

# University of Oxford ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 18 June 2018

Stage 2: 19 November 2018

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This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one Ofsted Inspector (OI) 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 gathered from 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>Secondary QTS</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	1
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	1
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	1
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	1

## The secondary phase

### Information about the secondary partnership

- This well-established partnership works with around 37 secondary schools in four local authorities. Most of these schools are in Oxfordshire.
- The partnership offers a one-year PGCE route with qualified teacher status (QTS). The subjects offered are: English, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages, religious education and science.
- A School Direct PGCE route to QTS in religious education, offered in partnership with the Wokingham secondary federation, is also available. However, no trainees followed this route in 2017/18.
- Trainees specialise in the 11 to 18 age range.
- The partnership also offers a wide range of professional development opportunities for teachers, including higher-level degrees and substantial research activity.

### Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- At stage 1, inspectors visited eight partnership schools and observed the teaching of 11 trainees. Inspectors met the trainees who had been observed to discuss their progress and review their teaching files. Inspectors also held discussions with other trainees, school-based mentors, professional tutors and senior leaders.
- At stage 2, inspectors visited five schools, four of which were partnership schools, and observed the teaching of eight newly qualified teachers (NQTs), one of whom had also been observed as a trainee at stage 1. One of these schools was also visited during stage 1.
- While in schools at stage 2, inspectors met the NQTs whose teaching had been observed and held discussions with other NQTs, induction tutors, professional tutors and senior leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised transition information for each of the NQTs observed.
- During both stages, meetings were held at the university with course leaders, school-based mentors and senior staff responsible for aspects of ITE provision. The lead inspector also observed a small number of curriculum studies and professional development sessions.
- Inspectors took account of 115 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for trainees.
- Inspectors considered a range of published evidence, as well as additional information provided by the partnership, to inform their judgements on outcomes, the quality of training and the leadership and management of the partnership.

- Inspectors checked that all statutory requirements for safeguarding and ITE were met.
- At the time of stage 1 of the inspection, there were 175 trainees on the course.

### **Inspection team**

Gary Holden HMI, lead inspector

Janet Pearce HMI, assistant lead inspector

Christopher Lee OI, team inspector

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 1**

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

- This is a unique and distinctive partnership. It is underpinned by a compelling and clearly articulated vision for a research-informed, partnership-led model of teacher education and professional development.
- Recruitment processes, including the setting of pre-course research tasks, are rigorous and thorough. Almost all trainees make a flying start to their training year, leading to completion and employment rates for all subjects and groups that are, over time, well above sector averages.
- The exceptionally well-crafted design of the course enables virtually all trainees to exceed the teachers' standards. Typically, more than two thirds of trainees attain to a high level by the end of the training year. As a result, they make an exceptionally strong start to their NQT year, ensuring in turn that their pupils make sustained progress in their learning.
- The partnership draws exceptionally well on the skills and experience of teachers and leaders within the partnership to enrich the curriculum studies and professional development aspects of the course. In addition, school-based mentors and university tutors work together extremely well to ensure a coherent and joined-up experience for trainees. Trainees express considerable confidence in all elements of the course, in particular the support provided by their university tutors.
- Leaders have ensured that schools in challenging circumstances, as well as those judged to be outstanding, good and requiring improvement, are well represented in the partnership. Schools value their involvement in the partnership, especially the opportunities membership provides for staff at all levels to be involved in research activity. School leaders believe this helps to recruit and retain talented teachers and leaders.
- The partnership takes its role in supplying high-quality teachers extremely seriously. Trainees are prepared for a long-term career in teaching, able to take responsibility for their own professional development and committed to social

justice. A large number of former trainees hold teaching and leadership positions in partnership schools and, in many cases, contribute to the course as mentors.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- continue to promote and embed its compelling vision for teacher education at local and national levels.

