

# Oxford Brookes University ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 12 June 2017 Stage 2: 16 October 2017

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

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

## Inspection judgements

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

	<b>Early years ITT (EYTS)</b>	<b>Primary QTS</b>	<b>Secondary QTS</b>	<b>ITE in FE</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	3	2	2	2
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	3	2	2	2
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	3	2	2	2
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	3	2	2	2

## Overview of the ITE partnership

The overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership requires improvement in early years ITT; it is good in primary; good in secondary; and good in further education.

This is because strong leadership and management, and consistently good-quality training, lead to good outcomes for trainees in the primary, secondary and further education phases. Leadership, outcomes and the quality of training of the early years phase require improvement because there are inconsistencies in provision. As a result, some trainees have not done as well as they might.

### Key findings

- Employment rates are consistently high. The partnership plays a key role in training effective teachers to meet the needs of the region and nationally. Employers value the high calibre of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and former trainees.
- Trainees' personal and professional conduct is exemplary. Trainees have a very good understanding of their responsibilities to keep children and young people safe.
- The partnership's rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that trainees are well suited to the demands of their training and to their role as effective teachers.

### To improve the ITE partnership should:

- Increase the rigour of quality assurance arrangements and ensure that they are systematically implemented across all phases, so that any inconsistencies in trainees' experiences are identified and addressed.

## Information about this ITE partnership

- The partnership offers initial teacher education (ITE) in the early years, primary, secondary and further education phases. It is a well-established provider of teacher education and works with 13 local authorities and over 600 schools, colleges and settings. This is the first inspection of the early years phase.
- The partnership includes teaching school alliances, diocesan boards of education, clusters of schools and individual schools. It also works with four School Direct partners, some of which offer salaried training routes.
- There are over 550 trainees across all the phases. Trainees in the early years follow either a graduate employment-based route or Assessment Only route leading to early years teacher status (EYTS).

- The primary phase offers undergraduate, postgraduate, School Direct core and salaried routes, and an Assessment Only route to qualified teacher status (QTS). The undergraduate routes include a work-based Bachelor of Arts (BA) part-time route over four years, and a full-time three-year BA route. The work-based BA route will cease at the end of 2018. The postgraduate and School Direct routes lead to the postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) with QTS.
- The secondary route is a School Direct route, some core and some salaried, leading to the PGCE qualification with QTS.
- Further education trainees follow a pre-service or in-service route. The pre-service is for one year full time, the in-service route is for two years part time. These trainees are working to meet the 2014 professional standards for FE teachers.

## The early years ITT phase

### Information about the early years ITT partnership

- Oxford Brookes University works in partnership with schools and early years settings in Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties to deliver early years initial teacher training (ITT).
- The first cohort of trainees started in September 2014. The partnership offers two postgraduate pathways: the graduate employment-based and the Assessment Only route.
- Early years trainees have the option to gain a Masters-level module as well as EYTS.
- At stage 1 of this inspection there were six trainees. At stage 2 there were four trainees on the employment-based route and one on the Assessment Only route.

### Information about the early years ITT inspection

- There was one inspector at both stages of the inspection. She visited four settings at stage 1, observing three trainees teaching and touring the setting with a fourth trainee. The three observations were carried out with the mentors or link tutors. The inspector observed the mentors giving feedback to the trainees, held discussions with the trainees, mentors and setting managers, and looked at the trainees' files. She also had a telephone discussion with a trainee.
- At stage 2, the inspector visited four settings to observe two former trainees and to meet with two of the current trainees, their mentors and a headteacher. One of these settings and a trainee were also visited at stage 1.
- The inspector held discussions with the programme leader and link tutor during both stages of the inspection and considered a wide range of evidence. This included: partnership agreements; the programme handbook; trainee blogs; recruitment and selection information; evidence of compliance with statutory safeguarding and early years ITT requirements; tracking and assessment information; and induction targets. The inspector also reviewed the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The inspector took account of five trainees' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

### Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald OI (early years phase lead inspector)

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 3**

### Key strengths of the early years ITT partnership

- The partnership recruits and selects trainees with the potential to achieve very well. All of those who have participated since the programme began have achieved EYTS.
- Almost all trainees complete a Masters-level module. Trainees and former trainees are unanimous in praising this aspect of the programme. They can demonstrate how this has deepened their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Trainees understand, and take good account of, child development, the importance of developing children's auditory discrimination, language skills and early mathematics.
- Trainees are motivated and professional. They build warm and productive relationships with the children, and with other adults, including parents.

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

#### The partnership must:

- ensure that all trainees have timely experiences working, and being assessed, in different schools and settings, and across the age range
- ensure that all trainees benefit from high-quality mentoring in all placements
- further clarify the constituent parts of the programme so that all trainees, mentors and employers know exactly what to expect over the year and what their responsibilities are in ensuring that the requirements are met
- improve the effectiveness of quality assurance, including the quality of training, mentoring and placements, self-evaluation and improvement planning.

### Inspection judgements

1. The overall effectiveness and each underpinning judgement of the partnership as they relate to early years ITT require improvement.
2. At stage 1 of the inspection, the partnership was not compliant with some of the statutory requirements of early years ITT. One aspect of non-compliance related to the requirements for trainees to teach and to be assessed in more than one school or setting across the birth to five age range. Second placements in early years settings had not happened for all trainees at stage 1 in June. All trainees had spent time in key stage 1, but

not all had taught, or been assessed teaching, in other early years settings. Centre-based staff urgently arranged placements and assessments in order to meet the requirements by the time the trainees completed the programme.

