

North Essex Teacher Training (NETT)

c/o Tendring Education Centre, Jaywick Lane, Clacton on Sea CO16 8BE

Inspection dates

24 to 27 May 2021

Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education and training

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

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

Trainees are positive about the partnership. They say that it is a friendly and supportive place, where they get the help they need. Trainees feel that they are well prepared to embark on their careers in teaching by the end of the course.

There are some strengths to the programme. For example, both primary and secondary trainees are given plentiful opportunities to learn how to plan an effective curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for pupils who speak English as an additional language. They also have a secure grounding in managing pupils' behaviour and the responsibilities that teachers have in safeguarding pupils.

There are considerable weaknesses that need to be addressed. The partnership's curriculum is poorly designed. It does not place sufficient emphasis on the most important knowledge that trainees need to learn about their subjects and/or age phases.

Too little emphasis is placed on reading in the ITE curriculum for primary trainees. Trainees do not receive enough direct teaching about early reading development.

Programme leaders have not made their requirements of mentors and partner schools clear enough. There is too much variability between schools and between individual mentors.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The partnership has 67 trainees.
- There are 29 primary trainees and 38 secondary trainees.
- Trainees are enrolled on various routes into teacher training. Most are enrolled as Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) trainees. Others are School Direct trainees, either on a salaried or non-salaried pathway. All trainees, except those on salaried routes, complete the PGCE.
- The partnership works with 30 primary schools and 12 secondary schools in Essex and Suffolk local authorities. Most of the partnership schools were graded good at their last inspection. A small number were judged to require improvement and three of the primary schools were judged outstanding at their most recent inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).
- Inspectors spoke with the chief executive officer of The Sigma Trust, the programme director, the primary programme leader and the secondary programme leaders. Inspectors also spoke with the training and assessment tutors, primary and secondary headteachers, and primary and secondary subject leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with 28 trainees. They also spoke with nine newly qualified teachers, who completed their training in July 2020, and six teachers, who completed their training in July 2019.
- Focused reviews of the following subjects were carried out: early reading, primary history and geography, primary mathematics, secondary mathematics, secondary English and secondary science.
- Inspectors visited five placements during the inspection. An inspector conducted a virtual visit to a sixth school via videoconferencing.

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

The ITE curriculum is weak, particularly for primary trainees. The rationale for choices about what should be included for trainees to learn is not convincing and the curriculum lacks ambition. Trainees are not being prepared well enough for their early careers. Across primary and secondary programmes, in some subjects trainees are taught about outdated educational theories. This means that some trainees do not use the most effective theories in their teaching practices.

There is no clear rationale for the amounts of time that are given to different subjects and aspects of the ITE curriculum. On the primary programme, phonics and early reading have not been given an appropriately high priority. Some primary trainees are at risk of finishing the course with underdeveloped knowledge and skills in this crucial area. Leaders have not

monitored trainees' progress is in this area well enough. They are overly reliant on mentors identifying and addressing weaknesses in a timely fashion. Too much is left to chance and the assumption that all schools within the partnership can and will provide expert tuition and support in this area. Quality assurance is weak.

The links between centre- and school-based elements of the course are not strong enough. Mentors are not given clear directions about what they must cover with trainees. Too much is left unplanned. This leads to too much variability in the quality of mentoring and training that trainees on primary and secondary programmes receive.

Weaknesses in leadership mean that many aspects of the provision are not monitored closely enough. Partnership leaders are not easily able to check that trainees are learning what they need to know to become effective teachers. This means that remedial action is not routinely taken to address gaps in trainees' knowledge.

The Department for Education's 'ITT Core Content Framework' (CCF) has not been fully integrated into the ITE curriculum. Trainees are not receiving the minimum curriculum content that they are entitled to and the ITE curriculum lacks ambition.

There have been some recent improvements. Senior leaders have identified weaknesses in the strategic leadership of the partnership and have started to take steps to address them. However, these actions are recent, and it is too soon to see their impact on the ITE curriculum or on trainees' experiences.

