

The Merseyside, Cheshire and Greater Manchester Teacher Training Consortium ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 18 June 2018

Stage 2: 26 November 2018

This inspection was carried out by 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 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

| | Primary QTS |
|---|--------------------|
| Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees? | 2 |
| The outcomes for trainees | 2 |
| The quality of training across the partnership | 2 |
| The quality of leadership and management across the partnership | 2 |

Information about this ITE partnership

- The Merseyside, Cheshire and Greater Manchester Teacher Training Consortium is an employment based-initial teacher training (EBITT) provider.
- In partnership with schools, it offers core training in primary education across the three to 11 age range. Trainees who successfully complete their training are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS). The consortium also offers the assessment-only route into teaching.
- The EBITT was formerly known as the Merseyside and Cheshire Graduate Teacher Programme Consortium. It changed to its present name, and gained charitable status, following the closure of the Graduate Teacher Programme in April 2013.
- The EBITT works with schools in Merseyside, Cheshire and Greater Manchester. Everton Nursery School and Family Centre is now the lead school for this partnership.
- At stage 1 of the inspection there were 16 primary trainees enrolled on the core programme and two trainees following the assessment-only route.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited a total of 13 schools across the two stages of the inspection to gather evidence about the effectiveness of the partnership. During these school visits, inspectors spoke with headteachers, school-based tutors, trainees and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to gather their views about the quality of the partnership's training.
- At stage 1, inspectors observed the teaching of 10 trainees jointly with their mentors. Inspectors looked at the evidence in trainees' files to inform their evaluation of how well trainees were meeting the teachers' standards. Inspectors also took account of the work in pupils' books and other available evidence about the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' learning over time.
- At stage 2, the inspectors visited seven schools and observed eight NQTs teach. Most of these NQTs had been observed as trainees at stage 1 of the inspection.
- At both stages of the inspection, inspectors checked that the partnership was compliant with all initial teacher training (ITT) criteria and statutory requirements, including safeguarding.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including improvement plans and self-evaluation. They also considered evidence relating to the actions taken by partnership leaders between the two stages of the inspection.

- Inspectors considered the five responses to Ofsted’s trainee online questionnaire, which trainees completed in the summer of 2018. They also took account of the provider’s own survey of trainees’ views about the programme.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings at both stages. These included discussions with the programme leader, training tutor, members of the management committee, a representative from the lead school and trustees.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow HMI, lead inspector

Stephen Bentham HMI, assistant lead inspector

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the primary partnership

- Strong and effective leadership has helped to secure good or better outcomes for almost all trainees over the past three years.
- Leaders have developed a well-designed and flexible programme that meets the needs of schools and trainees. It is underpinned by a strong sense of teamwork and support among current and past trainees.
- Effective pastoral and professional support means that completion rates are extremely high. All trainees who started the programme over the past two years have gained QTS.
- The highly effective recruitment and selection process ensures that the best possible candidates are recruited to the programme.
- The consortium is successful in ensuring a steady supply of good or better teachers in the local area.
- The partnership has been successful in training teachers since 2002. Last year all trainees secured employment. A high proportion gained employment in partnership schools.
- School leaders value the support and advice provided by programme leaders. Good lines of communication at all levels help to ensure that any concerns are dealt with in a timely manner.
- School-based tutors provide excellent, individualised support, which encourages trainees to develop into highly reflective and effective teachers.

- By the end of their training, all trainees demonstrate good or better practice in all of the teachers' standards. Their personal and professional conduct is also a strength.

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

The partnership should:

- build on the work started to ensure that all trainees develop deeper subject knowledge, particularly in geography, history, music and art
- strengthen the role of senior leaders from partnership schools in reviewing the work of the partnership and in shaping and influencing the training programme
- provide greater precision within the career-entry targets that are set for NQTs as they move into school to identify clearly the areas where further support and professional development will enhance their teaching.