3. There were also compliance issues relating to management and quality assurance requirements. For example, systems to ensure the quality of placements and to confirm that colleagues in placements understood, and had the capacity to undertake, their responsibilities were weak. Since stage 1, the university has streamlined documentation, clarified expectations, required observations to take place in alternative settings as well as in the base setting, and introduced greater capacity to the link tutoring role.
4. Mentors and trainees have all been issued with the same documentation to underpin expectations and outline experiences. There is now an earlier emphasis on the teachers' standards (early years) and earlier assessment points. Guidance has been provided for mentors. Partnership agreements and guidance have been produced for all placements. There is scope for yet further clarity around placements and expectations for mentors and trainees in different settings, particularly to ensure that trainees teach and are assessed teaching in a second setting or school and across the birth to five age group.
5. The partnership recruits strong candidates who already have many strengths in teaching in their current settings. Since the course started three years ago, all trainees have at least met the teachers' standards (early years) and many exceeded them at a good or better level in their base setting. Several have been promoted since gaining the qualification. However, as the opportunities to be assessed teaching in different settings and age groups have been haphazard, it is not clear how much progress trainees make over the year as a result of participating in the course. Trainees' files seen showed a lack of strong evidence against the teachers' standards (early years) in relation to different age groups and in different settings.
6. The programme highlights equality, diversity and safeguarding and trainees have a very secure understanding of the importance of these aspects and can apply them in practice. However, those trainees who have not benefited from well-planned experiences to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the teachers' standards across the age range and in different settings have not themselves had equality of opportunity and are at a disadvantage. Several of the settings and schools are in challenging socio-economic areas. However, almost all have been judged by Ofsted to be good or better.

7. As well as achieving EYTS, most trainees successfully complete the Masters-level module. This is a strength of the programme. Former trainees speak warmly about how valuable they found this aspect of the programme and can give examples of how they have used, and continue to use, their increased understanding of leadership to influence others and extend their own practice. Former trainees discussed how they amended their leadership styles to enable better team-working and bring about improvements in their settings.
8. Trainees' responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire are particularly positive about their understanding of, knowledge of, and ability to take account of child development, and the importance of developing early reading skills, a love of language and early mathematics. During observations there were good examples of trainees encouraging children to join in with favourite stories and introducing mathematical vocabulary, for example while children were playing in a mud kitchen. Trainees focus well on the impact that their teaching has on children's learning and development. They can assess, track and confidently report on children's progress.
9. Trainees understand the importance of providing a stimulating environment where children are encouraged to play energetically but safely, developing independence and resilience. Trainees are unanimously and rightly positive about their ability to manage behaviour well. They build warm and productive relationships with the children and with other adults.
10. The trainees' base settings provide high-quality training environments. However, the quality and impact of mentoring overall is very mixed. This is because last year expectations were unclear and the initial assessment point did not happen until January. The feedback given at that point was helpful, but rather late. As a result, there were some slow starts and delays because trainees and inexperienced mentors did not understand clearly what they needed to be doing. Targets tended to be 'to do lists' rather than developmental. As a result, this aspect of the training was not promoting rapid, in-depth progress.
11. The timing of the initial assessment has been changed so that it will now happen in the autumn term. Most of the current mentors have some experience in mentoring. Documents are sharper and shared. Discussions have already taken place between centre-based staff and mentors. The university has issued guidance to the mentors and current trainees are experiencing a more rapid start. Most of the current cohort are having regular meetings with their mentors and have carried out an initial audit against the teachers' standards (early years). Alternative placement requirements are being identified and suitable targets have been set.

12. Former trainees are very critical about the value of some of the centre-based training. Several used the term 'chaotic' to describe their initial experiences at the university. The provider has amended the activities and these changes are making a positive difference. Current trainees are much more positive about the start of their training. They feel valued as a group and praise the personal support provided by the course leader.
13. One aspect of centre-based training which all former trainees praised highly was the inclusion week. This gave all trainees, particularly those who had very limited opportunities beforehand to work with children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, positive experiences and widened their understanding.
14. The lack of coherence across the different elements of the programme last year meant that there were missed opportunities to systematically promote and deepen trainees' knowledge and skills across the age range and in different settings. For example, trainees complete blogs and these are a useful way of encouraging focused reflections. They enable trainees to relate theory to practice but, in their current form, they are rather limited in scope. They do not extend to other placements, age groups or aspects such as English as an additional language, multi-agency working or parental liaison.
15. The provider's self-evaluation has been imprecise and did not identify major weaknesses such as weak mentoring, lack of early focus on the teachers' standards (early years) and non-compliance with some statutory requirements. When the weaknesses were pointed out, the provider acted with some urgency to address them.
16. The systems to ensure that mentoring was sufficiently good, placements were happening and trainees were being adequately assessed were weak. Programme leaders did not check rigorously enough to make sure that suitable placements were being arranged or that colleagues in placements carried out their responsibilities adequately. There is now a partnership agreement and guidance for all placements, which must be signed.
17. The leader has reorganised materials and the course handbook to ensure that expectations are more explicit. More rigorous arrangements for supporting and assessing trainees have been put in place, although, at this stage in the year, they have not been fully implemented. The university has made additional appointments to add capacity to the link tutor team. Trainees and mentors seem much clearer about the expectations and requirements, although a little confusion remains about the exact nature of the placement requirements.



18. Partnership working is embryonic and there is very limited involvement of external partners in contributing to, or promoting improvements. A start has been made to try to develop partnership arrangements and increase the influence of partners.