There are some stronger aspects to the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that provision for pupils with SEND has a suitably high focus. For example, trainees complete an assignment about working with pupils with SEND before they start their course. At the beginning of the course, trainees attend a conference focused on working with pupils with SEND. This focus continues throughout the course. It is reflective of leaders' strong commitment to all aspects of equality and diversity.

Pastoral care and support are strengths. Trainees are very positive about the course and about the partnership. They feel well supported by the leaders and tutors at the centre, as well as mentors in their placement schools. This positive view is echoed by previous trainees and by headteachers in the local area, who are deeply committed to the partnership and its ongoing success.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- Weaknesses in strategic leadership over time have led to inadequacies in the quality of education and training, including the curriculum not meeting minimum entitlement standards in full. The partnership also fails to comply with all of the initial teacher education compliance criteria. As a matter of urgency, those responsible for governance should ensure that all statutory requirements are met, the expectations of the ITE curriculums are high, and leaders are held fully to account for the quality of the ITE programmes they design for trainees.
- The curriculum is not coherently planned. The rationale for the choices that have been made about the content of the curriculum is not convincing. This has resulted in a poorly planned curriculum that does not cover the minimum entitlement described in the CCF. Leaders should carry out a rigorous review of both the primary and secondary curriculums to ensure that all of the CCF's standards are covered in full, time in the curriculum is allocated appropriately, with the most weight given to the most important aspects, and the curriculum is suitably ambitious.
- Early reading has not been given a sufficiently high priority in the ITE curriculum plans. The programme is reliant on subject leaders and mentors in schools having the expert knowledge necessary to ensure that trainees become excellent teachers of early reading. Leaders do too little to assure themselves that this is the case in all settings. Leaders should ensure that early reading becomes the backbone of the primary training curriculum, procedures for monitoring trainees' progress in this area are rigorous and prompt and effective action is taken to mitigate against any issues that arise, and the quality and effectiveness of subject leadership and mentoring in all schools is checked closely so that all trainees receive equally high-quality training.
- Directions given to mentors are too vague. They are couched as recommendations rather than as requirements. This means that curriculum coverage is dependent on whether individual mentors choose to cover particular aspects of the course. Underdeveloped checks on the quality of mentoring by programme leaders means that this variability is not identified and acted upon promptly. Leaders should ensure that the core elements of the course are suitably ambitious, all mentors and subject leaders in schools are required, rather than encouraged, to cover these elements to the same extent and with the same quality, and robust monitoring makes certain this is the case.

Does the ITE partnership primary and secondary combined phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The partnership does not meet the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

The partnership does not meet the following criteria:

- criterion C2.1(a), which requires ITT partnerships to ensure that the content, structure, delivery and assessment of programmes are designed to: enable trainee teachers to meet all the standards for QTS across the age range of training
- criterion C2.2, which requires that they prepare all trainee teachers to teach within one of the following age phases: ages 3 to 11 (primary), ages 7 to 14 (middle) or ages 11 to 19 (secondary).
- criterion C3.4, which requires ITT providers to ensure that they monitor, evaluate and moderate all aspects of provision rigorously and demonstrate how these contribute to securing improvements in the quality of training and the assessment of trainees.

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70015
Inspection number	10189277

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 partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	primary and secondary combined
Date of previous inspection	3 to 6 February 2014

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Cindy Impey	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Hemmings	Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Partnership settings, schools and colleges

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

Name	URN	ITE phases	Date joined partnership	Current Ofsted grade
White Hall Academy	138575	primary	July 2017	Good
Clacton County High School	138084	secondary	January 2011	Good
Holland Park Primary School	147602	primary	July 2017	Requires improvement
East Bergholt High School	137218	secondary	June 2018	Good
Clacton Coastal Academy	135957	secondary	January 2011	Requires improvement
Frinton Primary School (virtual visit)	114723	primary	July 2017	Good

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