Inspection judgements

1. The Merseyside, Cheshire and Greater Manchester Teacher Training Consortium prepares trainees well to become successful teachers who can meet the demands of the profession. Schools in the partnership ensure that trainees are well supported and have the opportunity to contribute fully to the life of the school. As a result, trainees make good progress. Over the course of their training, each trainee develops the skills, knowledge and confidence required for their role as a new teacher.
2. Strong and effective leadership over time has created a close bond between schools and those who manage the consortium. Course leaders ensure that good-quality training and support is provided for those trainees who choose this route into teaching. Excellent lines of communication and strong cooperation between schools and partnership leaders underpin its effectiveness. The success of the consortium, and the confidence that headteachers have in the training programme, can be seen in the high number of former trainees who are now employed by partnership schools.
3. The partnership has developed a highly effective recruitment process, which plays a significant part in the very low withdrawal rates. The consortium also ensures that timely and closely tailored support is provided to help trainees overcome any difficulties that they may face during their training. As a result, completion rates are high.

4. Leaders from partnership schools play a full role in recruitment interviews and help to ensure that only high-quality trainees are enrolled on to the training programme. The provision of pre-course tasks, including an induction week, helps trainees to make a confident start to their training.
5. Leaders ensure that trainees who apply for the assessment-only route are subject to appropriate checks. Leaders are equally vigilant in making sure that those recruited to this route have the necessary skills and knowledge, along with suitable school-based experience. They also ensure that the assessment of these trainees is rigorously checked and quality-assured.
6. The partnership is successful in ensuring a steady supply of good and better teachers in the local area. In the past two years, all trainees have gained employment. Most NQTs are employed in partner schools, though some have gained employment in local schools that are not part of the partnership.
7. Trainees and NQTs develop good skills in promoting pupils' behaviour for learning. They understand the importance of having clear expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and of creating respectful relationships with the pupils that they teach.
8. Trainees and NQTs are well prepared to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the most able.
9. Trainees and NQTs have a good understanding of their role in child protection and safeguarding. Clear guidance is provided for all trainees during the induction week held before trainees start their first school placement. Trainees are taught how to recognise signs that there may be a safeguarding issue. Trainees are also required to familiarise themselves with the safeguarding arrangements in their placement schools. They told inspectors that they were fully aware of how to respond if they had any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety.
10. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate a good understanding of issues relating to equality and diversity in schools. They understand the importance of their role in promoting equality and how this supports strategies for improving the attainment and progress of all pupils, regardless of their circumstances and backgrounds. Trainees and NQTs also develop a good understanding of how to promote fundamental British values.
11. Leaders track trainees' progress against each of the teachers' standards at regular intervals and the assessment of trainees' performance is generally accurate. Trainees develop good subject knowledge, especially in English, mathematics and science. There is no significant difference in the achievement

of different groups of trainees. All trainees, irrespective of their background, exceed the minimum requirements as defined by the teachers' standards.

12. The targets that are given to trainees at the end of their training are not focused sharply enough on exactly what they need to work on in order to improve their teaching. As a result, this information is not as helpful as it might be in supporting NQTs to further improve their teaching skills as they begin their career.
13. School-based tutors provide trainees with excellent support during their training year. They develop a close working relationship with individual trainees and get to know them extremely well. School-based tutors carefully structure support to build on trainees' strengths and provide additional help in any areas of relative weakness. Tutors have excellent subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of teaching pedagogy. They play a highly effective role in the trainees' development over the course of the training year.
14. Trainees and NQTs spoke positively about their school placements. They particularly appreciated the fact that they were in school, almost full time, from the first day of the training programme. They said that this prepared them well for the rigours of teaching. Carefully planned second placements in contrasting schools enable trainees to experience different teaching practices, classroom organisation and management styles. As a result, they have a greater understanding of how schools function.
15. Good-quality school placements enable trainees to develop their teaching skills well. Trainees and NQTs are well prepared to teach in schools that are facing challenging socio-economic circumstances. They understand their role in promoting the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
16. Almost all partnership schools are good or outstanding. However, some trainees have had the opportunity to gain experience of working in schools that were judged to require improvement at their most recent inspection. Trainees also experience teaching in different age ranges, spending time in early years settings and secondary schools. This experience helps trainees to develop an understanding of how teaching, learning and assessment differ across key stages, while strengthening their understanding of progression across different age phases.
17. Many trainees and NQTs told inspectors that the structure of the training programme was what attracted them to this partnership. They appreciate the flexible approach and the support that they receive to match training to their needs and interests. Trainees value the regular opportunities to apply their theoretical learning in classroom practice. They are constantly encouraged by