### **Annex: Partnership settings/schools**

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

Bambino Day Nursery, High Wycombe

Cumnor Church of England Primary School, Cumnor

Disraeli School and Children's Centre, High Wycombe

Pegasus School, Oxford

The Hendreds Pre-School, East Hendred

Willow Cottage Day Nursery, Cumnor

Windmill Pre-School, Brill, Aylesbury

## The primary phase

### Information about the primary partnership

- Oxford Brookes University works in partnership with over 500 schools to provide ITE in the five to 11 age range for a BA course, and in the five to 11 and three to seven age ranges for postgraduate trainees, including School Direct trainees and the Assessment Only route.
- In 2016/17 there were 253 trainees following the three-year BA course (across all three years) and 102 trainees on the part-time, four-year work-based BA course.
- There were 254 trainees on the one-year postgraduate course, of whom 58 were training to teach pupils aged three to seven and 196 to teach pupils aged five to 11. The postgraduate course includes the option of taking up to three modules at level 7 (Masters credits).
- The university works in partnership with two teaching school alliances to deliver the School Direct route. In 2016/17 there were nine trainees on the core route and five on the salaried route.
- There were four candidates on the Assessment Only route in 2016/17.

### Information about the primary ITE inspection

- This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors.
- At stage 1, inspectors visited 18 schools and observed 36 trainees teach, mostly with class teacher mentors. Inspectors observed class teacher mentors providing feedback to trainees.
- Inspectors also talked with trainees and looked at evidence in their files to evaluate how well they met each of the teachers' standards. During the visits to schools, inspectors held meetings with class teacher mentors and headteachers. At the university, inspectors had discussions with the head of the school of education, programme leaders, course tutors and university visiting tutors. The lead inspector met with five programme leaders, two school leaders, two groups of trainees, a group of class teacher mentors, a group of university visiting tutors and two members of the school strategic partnership board. One training session was observed.
- The lead inspector reviewed the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement planning documents, recruitment and selection procedures, trainee tracking and assessment documentation, partnership agreements, external examiner reports, minutes of meetings and the content of the training programmes.
- At stage 2, inspectors observed 20 NQTs teach, some jointly with NQT mentors. They held discussions with headteachers and NQT mentors,

considered the NQTs' transition targets and had discussions with the NQTs about their training and transition into the teaching profession.

- At the university, discussions were held with the leadership team, members of the school strategic partnership board, a transition tutor and a group of NQTs. The lead inspector had telephone conversations with five headteachers from partnership schools. Two training sessions were observed.
- Inspectors took into account the 154 responses from Ofsted's trainee online questionnaire, which trainees completed in 2017.

### **Inspection team**

Ann Henderson HMI (overall lead inspector and primary phase lead inspector)

Wayne Stallard OI (assistant lead inspector)

Clive Dunn HMI (team inspector)

Brian MacDonald OI (team inspector)

Robin Hammerton OI (team inspector) stage 1

Gary Holden HMI (team inspector) stage 2

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **Key strengths of the primary partnership**

- Almost all trainees who completed their training in 2017 secured a teaching post.
- Completion rates are above the sector average. This is because the partnership supports trainees effectively. Pastoral support is strong. It is highly responsive to trainees' personal needs.
- Strong centre- and school-based training is valued by trainees. It makes a significant contribution to trainees' development of effective teaching skills.
- Trainees have good subject knowledge. They are prepared well to teach across the primary curriculum. Trainees display high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- The strong commitment and expertise of school leaders within the partnership are helping to lead the highly-regarded core training.
- Headteachers are overwhelmingly positive about the high calibre of trainees they employ from within the partnership.

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

### The partnership should:

- make more effective use of information from self-evaluation to identify the most important areas for development for the partnership
- strengthen partnership improvement planning in order to maximise the impact of actions on ensuring high-quality outcomes for trainees
- ensure that quality assurance procedures effectively identify and address inconsistencies, particularly in the quality of mentors' support for trainees.

### Inspection judgements

19. The overall effectiveness of the Oxford Brookes University's primary ITE partnership is good. The partnership complies fully with the ITT criteria and meets the statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination and for safeguarding. The partnership also ensures that the additional ITT criteria, which apply to the Assessment Only route, are met.
20. The partnership ensures that candidates who are accepted for a teacher training place have the skills, personal attributes and aptitude to successfully access the wide range of training. Recruitment procedures are strong on all the training routes. The partnership sets high expectations and provides trainees with additional support with any aspect of the training that proves to be challenging. Personal tutors provide bespoke support to trainees, if necessary. As a result, completion rates are above the sector average.
21. Outcomes for trainees are good overall. In 2017, by the end of their training, all trainees exceeded the minimum level of practice expected. They teach to a good or better standard. Over time, however, the proportions of male trainees and minority ethnic trainees awarded QTS are not as strong as for females and White trainees respectively.
22. Employment rates are above the sector average. They are particularly strong on the postgraduate, School Direct and work-based BA routes, where all trainees who completed their training successfully in 2017 secured a teaching post, many in the surrounding areas of Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.
23. Trainees' high standards of professional conduct strengthen their ability to become effective teachers by the end of their training. They are keen to learn and make very good use of the school- and centre-based training. This supports the development of their teaching skills well and means that they begin their teaching career as good or better teachers. They are highly

regarded by headteachers and make an important contribution to the national and regional supply of high-quality teachers.

