

University of Wolverhampton

Faculty of Education Health and Wellbeing, Walsall Campus, Gorway Road, Walsall WS1 3BD

Inspection dates

11-14 May 2021

Inspection judgements

	Early Years ITT	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase	Further education age-phase
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	Good	Good	Good
The quality of education and training	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Inadequate	Good	Good	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable	Good	Good	Good

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

The partnership provides effective training, both in the university and partner settings, that prepares trainees well to teach their subjects. Trainees learn how to apply relevant research to their teaching. They become reflective practitioners, committed to ongoing professional development. Trainees are also well prepared for the realities of teaching. For example, trainees in all phases finish their courses well prepared to manage behaviour.

Staff provide excellent support. University tutors provide effective help with issues such as managing workload and maintaining good mental health and well-being. In partner settings, mentors help to develop trainees' teaching skills while providing strong professional role models.

Relationships between the university and partner settings are strong. In most phases, strategic leadership and communication are effective. Staff from partner schools and FES settings play a full part in many areas of the partnership, such as reviewing the curriculum and recruiting trainees. However, this is not the case in the early years phase. Here, strategic leadership is weak and partner settings are not as involved in the partnership as they should be.

The partnership places a strong emphasis on inclusion, equality and diversity. Consequently, trainees understand these ideas well. Additionally, most know how to apply

them to the teaching of their subject. For example, trainees develop a good understanding of how to meet the needs of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Information about this ITE partnership

- The partnership has 894 trainees spread over four phases: early years, primary, secondary and further education and skills (FES).
- There are five trainees in the early years phase, 371 in the primary phase, 301 in the secondary phase and 240 in the FES phase.
- All trainees in the early years phase are employment-based graduates. In this phase, the partnership contains five settings.
- The primary and secondary phases both have trainees on one of five training routes. These are undergraduate, postgraduate (non-school direct), school direct (both salaried and fee paid) and teaching apprentices.
- In the primary phase, the partnership contains 250 schools. In the secondary phase, it contains 110 schools.
- The FES phase has trainees on one of three training routes. These are pre-service (part and full-time) and in-service. In this phase, the partnership contains 16 settings.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by 14 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors. Because of COVID-19 (coronavirus), many discussions were carried out via online meetings.
- Inspectors met with the Director of the Institute of Education, the Head of Primary Education, the Head of ITT Partnerships, the Head of Employment Based Routes (Primary and Secondary), the Head of Post Compulsory Education, the Head of Lifelong Learning Partnerships and several university tutors.
- An inspector attended a meeting of the Strategic Partnership Group.
- The lead inspector met with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience), the University Solicitor, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing, the Academic Registrar, the Deputy Academic Registrar (Enhancement), the Director of Strategic Planning and Performance and the Director of Teaching Excellence to discuss governance arrangements.
- In all phases, inspectors spoke with headteachers, principals, placement setting leaders, curriculum leaders, professional tutors, mentors and teachers. They scrutinised several documents, including evidence of self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Inspectors considered 221 responses to Ofsted's online trainee survey and 212 responses to its online staff survey.
- In the early years phase, inspectors visited or communicated with five placement settings and spoke with five trainees. They conducted focused reviews of communication and language, physical development, literacy and mathematics.
- In the primary phase, inspectors visited or communicated with 12 placement schools and spoke with 27 trainees. They conducted focused reviews of English and reading, mathematics and science, humanities, technology and creative arts.
- In the secondary phase, inspectors visited or communicated with eight placement schools and spoke with 50 trainees. They conducted focused reviews of English, mathematics, science, history, art, psychology and physical education.

- In the FES phase, inspectors visited or communicated with nine placement settings and spoke with 39 trainees. They conducted focused reviews of health and social care, early childhood studies, art, design, media and photography, business studies, engineering and SEND.

Early years phase report

What works well in the early years phase and what needs to be done better?

The early years initial teacher training (EYITT) programme is well managed at an operational level, but leadership at strategic level is weak. Self-evaluation is limited. This means that leaders have not identified or addressed weaknesses in the ITE curriculum. Quality assurance systems are also underdeveloped. External moderation of trainee assessments and checks on the quality of training and mentoring are not systematically completed.