school-based tutors to be reflective and evaluate which classroom strategies work and which are less effective. This approach has helped many trainees to become highly effective practitioners. Many headteachers told inspectors that the NQTs' teaching skills were much more developed than typically found for a teacher at this stage of their career.

18. Trainees and NQTs are prepared well to plan, teach and assess pupils' progress in phonics. Leaders ensure that trainees have the knowledge and skills required to develop this key aspect of early reading for children and pupils of different ages and abilities. Trainees also valued the training that they received in mathematics and said that the science training was particularly useful. As a result, they teach these subjects with confidence and competence.
19. Trainees receive good training in some areas of the wider curriculum, such as physical education. As a result, they are well prepared to teach this subject. However, the quality of training in subjects such as geography, history, music and art is variable. Changes to the training programme, following stage 1 of the inspection, mean that these subjects are receiving much greater attention. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this change on NQTs' readiness to teach across the whole primary curriculum.
20. Leaders have responded quickly and decisively to the feedback provided at stage 1 of this inspection, which identified weaknesses in self-evaluation and improvement planning. Improved quality assurance processes are providing good-quality information about the effectiveness of different aspects of the partnership's provision. Leaders have also developed an improvement plan which has been shared with senior leaders across the partnership to ensure that everyone has a shared understanding of the priorities for further improvement.
21. School leaders in the partnership have a high regard for the programme leaders. They appreciate the efficiency with which school placements are made and the excellent lines of communication. They also value the support that they receive if any issues arise. NQTs appreciate the high-quality professional and pastoral support that is provided during their training. Many NQTs said that they would recommend this route into teaching to others.
22. Partnership leaders have high expectations of trainees in terms of their personal and professional conduct. This has created a significant strength across the partnership. Senior leaders in schools were extremely positive about the high levels of professionalism shown by trainees and NQTs. Headteachers told inspectors that they were impressed by the NQTs' work ethic. They attributed this partly to the NQTs' previous experience in schools which, they said, provided a good grounding for new teachers.

23. Governance of the partnership is effective. Trustees and a management board oversee the work of the consortium and ensure that it meets all statutory requirements. However, senior leaders from partnership schools are not well represented on the management board. Although they are fully involved in activities such as recruitment, they do not currently make a significant contribution to decisions regarding the consortium's strategic direction or the training programme.
24. The consortium complies fully with the initial teacher training (ITT) criteria. It also meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding, promoting equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

All Saints' RC Primary School, Liverpool
Anfield Road Primary School, Liverpool
Croxteth Primary School, Croxteth
Fairway Primary School, Stockport
Larkhill Primary School, Salford
Manchester Muslim Preparatory School, Manchester
Springfield School, Crewe
St Anne's RC Primary School, Liverpool
The Beacon CE Primary School, Liverpool
Townfield Primary School, Birkenhead
Westwood High School, Oldham
Wharton CE Primary School, Winsford
Windsor Primary School, Liverpool

ITE partnership details

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| Stage 1 | |
| Stage 2 | 26–28 November 2018 |
| Lead inspector | Paul Tomkow |
| Type of ITE partnership | EBITT |
| Phases provided | Primary |
| Date of previous inspection | 19-23 March 2012 |
| Previous inspection report | https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/1998737 |
| Provider address | Room A210 The Heath Business & Technical Park Runcorn WA7 4QX |



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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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