24. Trainees and NQTs are reflective about their teaching. They are able to identify what is effective in their teaching and what they could do to make it even better. This is because the vast majority of trainees receive effective mentoring feedback which provides challenge and support focused on pupils' learning in lessons. Trainees are encouraged to think deeply about the choice of stimulating tasks and activities they plan and deliver, to justify them and to consider how their teaching could be even better.
25. Trainees make good use of their academic studies, making effective links between pedagogy and its application to their teaching skills. The university learning platform is a very useful tool for trainees to access training and support materials, including research papers, to further develop their understanding of a wide range of subjects and studies, for example English as an additional language. Trainees feel confident to teach pupils who speak English as an additional language.
26. University-based training prepares trainees well to teach across the primary curriculum. Trainees comment positively about the quality of training they receive in English, including phonics in the teaching of early reading, child development, mathematics, science and the foundation subjects. Inspectors' observations of taught sessions at the university confirm that trainees are provided with consistently good-quality training, some of which is of a high quality. For example, BA trainees were observed developing effective skills and strategies to teach physical education (PE) to all groups of pupils. To ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are included equally well in lessons, trainees took turns to be wheelchair-bound. Teamwork and the understanding of the needs of others in the groups were essential. This helped trainees to experience first hand the challenges and opportunities which can be afforded to all groups of pupils to develop, for example, effective control of ball skills.
27. Trainees have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe. Their broad range of training includes safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and e-safety, with opportunities to meet professionals from health and social care during a safeguarding conference. Both school- and centre-based training place a high priority on developing trainees' understanding of pupils' welfare, health and safety. Trainees learn at an early stage in their training about establishing a safe and motivating environment for learning. Trainees and NQTs display high expectations, which are reflected in the quality and presentation of pupils' work. Trainees and NQTs exhibit a strong presence in the classroom and quickly form mutually courteous relationships with pupils and other adults. As a result, strong relationships underpin the trusting, respectful and calm atmosphere established in classrooms.

28. Trainees develop particularly effective skills in managing pupils' behaviour. Their training includes strategies for dealing with a range of behaviour, including bullying. Through positive relationships, they demonstrate the importance of ensuring that pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Trainees and NQTs promote positive behaviour and make effective use of the schools' behaviour policies. They are able to adapt their skills to ensure that all groups of pupils are supported well in their learning. The vast majority of trainees display high levels of competence in managing behaviour effectively.
29. Most trainees are positive about the support from university visiting tutors, who make two visits to each school-based training placement. These visits are designed to ensure that trainees and school-based mentors are clear about the procedures for mentoring support and for the university visiting tutor to, jointly with their mentor, observe trainees' teaching. However, there is a mixed picture of the quality of these visits. Some mentors are not provided with opportunities to record their observations and a small minority do not receive any feedback on the quality of their feedback to trainees. As a result, some mentoring skills are not developed well enough. For example, mentors' feedback to trainees is sometimes not precise enough to ensure that trainees improve their teaching skills.
30. The partnership is well established. The wide range of schools involved in the partnership affords a breadth of opportunities for trainees to develop effective teaching skills. Trainees have very good opportunities to observe good and outstanding teaching in a range of contrasting placements, both rural and urban, including schools in areas of social deprivation and those that require improvement. The breadth of additional experience placements enhances trainees' knowledge and understanding of a range of diverse learning environments. BA trainees are extremely positive about the 'pathways' available to them during their second year of training. These include experiences in: early years; key stage 3; an inclusion week in a special school; a cultural week visiting museums and galleries to plan school visits; and developing their understanding of the importance of health and well-being linked to the teaching of PE.
31. The partnership makes effective use of the expertise and specialisms of school leaders so that trainees can learn from highly skilled professionals working in schools. Overall, the quality of mentoring is good. However, at stage 1 of the inspection, it was clear that not all mentors had received up-to-date training. This meant that for some trainees there were variations in the quality of feedback and support they received. University leaders have responded well to this finding and have put in place a more rigorous system to make sure that all mentors access up-to-date, relevant training to enable them to provide high-quality mentor support for trainees. Recently, the mentor programme has been amended to include a staged approach to

training throughout the year to develop class teacher mentors' skills. Most trainees are positive about the quality of feedback they receive, which helps them to reflect on their skills and the progress that pupils make in their learning during lessons.

32. Support for trainees' transition from the training programme to their NQT year is usually good. Trainees are expected to consider the most appropriate targets to move their practice forward in their first year of teaching. Trainees say, however, that feedback about their targets is variable. Headteachers employing NQTs receive information on how well the new employee has attained against each of the teachers' standards and their strengths and areas for further development as they begin their careers. School leaders use the information well, making appropriate amendments to the areas for development so they are more suited to the key stage and the age of pupils taught, if necessary. Targets are used to good effect, to inform the career development priorities, continuing professional development and mentoring in the employing schools. University leaders are in the process of developing a more consistent format of transition documentation, to support trainees when they begin their first teaching post.
33. Leaders gather a wide range of information about the performance of trainees. However, the analysis of this information is not precise enough to pick up issues quickly and plan strategies to bring about improvement. Currently, plans are in place to bring about improvement in some aspects of the work of the partnership. For example, in supporting trainees' understanding and use of assessment. However, issues such as the inconsistencies in outcomes for some trainees due to the quality of mentoring support were not picked up until stage 1 of the inspection. Quality assurance processes are not monitored well enough to pick up on any discrepancies. The partnership's plans do not identify clearly enough the expected impact of the actions or the measurable improvement in outcomes for all groups of trainees.
34. Leaders in the teaching alliance schools are very positive about the quality of mentoring and the support from visiting tutors. Their feedback to trainees is precise and supportive. School Direct trainees are provided with a wealth of opportunities to teach in mainstream and special schools. The quality of the training to teach pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is particularly strong. The design of the training, particularly the emphasis on teaching pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, for School Direct trainees has a positive impact on the high-quality outcomes for this group of trainees.
35. Leaders from partnership schools have the opportunity to contribute to the design of the training programmes, recruitment procedures and quality assurance of the partnership through regular meetings of the partnership panel. As a result, trainees benefit from good-quality support and training.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Bishop Loveday Church of England Primary School, Banbury

