

South Essex College

Luker Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 1ND

Inspection dates

10 to 13 May 2021

Inspection judgements

Further education age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

N/A

What it's like to be a trainee at this provider?

Trainees receive good support from the staff teaching on the ITE programme. They appreciate the accessibility of their teachers and the constructive feedback they receive on both their written work and from observations of practice. Trainees understand fully their areas for development.

Trainees contribute enthusiastically to group discussions where they debate the theories they learn. Teachers provide them with opportunities to share their own placement and curriculum experiences in taught sessions. Trainees have a good understanding of current teaching theories. Teachers ensure that trainees' knowledge of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is integral to their learning and discussions in class. Consequently, trainees understand the adjustments to make for learners with SEND. They apply them effectively to their own practice.

Most trainees appreciate the support and feedback they receive from their mentors. They feel that mentors help them improve their teaching practice because of their specialist-subject expertise.

Trainees have continued to make progress in the development of new skills and knowledge during the pandemic. They enjoy their learning through virtually taught sessions, and some prefer this method of learning. Trainees have improved their own digital pedagogy through experiencing their teacher's own highly effective practice.

Trainees find the recording they are required to complete to evidence their ongoing development adds too much to their workload. They feel this repetition of evidencing their reflective practice is burdensome.

The very few trainees in external placements have been adversely affected by the pandemic. They feel that staff prioritise trainees that are internal to the college when scheduling observations.

Information about this ITE provider

- There are 32 trainees. 11 are on a full-time programme of study and 21 are on a part-time programme.
- Further Education and Skills (FES)
- Placement settings in schools and college.
- Five trainees are studying the level 5 certificate of education. Twenty-seven trainees are studying the level 6 post-graduate certificate of education.
- Twenty-seven trainees are on placement in South Essex College, three trainees are on placement in secondary schools and two are placed in an external FE college.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality; Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality; Head of Human Resources; Vice Principal Quality and Compliance; Head of ITE; Curriculum Head of ITE; Programme Leader; ITE tutors; and Teaching and Learning Specialists. Inspectors also spoke to mentors in placements within and external to the college.
- Inspectors spoke to 11 trainees and six former trainees.
- Focused reviews were carried out in English; performing arts; 14 to 16 teaching; higher education teaching; and beauty therapy.
- All placement visits were in South Essex College.

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

Staff teaching on the ITE programmes are professionally qualified and very experienced. They know their trainees well and consider fully their needs when planning the curriculum and assessment activities. Teachers model good, up-to-date practice and demonstrate different teaching strategies to support the development of their trainees' skills. They collaborate effectively to share information about the trainees and their progress. Staff encourages trainees to work towards professional formation to support their future career plans.

Staff use a range of initial assessment tools effectively to ensure that trainees enrol on an appropriate teacher training course. They ensure that trainees have the skills to be able to teach, such as good communication skills and a willingness to listen and respond appropriately to feedback. Leaders keep detailed and up-to-date safeguarding records for all ITE trainees to ensure that learners are safe. Trainees understand the importance of safeguarding and how to identify and respond to any concerns that may arise.

Managers listen and respond to feedback from trainees to ensure that the curriculum is current and meets their needs fully. They provide trainees with the skills they need for teaching in the sector. They have sequenced the curriculum to ensure that trainees have

the essential skills and knowledge required to manage their own subject-specific curriculum. Trainees have a good understanding of how to manage their learners' behaviour and keep learners safe from the start of their ITE programme.

Senior leaders ensure that the ITE curriculum is reviewed regularly. They have developed the curriculum to ensure that it is up to date and reflects the changing further education landscape. For example, they have introduced a module on digital pedagogy and ensure that trainees consider and reflect on the currency and relevance of what they learn. Teachers plan for guest speakers to provide expert insight into the further education sector. For example, in topical subjects such as T levels, apprenticeships and offender learning.

Staff provide comprehensive developmental feedback to trainees on the quality of their work and observations of practice. They set clear developmental actions and follow these up in subsequent observations. As a result, trainees demonstrate good improvement in their teaching practice over time. Staff ensure that trainees are fully prepared to meet the professional standards for teachers and trainers in education.

Trainees written work is produced to a high academic standard. They use and reference relevant and up-to-date teaching and learning theories. They apply their learning effectively to their teaching practice. They are knowledgeable when articulating how they have adapted their practice because of their learning.

The former trainees are appreciative of the skills they learned. They recognise how their learning has made them better teachers. For example, they are confident in using a wide breadth of teaching and learning strategies in their everyday teaching.

Staff give good attention to developing trainees as reflective practitioners. Trainees are encouraged to record and reflect continually on their developing skills and understanding, while evaluating how they can improve their practice. However, the many documents that trainees need to complete to record this same evidence adds excessively to their workload.

Leaders have not ensured that the quality of mentoring support trainees receive is consistently good. Most mentors act as a critical friend and provide effective feedback to improve trainees subject-specific teaching practice. However, too few have a good understanding of the academic curriculum taught. As a result, they do not help trainees reinforce their theoretical understanding, or have an effective oversight of how this theory could be reflected in trainees' subject-specific teaching.

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

- Leaders need to ensure that the quality of mentoring those trainees receive is of a consistently good quality. Mentors need to have a good understanding and knowledge of the academic programme taught to trainees. Mentors need, in their supervision of trainees, to demonstrate that they are helping trainees develop and reinforce their theoretical understanding of teaching theories in their subject-specific teaching practice.

- Leaders need to review and evaluate the recording requirements of reflective practice that they currently place on trainees. They should then look to reduce this burden if necessary.

ITE Provider details

Unique reference number	2580206
Inspection number	10181588

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

This framework and handbook sets 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 age phase
Date of previous inspection	9 to 12 May 2017

Inspection team

Penny Fawcus, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Perry	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(s)	Date joined partnership	Current Ofsted grade
South Essex College, Luker Road.	2580206	FES	January 2020	Good
Greensward Academy, Hockley.	135652	FES	Unknown	Good

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