Involvement of partnership settings is narrow. Mentors fully support trainees but are unaware of the partnership's key priorities. Settings are not routinely involved in selection and recruitment activities or contributing to the design and review of the programme to improve it.

There are weaknesses in the early years ITE curriculum because it is not strategically planned. However, this does not have an adverse effect on trainees because of the bespoke support provided by university staff, effective mentoring and good-quality centre-based training. The supplementary training and wider reading that trainees complete greatly enhance their knowledge and skills and ensures they become effective practitioners.

Centre-based training, focusing on general teaching skills, is of good quality because subject leaders are experienced and knowledgeable. Training supports trainees to deepen and extend their knowledge of how children learn. Trainees understand and take account of the individual needs of children as this aspect is covered well.

Early reading and mathematics are priority subjects and taught at the beginning of the programme. There is a sharp focus on preparing trainees to teach early reading and phonics. Trainees are confident and demonstrate a clear understanding of these areas. Subject expertise from the primary phase is utilised well. Centre-based training is supplemented by a package of external training, led by credible experts in their field. Training and materials ensure that trainees know how to teach children to decode to become successful readers.

Planning of the ITE curriculum is less coherent and rigorous in other areas. Leaders do not systematically check trainees' subject knowledge. Trainees have limited training in how to teach expressive art and design or how to develop a sequence of lessons.

Placements complement and add significantly to trainees' practice. Most trainees were unable to experience an alternative placement this year to extend their experience of teaching different age groups because of COVID-19. However, university staff skilfully devised a two-week intensive, online programme focused on baby development and Reception-aged children. Literature reviews, discussion and extensive background research ensured that trainees improved their knowledge and understanding for these age groups, having previously had little experience.

Mentors are experienced early years practitioners and provide strong support and guidance to trainees. Roles and expectations of mentors are made clear from the outset. Mentors play a central role in assessing trainees' progress. Evidence submitted is checked and scrutinised. However, mentors report that their work is not quality assured, and they do not receive feedback on their role.

What does the ITE partnership need to do to improve the early years phase?

Information for the partnership and appropriate authority

- The provider makes effective use of the expertise and strengths within the primary phase to support the EYITT programme. Nevertheless, self-evaluation and improvement planning in the early years phase are weak. This means that leaders are unaware where deficiencies lie and where provision can be improved. Leaders should raise the profile and importance of the early years phase by carrying out robust and systematic self-evaluation to inform action plans and strengthen the quality of education and training for early years trainees.
- A course representative provides feedback on behalf of other trainees to the university about the EYITT programme. Beyond this, quality assurance systems are ineffective. For example, leaders do not provide mentors and trainers with feedback on their work. There is limited evidence of external moderation of trainee outcomes and evaluation of systems in place. As a result, weaknesses in the quality of training could go undetected. Leaders should establish consistent quality assurance systems to check the quality of training and implementation of the ITE curriculum.
- Trainees are confident in their ability to teach children. Regular assessments identify trainees' progress towards meeting the early years teachers' standards. However, there is less emphasis on checking trainees' subject knowledge and planning skills. Trainees have limited understanding of how to sequence learning. This means trainees have not developed their ability to build children's learning progressively. Leaders should strengthen the quality of education and training by reviewing the course structure and emphasis placed on curriculum implementation. They should carry out checks to diagnose deficits and address gaps in trainees' knowledge and skills.
- Relationships with settings are productive and positive. Trainees and mentors work closely with the course leader. However, there is little or no strategic engagement with partnership settings. For example, partnership staff are not involved in recruitment and selection procedures or evaluating and shaping the programme. This means that their expertise is not used as well as it could be to improve the programme. Leaders should increase the involvement of partners at a strategic level and utilise their feedback to enhance the EYITT course.

Does the ITE partnership early years phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Primary phase report

What works well in the primary phase and what needs to be done better?

Leaders' vision and high aspirations for trainees are key reasons why schools have joined the partnership. Leaders use feedback from the strategic partnership group, trainee final outcomes and reviews of the ITE curriculum to inform improvement priorities. For example, leaders further developed enhancement and enrichment days in response to schools' feedback to widen trainees' experiences in foundation subjects.