Brookfields Special School, Reading

Caldecott Primary School, Abingdon

Carswell Community Primary School, Abingdon

Chilton County Primary School, Didcot

Dashwood Banbury Academy, Banbury

Haddenham Junior School, Aylesbury

Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Chipping Norton

Iffley Academy, Oxford

Monks Risborough Primary School, Princes Risborough

North Leigh Primary School, Witney

Northbourne Church of England Primary School, Didcot

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Witney

Ryvers Primary School, Slough

St Aloysius' Catholic Primary School, Oxford

St Barnabas' Church of England Primary School, Oxford

St Christopher's Church of England Primary School, Oxford

St Ebbe's Church of England Primary School, Oxford

St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Banbury

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Oxford

St Mary and John Church of England Primary School, Oxford

St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Oxford

St Philips and St James' Church of England Primary School, Oxford

St Swithun's Church of England Primary School, Oxford

Theale Church of England Primary School, Theale

Tyndale Community School, Oxford

Wheatley Church of England Primary School, Wheatley



## The secondary phase

### Information about the secondary partnership

- Oxford Brookes University currently works in partnership with two teaching school alliances: The Downlands Alliance and Berkshire Teaching Alliance. Both were new to the partnership in 2016/17.
- At stage 1 of the inspection there was a total of 23 secondary trainees in mathematics, English, biology, physics, chemistry, dance, drama, music, art and design, social science, business studies, modern foreign languages, history and geography. In some subjects, dance, drama, business studies, and social sciences, there was only one trainee.
- The partnership offers School Direct routes only. The majority of trainees study for a postgraduate qualification in education at the same time as undertaking training to gain QTS. A small number of trainees did not undertake this additional study and followed a QTS-only route.

### Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- There was one inspector at both stages of the inspection.
- She visited three schools at stage 1, jointly observing trainees teaching with mentors on three occasions and on another jointly observing with a teacher in the same department. The inspector observed mentors giving feedback to three trainees, held discussions separately with mentors, trainees and the headteacher from two of the partner schools and with programme leaders and managers from the two teaching school alliances. She met several times with the academic lead for educational partnerships from Oxford Brookes, who acts as the secondary course leader, sometimes accompanied by the newly appointed School Direct coordinator. The inspector also took account of 11 responses from trainees to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- During stage 2, the inspector visited two schools, one of which she had visited at stage 1. She observed three NQTs teach, two at one school and one at another. The inspector met with all the NQTs she observed teach to discuss their training. She also met with one executive headteacher and another NQT who trained at Oxford Brookes University. The inspector met with the NQT tutors at both the schools visited. She met with a group of trainers consisting of two university course tutors, a mentor she had not met at stage 1, along with the programme manager from The Downlands teaching alliance. The inspector met separately with the head of the school of education at Oxford Brookes. On a number of different occasions she met with the course leader, accompanied by the School Direct coordinator. The inspector also took account of the final total of 16 responses from trainees to the online questionnaire.

- The inspector, at both stages, scrutinised pupils' work to ascertain the quality of trainees' and NQTs' teaching over time. She also reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence provided by the partnership, including leaders' evaluations and improvement plans and minutes from meetings when the effectiveness of the partnership was discussed.

### **Inspection team**

Sarah Hubbard HMI (secondary phase lead inspector)

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **Key strengths of the secondary partnership**

- The trainees' positive attitudes, aptitudes and professionalism ensure that they make a strong contribution to the schools in which they are placed.
- Effective collaboration between the university's academic lead for educational partnerships and partnership programme leaders in schools supports trainees in developing their skills well.
- Training sessions delivered by leaders in teaching school alliances are well-planned and thoughtfully delivered. It provides trainees with a strong understanding of how to be an effective practitioner.
- Leaders have a responsive approach to feedback and the changes they make are improving the effectiveness of training and outcomes for trainees.
- The course leader's plans for the continued development of the partnership are well-founded. They are based on a deep understanding of local recruitment needs and sector changes.

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

#### **The partnership should ensure that:**

- all subject knowledge training, especially online training, is as useful and manageable as the best training found in the partnership
- university course tutors' support for trainees in applying their subject knowledge when assessing pupils' progress is consistently strong
- all aspects of quality assurance are equally thorough and fully interpreted to gain a sharper insight into the partnership's strengths and weaknesses.

### **Inspection judgements**

36. There is much agreement among partnership schools about the positive attributes of trainees. They display high levels of professionalism, a genuine

desire to improve their practice, and integrate themselves fully into school life.

