

New College Durham

Framwellgate Moor Centre, Framwellgate Moor, Durham DH1 5ES

Inspection dates

10 to 13 May 2021

Inspection judgements

Further education age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education and training

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to be a trainee at this ITE provider?

Trainees successfully acquire generic skills that they need to be effective teachers. They become increasingly confident in using a range of teaching strategies. Trainees receive helpful guidance and support from their tutors and placement mentors. They make good use of opportunities to learn from experienced colleagues, and they reflect carefully on how they can apply their learning to their own practice.

Trainees are prepared well for the demands of teaching in the further education and skills sector. They receive helpful pastoral support that helps them to maintain their well-being and to develop their resilience and ability to cope with the pressures of working in the sector. Tutors provide trainees with useful information on safeguarding and how to support learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Trainees do not have the opportunity to gain sufficient insight into contemporary educational theory and research. This means that they often apply too narrow a range of theoretical perspectives to their practice.

Trainees do not receive enough support in developing the specific skills that they need to teach their subject. Leaders rely on trainees' mentors to develop this aspect of the training but do not inform mentors that it is part of their role or check that they provide this support.

Information about this ITE provider

- At the time of the inspection, there were 41 trainees on the initial teacher education programme, all of whom were being trained to teach in the further education and skills sector.
- Trainees had placements or were employed at the following organisations: New College Durham, which is an outstanding college, three other further education colleges with inspection grades ranging from good to requires improvement, three schools with inspection grades ranging from good to inadequate, an independent training provider, a private coaching company, a marketing agency, a hospital, a fire and rescue service, a prison, a hairdressing business and a charity.
- Trainees follow a two-year, part-time programme that leads towards either the Certificate in Education: Post-Compulsory Education and Training at level 5 or the Professional Certificate in Education: Post-Compulsory Education and Training at level 6, both validated by the Open University. There are both pre-service and in-service trainees on the programme, with an even split.

Information about this inspection

- Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors carried out the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the following senior staff at the provider: the chief executive/principal, the deputy principal, the vice principal quality, the vice principal higher education, the head of school for business, management, professional and education, the head of improving learning, the human resources manager and the health and safety manager. They also spoke with three managers from the Open University.
- Inspectors spoke with 14 trainees and five former trainees.
- The following subject areas were considered through five focused reviews: business, accountancy and tourism, early years education, hairdressing and beauty therapy, music and drama, and staff coaching and training.
- Inspectors visited or communicated with staff, mentors and trainees at seven placement settings.

What does the ITE provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders provide an appropriately structured, centre-based programme. Trainees study a useful first module that gives them an initial insight into teaching and assessment methods. As trainees progress through the course, they study relevant content that includes curriculum design and preparing for professional practice.

Tutors provide trainees with helpful information and feedback on demonstrating competence against the professional standards for teachers and trainers in further education. However, they do not provide enough information or support on the professional formation process for trainees who wish to achieve Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status.

Tutors provide good opportunities for trainees to extend their learning through participating in the college's professional development programme. Most trainees benefit from a range of relevant additional training, covering topics such as approaches to teaching the new T-level qualifications, behaviour management and coaching.

Leaders monitor closely the progress that trainees make in relation to the assessed components of the course. The assessment of trainees' written work and the evaluation of the quality of their teaching is largely accurate. Trainees who are unable to complete all assessed components of their programme due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic have benefited from appropriate alternative assessment arrangements.

Leaders implement a comprehensive quality assurance process. Monitoring by the validating organisation has enabled the college to identify the need to introduce training for mentors. Although managers gather the views of trainees, the response rate is low, which means the value of the survey is limited in informing improvement planning.

Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. They participate in a wide range of college initiatives and staff training on topics such as developing learners' English and mathematics skills and working with learners with SEND. This increases the expertise that they bring to the training role.

Mentors have teaching roles which enable them to provide helpful support for trainees in the areas in which they teach. This support mainly consists of discussion about how concepts learned on the course can be applied in trainees' teaching and practical advice on teaching. Trainees value the support that their mentors provide.

Tutors ensure that former trainees who secure a job or who continue in their roles at the college receive good support to develop their skills further. However, trainees who work for other employers do not benefit from a similar transition to induction and early employment.

The centre-based and placement-based elements of the programme are not integrated well enough. There are no arrangements in place for ensuring that training needs identified through the centre-based programme inform the work that trainees carry out on their placements.

The training programme does not include sufficient coverage of relevant and pertinent educational theories. Leaders and managers do not support trainees well enough to develop their critical understanding of contested theories and teaching approaches. As a result, trainees draw on too narrow a range of theory and research when planning their teaching.

Leaders' management of placement settings and mentors is not strong enough. Leaders do not have enough oversight of trainees' progress on their placements. Mentors receive no formal training for the role. Leaders do not monitor the quality of mentors' work rigorously enough. This means that leaders lack assurance that trainees successfully develop their skills in teaching their subject.

What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the FES phase?

- Leaders should ensure that tutors use a much wider range of recent and appropriately critical research to inform the design of the curriculum, so that trainees have a deeper insight into pertinent educational theories that can inform their practice.
- Leaders need to develop and put in place an infrastructure for the placement-based element of the programme that makes clear how it combines with the centre-based element to enhance trainees' learning and development.
- Leaders need to develop and implement a rigorous process to evaluate and improve the quality of placements and mentoring so that trainees gain greater benefit from this aspect of their training.
- Leaders need to urgently implement a mentor induction and training programme to increase mentors' understanding of the requirements of the role, in particular the delivery of the subject-specific aspects of the training and the development of trainees' skills in teaching their subject.
- Tutors need to provide more comprehensive information and support about the professional formation process for trainees who wish to achieve QTLS status.
- Leaders should increase and improve their liaison with other employers where trainees are placed or where they work to help prepare trainees for their transition into teaching after they have completed their course.
- Leaders should take steps to gather information about trainees' views from a greater number of trainees, analyse this data, and identify and implement actions that emerge from the analysis.

ITE Provider details

Unique reference number	2580204
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This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in accordance with the 'Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook'.

This framework and handbook set out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2020.

Type of ITE provider	General further education college
Phases provided	Further education
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Inspection team

Steve Hailstone, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Shepherd	Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Provider placements

Inspectors spoke with trainees who were employed or on placement at the following providers and organisations:

Name	URN	ITE Phase	Date joined partnership	Current Ofsted grade
New College Durham	130659	FES	N/A	1
Bishop Auckland College	130657	FES	N/A	3
Gateshead College	130551	FES	N/A	3
Hartwell School	146733	FES	N/A	2
BL Hairdressing	N/A	FES	N/A	N/A
Rainbow's End Coaching Ltd	N/A	FES	N/A	N/A
County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service	N/A	FES	N/A	N/A

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