University moderation tutors check the quality of mentoring regularly. They review trainees' weekly targets and provide swift responses and guidance to ensure that mentors' support is consistently of a high quality. New mentors receive comprehensive training that ensures they are prepared for the role well.

Leaders have woven the Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework (CCF) throughout the ITE course. They check where trainees apply their centre-based learning in practice during their placements. While leaders have provided mentors and schools with clear guidance about the CCF, due to COVID-19, their opportunity to work with mentors to ensure they fully understand it has been limited. This means that some mentors lack a clear understanding of the CCF, and how it applies to the course.

Trainee assessments have been developed to ensure that feedback and targets focus on trainees' progress through the ITE curriculum. However, leaders' ability to ensure that all mentors have a secure understanding of the formative assessment procedures has been limited due to COVID-19. Some mentors are yet to have a secure understanding of how to assess trainees against the ITE curriculum as opposed to the teachers' standards.

The ITE curriculum is sequenced carefully to enable trainees to develop their teaching skills and subject knowledge progressively. It is delivered by well-trained experts, including in SEND and behaviour management. Effective use is made of wider expertise, such as partnership school leaders, to enhance the quality of the tutoring. The 'wider curriculum' module ensures that trainees understand the requirements of the national curriculum in foundation subjects and how to develop sequences of learning within these subjects. All trainees take additional enhancement, enrichment and research modules as part of their course. They choose the focus of these modules, for example early years, SEND or an international study in Asia. These opportunities deepen and broaden trainees' learning and contribute well to preparing them for employment.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that the teaching of early reading and phonics is prioritised for all trainees. Trainees are given a children's reading book at the start of the course which is used to inform their initial training in English, reading and phonics. The phonics training programme has been enhanced over the last year with the introduction of an additional training package. Because of the high-quality reading and phonics training, trainees say that they feel very well prepared to teach early reading and phonics.

What does the ITE partnership need to do to improve the primary phase?

Information for the partnership and appropriate authority

- Leaders have woven the CCF throughout the primary ITE curriculum. They have provided partnership schools with information about the CCF and how it applies to the course. However, leaders have been unable to provide more detailed and focused support to schools because of COVID-19. Therefore, some schools do not have a detailed understanding of what the CCF is and where it is integrated into the course. This limits their ability to apply all aspects of the CCF fully to trainees' school-based experiences. Leaders should continue to work with schools to help them to fully understand and embed the CCF in trainees' placements.
- Leaders have developed appropriate assessment procedures to enable trainees to build on their prior learning to meet the teachers' standards by the end of the course. However, due to COVID-19, leaders' ability to ensure that these assessment procedures are embedded and used consistently across the partnership has been limited. This means there is variability across the partnership in how trainees are assessed, including some trainees being assessed too often against the teachers' standards in the early stages of their training. Leaders should continue to work with mentors and trainees to enable them to have a secure understanding of, and apply, the partnership's assessments procedures.

Does the ITE partnership primary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Secondary phase report

What works well in the secondary phase and what needs to be done better?

Leaders are ambitious for trainees. Their vision is to develop reflective and resilient teachers who help raise aspiration and achievement in local schools. Trainees use their university-based learning and experiences in school well to shape their understanding of how to teach their subject. As a result, they are ready to take the first steps in their career.

Leaders have constructed a coherent ITE curriculum that is well designed around subjects. Trainees explore aspects of pedagogy and models of learning, engaging with up-to-date and relevant research. Subject tutors provide the necessary subject specificity to contextualise trainees' learning. Alongside this, trainees are taught the practical knowledge needed to plan learning and manage a classroom environment. This means that they are well prepared for their placements.

The partnership meets the requirements set out in the CCF. Leaders have developed and shared detailed information about the CCF with mentors. Many mentors use this well in their discussions with trainees, although a few do not. Leaders have appropriate procedures in place to assess and track trainees' progress. Mentors set weekly targets with trainees and subject tutors check these. In the best examples, these are focused sharply on subject-specific dimensions. However, in some cases, targets are set using the teachers' standards and are therefore too broad. Disruption to normal operations, because of COVID-19, has hindered leaders in embedding their expectations of the integration of the CCF and trainee assessment. They have rightly identified this as a priority.