37. Well-planned and flexible training supports trainees in meeting the teachers' standards at a good or higher level, according to the partnership's own criteria. Although the quality of trainees' teaching is very strong, it is not outstanding because trainees do not use their subject knowledge expertly enough when assessing pupils' learning. Trainees' skills here are less strong than in other aspects of their practice.
38. Across the partnership, leaders and teachers show commitment to developing high-quality trainees with the capacity to make a positive contribution to their school community and to pupils' lives. While the partnership meets local and regional recruitment needs, it also equips trainees for teaching in schools that are very different from those within the partnership.
39. In 2016/17, there were some differences in the way the two new partners selected trainees for their programmes. Although both partners sought to ensure that candidates had an aptitude for teaching and strong knowledge of their subject, only one required candidates to teach a small group of pupils. Following feedback from stage 1 of the inspection and advice from the course leader, all candidates are now required to teach during the selection process. This change is indicative of how responsive the partnership is to feedback and its commitment to making year-on-year improvements.
40. Flexibility within training programmes means that trainees often attend whole-staff training within their placement schools, in addition to planned training. Many trainees commented on how much they had benefited from attending whole-staff training at the start of the academic year. As a result, trainees better understood their placement school's improvement priorities and how they could contribute to delivering them.
41. Trainees cite the effective training sessions delivered by leaders within the partnership as making a strong and positive contribution to their practice. These sessions comply with recommendations for training content, and include thorough training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Trainees are particularly complimentary about the way leaders structure this training, often employing a range of different approaches to its delivery. Trainees are able to adopt these approaches successfully in their own teaching practice because they have experienced them first hand.
42. As a result of becoming fully-fledged members of their school communities, trainees and NQTs establish high expectations for how pupils should approach their learning. They confidently ensure that pupils meet these high

expectations, challenging them appropriately when they fail to do so. Trainees told the inspector that they felt like 'proper teachers' from the start of their first placement.

43. Trainees and NQTs use their knowledge of the curriculum and examination specifications well when designing activities for pupils to complete in lessons, and for homework. They ensure that pupils acquire the subject vocabulary necessary to meet national expectations. Trainees and NQTs also make effective use of their wider literacy training in lessons, so that pupils are better able to use subject-specific vocabulary in their written explanations. For instance, in a biology lesson, pupils were able to write a full explanation of how the human digestive system works using correctly spelled scientific terms because of the support the NQT provided.
44. Trainees and NQTs are also skilled at ensuring that the tasks they set for pupils enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding. They adeptly provide additional challenges to ensure that the most-able pupils are stretched. Trainees and NQTs provide pupils with well-planned opportunities to apply their learning at a deeper level, including linking theoretical concepts to real-life situations. For example, one trainee ensured that pupils thoroughly understood how film trailers entice audiences to watch films. Pupils went on to utilise their understanding when designing their own film trailers.
45. Trainees have a sound awareness of different ways in which groups of pupils learn and the range of barriers they have to their learning, including inequalities in opportunity. Some, but not all, trainees experience placements that are contrasting in terms of socio-economic context. However, no current placement school is graded less than good. Programme leaders and managers ensure that trainees teach the full ability range, including classes with a high proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a consequence, trainees can plan and teach lessons which enable pupils with additional needs to make the progress that they are capable of.
46. Over time, trainees gain a more nuanced and developed understanding of how best to meet pupils' needs and manage their behaviour. The NQTs observed demonstrated increasingly sophisticated practice in these areas. For instance, one NQT enabled a group of pupils with short attention spans to concentrate more fully on their learning by building pace and variety into the lesson. Similarly, guidance about managing behaviour, which NQTs received as trainees, enables them to apply their schools' behaviour policies with increasing confidence.
47. Throughout the partnership, standards of teaching are equally strong across the different subjects that trainees teach. The small number of salaried

trainees achieve in line with non-salaried trainees. Mentors collaborated well with university course tutors and programme leaders to ensure that where a trainee was the only one following their subject in 2016/17 they had the opportunity to share their ideas with effective subject practitioners in non-partner schools. These trainees went on to achieve the higher level in their final assessments.

48. Although the majority of trainees rated most aspects of their training highly, a number were critical of subject knowledge training. For example, some trainees found that the number of hours they invested in online modules did not always pay off in increasing their knowledge. Some trainees had to go elsewhere to find information about the body of knowledge that was required for them to teach their subject to A-level standard. As a consequence, they had to look elsewhere to boost their subject knowledge. A few trainees spoke of missing out on effective face-to-face support from subject practitioners. Although, by the end of their course over half of trainees received a 'higher' level for this aspect of their practice in some cases, this was as a result of trainees' additional, independent study. Provision for subject knowledge training has now changed.
49. Mentors have a highly developmental approach to working with trainees and some are particularly good at cultivating specific aspects of trainees' practice, such as using questioning and employing examination board criteria to help pupils make good progress. Most trainees spoke very positively of the impact that their mentors had on their development as teachers. The partnership is sensibly developing a clearer overview of each mentor's strengths and areas for further development.
50. Mentors feel very well supported in their role through the effective training they receive. Visits from university course tutors help them to apply agreed approaches to assessing trainees' practice. However, some university course tutors do not always place enough emphasis on developing trainees' designing effective assessment opportunities in their subject specialism. Due to the timings of placements, and deadlines for final reports, university course tutors did not visit any trainees on their second placement and some course tutors did not contribute to trainees' final reports. Consequently, while grades were accurate, some trainees' final reports and NQT documentation were more detailed and helpful than others.
51. Programme leaders in schools and the course leader in the university are making some headway in improving the consistency with which course tutors approach their school visits. They acknowledge there is more work to be done to make this aspect of training as strong as other aspects of the training provided.