## **Inspection judgements**

1. The overall effectiveness of this secondary partnership is outstanding. Consistently high-quality training has led to exceptionally strong outcomes for trainees over time. The partnership meets all safeguarding requirements, including ensuring that trainees understand their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. The course is compliant with all initial teacher training criteria. Trainees benefit from carefully chosen and complementary placements that include experience of post-16 teaching.
2. The partnership actively promotes equal opportunities, diversity and widening participation. All members of the partnership share a passionately held vision for high-quality state education and are committed to attracting teachers from as broad a range of backgrounds and circumstances as possible.
3. The internship model of teacher education, developed over many years by this partnership, has several distinctive and highly effective features. Through rich discussion and exposure to a wide range of literature, trainees bring a critical eye to their studies. Trainees draw successfully on the experience and expertise around them to forge their own strong identities as reflective practitioners. They undertake demanding academic assignments based on important aspects of educational policy or practice. Trainees carry out school-based research projects, many of which have influenced curriculum planning in placement schools.
4. Outcomes for trainees are outstanding. Completion and employment rates over time are consistently high across all subjects. Headteachers say that they have confidence in employing NQTs from this partnership because of the excellent training they receive. All trainees awarded QTS exceed the minimum standard required. Typically, over two thirds of trainees achieve to a high level by the end of their course.
5. Leaders and managers will occasionally agree to a suspension of studies to prevent a trainee having to withdraw from the course. In such cases, course tutors remain in close contact with the trainee to ensure that they continue to feel part of the course. Typically, around half of those who suspend return to complete their course.

6. Trainees and NQTs confirm that the recruitment and interview process is rigorous and fair. Staff from partnership schools always take part in the interview process, which is designed to identify applicants who have the potential to become good teachers. Appropriate emphasis is placed on subject knowledge, and leaders make available a wide range of pre-course tasks to applicants who need to strengthen their subject knowledge before starting the course.
7. The course is exceptionally well designed. The overall shape of the year ensures a gradual immersion into teaching, so that, by the end of the training year, trainees are exceptionally well prepared for their NQT year and beyond. The provision is enhanced by a range of visiting speakers, some of whom are drawn from placement schools. Others are researchers or policy experts from the university and beyond. A strong theme that unites all the various elements of the course is a concern with diversity, equality and the overcoming of educational disadvantage. The partnership is committed to ensuring that trainees have the skills and knowledge they need to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, in the week-long extended learning opportunity, trainees have the opportunity to sample teaching in a specialist setting.
8. Trainees make outstanding progress across all of the teachers' standards. The school- and university-based elements of the course are delivered consistently well. These are informed by, though not limited to, the DfE's core content framework. Trainees and NQTs express high levels of satisfaction with the university-based curriculum studies and professional development sessions. They value the support for subject knowledge that they receive from their tutors. The sessions typically combine a deeply practical approach to teaching subject content with a rigorous examination of research evidence. Consequently, trainees have an excellent understanding not only of the 'what' and 'how' of teaching, but also the 'why'.
9. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate consistently high expectations and a sharp focus on pupils' progress. Trainees use their exemplary subject knowledge to plan coherent sequences of lessons that enable pupils to learn and remember new knowledge, skills and concepts. Trainees and NQTs ask probing questions and set challenging tasks that require pupils to explain their thinking and use subject-specific vocabulary with precision. Trainees and NQTs have a well-developed awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. They meet these needs well.
10. Trainees and NQTs manage behaviour with confidence. They confirm that their course provides helpful guidance on classroom management and on ways to engage pupils in their learning by setting them challenging and worthwhile tasks. From a very early stage in their placements or employing schools,

trainees and NQTs establish clear routines, build positive relationships with pupils and respond appropriately to off-task behaviour.

11. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the purpose of summative and formative assessment. They identify clearly what they want pupils to learn, assess accurately how well pupils have mastered new material and give them precise feedback on next steps. Trainees and NQTs adapt material skilfully to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Consequently, pupils make strong progress in their learning.
12. All trainees sign a code of conduct at the start of their training course that spells out the behaviours and attitudes expected of a teacher, including the appropriate use of social media. By the time they embark on their first teaching post, NQTs demonstrate a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and minimising disadvantage. For example, one NQT said, 'I know that it is my duty to prioritise the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs.'
13. Trainees and NQTs understand their professional duties, including child protection and their obligation to promote fundamental British values and to prevent radicalisation and extremism. A comprehensive programme of professional studies sessions and school-based training ensures that trainees and NQTs have a good understanding of current legislation and relevant safeguarding guidance. As a result, trainees and NQTs carry out their responsibilities diligently and are confident about the procedures they should follow if they have any concerns about a pupil.
14. The partnership works with a wide and diverse range of schools, including those serving disadvantaged communities, schools that are judged to require improvement, and those that are rated good or outstanding. As a result, trainees are prepared exceptionally well to teach in a variety of contexts. For school leaders, the value of the partnership goes beyond ITE. They believe that the opportunities the partnership provides for staff at all levels to be involved in a wide range of research projects and/or as mentors is an important factor in the recruitment and retention of talented teachers.
15. Trainees and NQTs express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of mentoring that they receive. Arrangements for training mentors, keeping their skills updated and checking the quality of their work are highly effective. Mentors, many of whom are themselves former trainees, show a deep understanding of their role and strong support for the partnership's values. Mentoring is rightly focused on encouraging trainees to evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress. The partnership has adapted the mentor standards appropriately to better reflect the distinctive nature of the course. Because of the excellent training they receive, mentors guide trainees through

