful questioning remains a work in progress.
21. Although primary trainees gain useful practical experience of teaching subjects other than English and mathematics, the extent of this experience is uneven. This is also the case in terms of secondary trainees' experience of teaching in the sixth form. At stage 2 of the inspection, leaders had plans in place for enhanced monitoring to ensure that trainees access the full range of opportunities to teach across subjects and age ranges.
22. Leadership and management of the partnership is good. Leaders are ambitious and so demonstrate good capacity for further improvement. Swift action was taken to address the emerging areas for improvement identified at stage 1 of the inspection. It was too soon to evaluate the full impact of these changes at stage 2.
23. The partnership's self-evaluation of its own performance is detailed and thorough. Ongoing checks take very good account of trainees' views. Actions to address any concerns raised are implemented quickly; for example, in revising the online documentation that trainees are required to complete in order to reduce repetition and any unnecessary workload.
24. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the partnership's strengths and weaknesses. They are systematic in their analysis of patterns and trends to continue to improve provision. For example, in recognition of the individual reasons underpinning early withdrawal from the training, leaders enhanced the strong support available by adding the services of a professional counsellor for trainees who may need to use them.
25. Recruitment and selection processes are effective. Well-considered school-centred activities provide trainers and employing schools with useful information to assess candidates' potential to succeed.
26. Day-to-day communication links between the central team and schools are strong and effective. Leaders have taken steps to modify the composition of the partnership's executive committee to increase the representation of school leaders. Nevertheless, there is scope to increase further the engagement of

schools in evaluating and improving the quality of provision. Leaders recognise that this is an important factor to ensure that any competing priorities between the needs of employing schools and trainees' development needs are addressed quickly.

27. Inspectors saw evidence of effective planning for trainees' development beyond the training; for example, in the professional dialogue undertaken with mentors to produce career entry development profiles. Leaders know, however, that there is more to do to extend the reach of the partnership's professional development for NQTs. This is also the case in developing innovative solutions to bridge the geographical constraints which sometimes limit opportunities for sharing good practice.

### **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Gretton School, Girton

Hinchingbrooke School, Huntingdon

Longsands Academy, St Neots

Neale Wade Academy, March

Newark Hill Primary School, Peterborough

Ormiston Bushfield Academy, Peterborough

Park Lane Primary School, Whittlesey

Reedham Primary School, Norwich

Sawtry Village Academy, Sawtry

Springwood High School, Kings Lynn

Stanground Academy, Peterborough

St Peter's School, Huntingdon

Thorpe Primary School, Peterborough

Westwood Primary School, March



## ITE partnership details

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Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	May 2012
Previous inspection report	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70232">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70232</a>
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