52. The course leader has been responsive to informal feedback from partners and trainees, as well as to feedback from stage 1 of this inspection. This has led to a number of changes for the current tranche of trainees. For instance, they will all have an additional experience at a school where socio-economic circumstances are more challenging than in the vast majority of their placement schools. In addition, changes have been made to the timing of the second placement to ensure that all trainees are observed teaching during the placement by their university course tutors.
53. The course leader works skilfully and unfalteringly to ensure that the two new teaching school alliance partners are able to meet trainees' needs effectively. The programme leaders commented that her support has been very helpful and easy for them to access. Programmes delivered by new partners comply with ITT criteria and meet the requirements for School Direct trainees.
54. The course leader has a highly nuanced understanding of the shifting local and national landscape for training teachers. She uses this well when planning for future development with partners. Current partners have remained within the partnership for a second year and are beginning to play a more active role in determining its direction.
55. There are a number of areas where quality assurance was not thorough enough due to staff turnover at the university last year. In addition, leaders do not always use information gleaned from quality assurance to sharpen their interpretation of data on trainees' performance. As a result, their analysis of the partnership's strengths and weaknesses is not always incisive.

### **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Denefield School, Reading

Kennet School, Thatcham

St Bartholomew's School, Newbury

The Downs School, Newbury

# Initial teacher education for the further education system

## Information about the FE in ITE partnership

- Oxford Brookes University further education (FE) in ITE partnership comprises the university and local providers, Swindon College and the Activate Learning College Group, consisting of the City of Oxford College, Banbury and Bicester College and Reading College. In addition, the university has links with another four colleges which provide placements for full-time pre-service trainees. Centres are located across Oxfordshire and the Thames Valley area.
- The partnership offers two qualification routes, either a one-year, full-time pre-service programme, or a two-year, part-time in-service programme, both validated by the university. Both routes lead to either a level 6 professional graduate certificate in education or a level 7 PGCE. Both the part-time and full-time programmes offer an opportunity for trainees to gain 60 credits towards a Masters-level qualification.
- In 2016/17, there were 67 trainees, around two thirds of whom were on the in-service route.

## Information about the FE in ITE inspection

- At stage 1 of the inspection, inspectors observed 15 trainees teaching during their training, and at stage 2, six trainees teaching during their training and eight former trainees teaching. In addition, they interviewed trainees, course leaders, mentors and employers on the sites visited. They also held focused discussions with individual trainees, groups of trainees and former trainees to evaluate the impact of the training on the quality of their teaching.
- Inspectors scrutinised trainees' and former trainees' assessed work, planning for teaching, lesson observation records, and progress and development records, including associated tracking documentation.
- Inspectors also considered: the partnership's self-evaluation; assessment information related to trainees' outcomes; improvement plans; quality assurance procedures; and compliance with legislation, in particular with regard to safeguarding requirements. In addition, inspectors reviewed 20 trainees' responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Richard Beynon HMI (phase lead inspector)

Carolyn Brownsea OI (assistant phase lead inspector) stage 1; (team inspector) stage 2

Pauline Dixey OI (team inspector) stage 1; (assistant phase lead inspector) stage 2

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

### Key strengths of the FE partnership

- Completion rates have been consistently high and trainees' attainment good for the past three years.
- A good proportion of trainees gain jobs in the FE sector at the end of their courses; a significant minority subsequently achieve rapid promotions in their workplaces.
- Trainees are highly evaluative and demonstrate impressive abilities to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their own practice for the benefit of their students.
- Trainees demonstrate good levels of confidence in developing their students' English and mathematics skills across a range of vocational subjects.
- The vast majority of trainees are well prepared to discuss with students the 'Prevent' duty, British values and other safeguarding matters. They lead discussions with confidence, challenge preconceptions appropriately and know how to deal with any concerns.
- Trainers and the large majority of mentors provide very high levels of pastoral and academic support that contribute to improving trainees' outcomes overall.

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

#### The partnership should:

- make sure that all mentors receive sufficient clear guidance on what constitutes good practice in their role to enable trainees to make optimal progress
- improve further the quality assurance of mentor observations and observation feedback
- improve the management and quality assurance of placements for full-time pre-service trainees.

### Inspection judgements

56. The partnership continues to provide good-quality training and has maintained the good outcomes overall for trainees since the previous inspection. Programme revalidation in 2015 involved partners fully in decision-making and design. New courses reflect well the needs and policy landscape of the sector.

57. Completion rates have remained high since the previous inspection, though overall numbers of trainees have declined by around a fifth since 2012.



Overall, attainment has been high for the past three years, though with a slight decline in outstanding trainees during 2016/17. Progress made by trainees is good overall, with a minority making considerable and rapid progress from the outset. There are no discernible differences in completion or attainment by gender, ethnicity or race. As at the previous inspection, a considerable proportion of trainees come from family backgrounds with no previous experience or success in higher education.

58. By the latter stages of their training, the large majority of trainees perform very well against the 2014 professional standards for teachers and trainers. The vast majority of former trainees demonstrate good practice in relation to standards concerning professional conduct and behaviour. In much of their teaching, trainees demonstrate very effective teaching skills, with some outstanding practice observed by inspectors.
59. Recruitment processes are thorough in checking that trainees have the motivation and professional resilience to deal with the demands of teaching in the sector. Trainers pay good attention to the formal qualifications, vocational skills and personal characteristics that trainees will need and employers will seek. They also pay good attention to background checks and safeguarding legislation. Such rigour, together with inclusive and wide-ranging interview discussions, gives trainees a good insight into the demands of the further education teacher's role and contributes effectively to trainees' good outcomes.
60. Progression to full-time employment as a teacher is good for full-time trainees and for the few part-time trainees not working when they start training. To secure work, a significant minority of trainees move out of the region. A further significant minority take up posts teaching in special schools or school sixth forms; this trend appears to be growing in direct relation to financial strictures and uncertainties of funding in the further education sector. University trainers have very good contact with former trainees and monitor employment trends carefully.
61. Across the past three years, a very good proportion of former trainees have quickly secured promotions to faculty manager or similar roles, and a small number have progressed to senior leadership roles. Senior staff at partner colleges value their engagement with the partnership and particularly value the skills and attributes that trainees bring to their institutions. For a number of pre-service placement colleges, trainees form an important and reliable source of new staff.
62. In their discussions with inspectors, almost all trainees were thoughtful and highly reflective. They referred frequently to the professional standards, and were clear about what constituted the characteristics of a good teacher. They use the personal development review document well to reflect on their

progress and the ways that they meet professional standards at each stage of the course. In their reflective writings and assignments, they identify clearly those things that they do well and those that require improvement. Trainers ask challenging questions and lead frequent productive discussions that help trainees to reflect on and improve their practice for the benefit of their students.