their placements skilfully and sensitively. The partnership emphasises the role of the mentor in ensuring that the trainee develops resilience and the ability to manage their own well-being.

16. Trainees and NQTs value the guidance they receive on managing workload and looking after their own well-being. Consequently, they develop sustainable and sensible work habits and understand the importance of a healthy balance between life outside school and work. Trainees and NQTs express few, if any, concerns about the mentoring from one placement to another.
17. Leaders and managers invest considerable care in ensuring that trainees are well matched to placements and that placements provide trainees with experience of teaching in different environments. Because this is such a well-established partnership, there is admirable clarity among partners about the purpose of a placement school. These schools embrace the fact that trainees are expected to experiment with different approaches to planning, delivery and assessment as an essential aspect of their formation as teachers. Mentors willingly teach lessons planned by trainees so that trainees can evaluate their own planning. Trainees and NQTs are highly appreciative of the opportunities afforded to them in their placement schools. The impact of this element of their training can be seen in the confident start that NQTs have made in their new schools. One headteacher said, 'This is the strongest NQT we have ever seen in our school.'
18. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the course are rigorous and effective. A network of boards and panels, all of which have strong partnership representation, carefully scrutinise every aspect of the course. Rich sources of information, collected over time and based on outcomes, trainees' views, mentor feedback and tutors' reports, are used to plan ambitious actions which ensure continuous improvement. Tutors carry out frequent visits to partner schools and take the opportunity to engage in joint activities that help mentors to moderate their judgments about trainees' progress. Although this is a long-running and stable course, there is no hint of complacency from leaders, managers or partners. Indeed, leadership of the course is characterised by humility and a deep-rooted commitment to ensuring that all trainees from this partnership have the personal attributes, knowledge and skills to transform the life chances of the pupils they teach now and in the future.
19. Trainees have many opportunities to communicate their views, informally through regular contact with course tutors and mentors, and formally via student representative groups and regular questionnaires. Leaders and managers take account of trainees' views in all and any decisions about the course. For example, in light of trainees' comments about the demands of the course at particular times of the year, leaders have reduced the amount of paperwork trainees are expected to complete.

20. Pastoral care is strong. Several trainees and NQTs commented on the highly effective support they received from tutors and mentors when they experienced difficulties. The partnership is meticulous in ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to remove barriers for those trainees who have declared SEND. Consequently, trainees with disabilities achieve well.
21. The partnership has outstanding capacity to improve. This can be seen in the thorough and highly effective actions that leaders took following stage 1 of the inspection. Leaders carried out their own research into the areas identified and came up with credible plans that have already started to yield positive results. The partnership rightly believes that their model of ITE, which engages the whole partnership in teacher education, ongoing professional development and research, with a strong focus on pupils' progress and on overcoming disadvantage, has the potential to inform future developments across the sector.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Bartholomew School, Eynsham

Burford School, Burford

Cheney School, Oxford

Matthew Arnold School, Oxford

John Mason School, Abingdon

North Oxfordshire Academy, Banbury

Oxford Spires Academy, Oxford

The Cherwell School, Oxford

The Henry Box School, Witney

St John the Baptist School, Woking

UTC Oxfordshire, Didcot

Waddesdon Church of England School, Aylesbury



## ITE partnership details

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Phases provided	Secondary
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Previous inspection report	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/41/70057">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/41/70057</a>
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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)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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