The ITE curriculum is integrated across the partnership as mentors and trainees discuss university-based learning in regular mentor meetings. The quality of mentoring is high. Leaders provide comprehensive academic and pastoral support for trainees. Trainees see their school-based mentors and university tutors as a cohesive team that work together to help them develop. Leaders provide high-quality, initial training and guidance for new mentors. Mentors are well supported, have relevant levels of subject expertise and are valued by trainees. Leaders monitor the quality of mentoring rigorously. However, the integration of the centre-based and placement-based elements of the ITE curriculum is not sufficiently deliberate. Mentors do not always know what trainees are learning. Therefore, they cannot use this information when planning mentor sessions.

Trainees are taught about social disadvantage and inclusion. As result of leaders' expertise in these areas, trainees are exposed to the social and cultural implications of educational disadvantage and the role of the teacher in helping to overcome these. This is a strength of the course.

The strategic leadership of this phase of the partnership is cohesive and forward-looking. Leaders work effectively with schools, for example in recruiting and selecting trainees. They liaise closely to place trainees into schools, taking trainees' needs and the schools' context

into account. Leaders gather the views of stakeholders to help inform their planning. They have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

What does the ITE partnership need to do to improve the secondary phase?

Information for the partnership and appropriate authority

- Leaders have developed an ITE curriculum that provides trainees with a robust introduction to the traditions and practices of their subject. Trainees' university-based learning provides them with the required, detailed, subject-specific knowledge needed. However, leaders do not pass on details of this learning directly to mentors. Instead, it is communicated via the trainees themselves. Consequently, mentors are not able to link their sessions to the central training as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that mentors know what their trainees are learning in their university-based sessions so that they can build on this training in their work with trainees.
- Leaders have ensured that the ITE curriculum provides trainees with their minimum entitlement, as set out in the CCF. They have shared a framework with mentors to help them understand the CCF. However, due to COVID-19, their work to implement this framework has slowed. As a result, mentors' understanding of how to use the CCF requires strengthening. Leaders should build on the work already undertaken so that all mentors fully understand the CCF.
- Leaders are developing assessment procedures that provide trainees with subject-specific targets to help them improve. However, due to the impact of COVID-19 on leaders' actions, this work has not been completed as planned. Consequently, in some instances, assessment and associated targets are too broad, relying too much on the teachers' standards rather than what trainees should know and remember. Leaders should continue to work with mentors and trainees to ensure that assessment and target setting are formative and sharply focused on trainees' knowledge of the ITE curriculum.

Does the ITE partnership secondary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Further education and skills phase report

What works well in the further education and skills phase and what needs to be done better?

Leaders work closely with their partners to design an ITE curriculum which is ambitious for trainees. Leaders support partners to adapt the ITE curriculum to meet their local needs, the settings they work in and the needs of their trainees. The ITE curriculum prepares trainees well to teach in the FES sector.

Leaders have identified that trainees within the FES sector may teach a wide range of learner groups in a range of settings. Most trainees develop the skills they need to teach different groups and in various settings. However, a few trainees' teaching practice is limited to a narrow part of their subject curriculum.

Leaders have planned the sequencing of the ITE curriculum well. Teachers ensure that trainees understand the key principles of curriculum design and teaching early on in their training. However, teachers do not provide a small number of pre-service trainees with the subject pedagogy they need to teach their subjects. As a result, these trainees are not sufficiently confident when planning their teaching.

Most trainees receive high-quality mentoring when in their placements. Mentors have relevant subject expertise. They use their subject knowledge to ensure that trainees reflect on their teaching following observations. They provide helpful feedback with lesson structure and the development of online and practical resources to enable trainees to improve their teaching.

Teachers undertake thorough assessment to ensure that trainees are receiving the feedback they need to improve. Trainees benefit from assessments that promote their skills of self-reflection. Teachers bring together trainees' reflections, placement practice and academic writing opportunities to improve trainees' practical and academic learning. Through the extensive use of their reflective journals and the feedback they receive, trainees become reflective practitioners. The majority of trainees move on to higher level qualifications at the end of their programme.