63. In the large majority of classes, trainees maintain very good working relationships with students, promoting and modelling values of equality and respect. The vast majority of trainees successfully promote good behaviour during lessons.
64. Training quality is good at the university and in partner colleges. Trainers are effective at modelling good practice, and trainees reflect such modelling in their own teaching. From the early stages of courses, trainers are skilful in developing trainees' understanding of theory and in helping them to apply theoretical models in their teaching. Trainers focus well on the needs and interests of the students with whom trainees work. As a result, trainees keep the needs and aspirations of students at the forefront of their planning and teaching. In general, trainees have well-developed academic skills and put these to good use on their courses and in their teaching. The twice-yearly partnership conferences held at the university provide a good focus for research discussions and for trainees to explore action-research projects that benefit their students.
65. Trainees profit from strong academic and personal support that helps them to remain on course and make good progress. Trainers at the university and in partner colleges are hard-working, highly qualified and knowledgeable about the sector. Trainees respect the expertise of their trainers and reflect well on the attributes they model. Many trainees and former trainees recognise ways that personal or academic support has helped them to stay and succeed on the course.
66. Trainees develop good strategies to identify and improve students' English skills. When planning learning, trainees thoughtfully weave skills and development activities into vocational classes. Trainees understand well the importance of checking students' spelling and correcting grammatical errors in written work. Most trainees are able to develop students' mathematical skills effectively, even in subjects without an obvious mathematical content. Sometimes they do this subtly and imaginatively, for example in using timelines and calculations of eras and periods during an ancient history class. During observed teaching, trainees routinely and effectively reinforced to their students the importance that English and mathematics skills have, for employment and life.

67. A minority of trainees did not plan well enough to make the best use of teaching assistants in their lessons. In a small number of classes, trainees had not made any clear plan to use the skills of support workers. In such cases, teaching assistants or support workers were simply another body in the room, useful for checking students' work, or for helping to distribute resources. In contrast, those students who were more successful in involving teaching assistants included them in targeted support for specific students and planned activities with small groups.
68. During the first stage of the inspection, full-time pre-service trainees had insufficient opportunities to teach or to encounter a wide enough range of learners reflecting the full diversity of the FE sector. Course leaders made swift progress in dealing with this weakness, so that current trainees now have much-improved opportunities to teach groups with a range of cultural, ethnic and economic backgrounds as well as a wide range of course levels within individual subject areas.
69. The identification and allocation of mentors for full-time pre-service trainees requires improvement at most placement provider colleges. Trainers do not always identify and allocate mentors soon enough. For example, one trainee did not have a mentor until three weeks into the placement. In too many cases, mentors are part-time members of staff, and do not always have the time available to support their trainee or former trainee and to engage with trainers.
70. Oversight of mentoring activity and of the quality of mentor observations for in-service trainees requires improvement. All mentors have access to a handbook which gives some structure to their activity. However, despite recent improvements, the handbook still gives too basic an introduction to the role and purpose of mentoring. Too many mentors in placement colleges for full-time trainees regard the handbook as a substitute for mentor training. However, too few mentors use the handbook as a working tool to inform the mentor/trainee plan or shape discussions. In some cases, including for a small minority of mentors for in-service trainees, mentors see line-manager observation training and/or training to act as a buddy or mentor to new staff as a substitute for mentor training. Neither of these forms of training prepares mentors well enough to carry out formative observations or to fulfil the wider mentoring role for trainee teachers.
71. Trainees have a very good understanding of their responsibilities with regard to the 'Prevent' duty, promotion of British values and wider safeguarding matters. They are especially confident in setting out to their students the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism. In lessons, they led discussions about such topics with confidence and energy, and made sure that students understood risks, rights and responsibilities.

72. Leadership and management of the partnership are good. Course leaders have sustained good-quality training and made sure that outcomes for trainees remain strong. Partner colleges value involvement in the partnership. Placement colleges for pre-service trainees value the strengths that trainees bring to their staff. Staff and managers across the partnership respect and value university and college trainers.
73. Partnership self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths in provision, and most weaknesses. Leaders had underestimated the weaknesses in placement management and in the quality assurance of mentoring and their negative impact on outcomes for trainees. Trainers and leaders take good account of trainees' views in their management of programmes. Course committees provide generally good oversight of provision. Partner college staff benefit from very frequent, effective and open communications.
74. Strategically, partnership leaders maintain a clear focus on national priorities, and reflect well on policy changes in the sector. Capacity to improve at senior level is good. Trainees benefit from the good strategic awareness of leaders, and they are well prepared to assess conditions in the sector, and thus to support students in it.

### **Annex: Partnership colleges**

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Banbury and Bicester College, Banbury and Bicester

City of Oxford College, Oxford

Reading College, Reading

Swindon College, Swindon

## ITE partnership details

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Provider address	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Harcourt Hill Campus Oxford Oxfordshire OX2 9AT



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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