Leaders rely on the information and reporting from placement link tutors to assure themselves of the progress of trainees. Personal tutors work with teachers and mentors through the joint lesson observation process to ensure that trainees understand what they need to do to improve. Leaders have made adjustments to the process during the pandemic. Joint observations have moved to three-way conversations between trainees, mentors and personal tutors. However, in a few instances, link tutors have not attended these conversations and so are not as aware of trainees' progress as they should be.

What does the ITE partnership need to do to improve the further education and skills phase?

Information for the partnership and appropriate authority

- Leaders have ensured that trainees on the pre-service pathway are well qualified in their subjects before they start on their programmes. Teachers provide trainees with the pedagogical skills they need to start teaching. However, the ITE curriculum does not ensure that a small number of trainees develop their subject pedagogy well enough. Leaders should ensure that all trainees develop the subject pedagogy they need in order for them to become confident and skilful teachers.
- Leaders recruit and place trainees into a range of FES settings. Most trainees experience a range of settings and learner groups in preparation for working in the sector. However, a few have more limited opportunities. Leaders should ensure that all trainees are able to observe and learn from different settings to inform their teaching.
- Leaders rely on the information and reporting they receive from personal tutors to assure themselves of the progress trainees are making on their programmes. The recent adjustments to quality assurance procedures, such as changes to joint lesson observations, has led to gaps in the information leaders receive. Leaders should ensure that they receive timely and comprehensive information that reflects the quality of trainees' experiences accurately, so that they can make prompt and effective interventions when necessary.

Does the ITE partnership secondary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE Partnership details

Unique reference number	70084
Inspection number	10166700

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) and Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) 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 Partnership	HEI
Phases provided	Early years Primary Secondary FES
Date of previous inspection	11-14 March 2013

Inspection team

Alun Williams, Overall lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Gillian Martin	Ofsted Inspector
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Annex: Partnership schools

Inspectors contacted trainees and staff at the following settings, schools and colleges, as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE Phase	Date joined partnership	Current Ofsted grade
HLC Academy	147721	Early Years	October, 2020	Good
Marsh Hill Nursery	103126	Early Years	October, 2019	Outstanding
Tutbury Preschool	EY 218984	Early Years	October, 2020	Good
Wallbrook Primary Academy	144942	Early Years	October, 2020	-
YMCA, Walsall	2530668	Early Years	October, 2020	-
Caldmore Primary Academy	143904	Primary	April, 2016	Good
Fallings Park Primary School	104294	Primary	January, 2016	Good
Field View Primary School	141775	Primary	March, 2021	Good
Nishkam Primary School	139274	Primary	September, 2016	Good
North Walsall Primary Academy	144499	Primary	October, 2017	Good
Northwood Park Primary School	141648	Primary	September, 2016	Good
Oakham Primary School	103950	Primary	October, 2015	Outstanding
Park Hill Primary School	103910	Primary	October, 2015	Good
Salisbury Primary School	104178	Primary	March, 2018	Good
St John's Church of England Primary School	104228	Primary	January, 2015	Outstanding
Wood Green Junior School	103913	Primary	January, 2020	Good
Woodhouse Primary Academy	139637	Primary	October, 2015	Good
Aldridge School - A Science College	137974	Secondary	September, 2020	Good
Madeley Academy	135149	Secondary	January, 2021	Good
Moseley Park	138098	Secondary	September, 2020	Outstanding
Ormiston NEW Academy	145134	Secondary	January, 2021	Requires improvement
Wombourne High School	141343	Secondary	January, 2021	Requires improvement
Heath Park	137730	Secondary	September, 2020	Outstanding
Codsall Community High School	124400	Secondary	February, 2021	Good
Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Academy	141802	Secondary	January, 2021	Good
Birmingham Metropolitan College	130466	FES	2012	Requires improvement
City of Wolverhampton College	130484	FES	2017	Good
Dudley College of Technology	130475	FES	2019	Outstanding

RAF Cosford	56896	FES	2017	-
Sandwell College	130479	FES	2017	Good
The Bournemouth and Poole College	130652	FES	2014	Requires improvement
Wolverhampton Adult Education Service	55413	FES		Good

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