

# ARK Teacher Training

The Yellow Building, 1 Nicholas Road, London W11 4AN

## Inspection dates

28 February to 3 March 2022

## Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

### Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

The quality of education and training

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

Trainees thrive on this exceptionally well-planned and delivered programme. They develop subject knowledge and subject-specific pedagogy that is applicable to a wide range of contrasting settings. Trainees rapidly gain the skills and confidence to create a positive climate for learning in their lessons. They acquire a strong understanding of how children learn. Primary-phase trainees develop a secure knowledge of how to teach early reading and phonics. All trainees become familiar with the demands, expectations and rewards of the teaching profession, placing them in an optimum position to be successful in their future careers.

Trainees are motivated and inspired by the partnership's aim to provide equal access to high-quality education for all pupils. This sense of purpose is integral to the training programme. Trainees understand the principles of adaptive teaching. They acquire a repertoire of strategies for working with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with those who speak English as an additional language.

Experienced, dedicated leaders, tutors and mentors work together to ensure trainees receive high levels of support from the moment they start training with the partnership. There are well-considered pathways to support trainees' mental health and well-being. Recent trainees said how very well they were supported. One, typical of many, said of leaders, tutors and mentors, 'There was never a time when anything was too much or too silly or a personal problem not important. When really needed, they were there.'

## Information about this ITE partnership

- Ark Teacher Training (ATT) provides a programme of teacher training in primary and secondary phases that, on completion, leads to the award of qualified teacher status. Trainees have the option to also complete a Post-graduate Certificate in Education with Goldsmiths, University of London.
- The partnership comprises schools in the Ark multi-academy trust and other partner schools across London, the South East and the Midlands. There are currently 29 secondary schools in 19 local authorities and 21 primary schools in 12 local authorities. The schools serve a wide range of demographic and socio-economic areas. Most schools were judged to be good or outstanding at their last inspection.
- The partnership offers training via the School Direct route or apprenticeships. Ark Teacher Training works with organisations such as Researchers in Schools and Now Teach to support their recruitment of trainees.
- At the time of the inspection, 106 secondary trainees were specialising in the following subjects: biology, chemistry, computer science, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages (French and Spanish), music and physics. There were 28 primary trainees.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by four Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors held meetings with ATT leaders, including members of the steering group and primary and secondary curriculum leaders. Inspectors also met with 25 trainees, 14 early career teachers and former trainees, 18 mentors and seven partnership school leaders. Inspectors were accompanied on lesson visits by mentors or school leaders. Some school visits and meetings were held virtually.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of partnership documents, including documentation relating to curriculum planning, training, partnership evaluation and improvement planning. They reviewed support plans, written records of steering group meetings and the partnership agreement document. Inspectors also visited the partnership's online learning platform and viewed video recordings of centre-based training sessions.
- Inspectors undertook focused reviews in early reading, chemistry, geography, history and modern foreign languages.
- In order to check the partnership's conformity with the ITE compliance criteria, inspectors met with leaders, including members of the recruitment and selection team, and looked at records of safeguarding checks.
- Inspectors considered the responses completed by 106 centre- and school-based staff and 56 trainees.

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

Leaders' skilful planning and insight have led to the establishment of a first-class training programme. The initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum content and structure are underpinned by up-to-date and credible academic thinking. It complies in full with the core content framework. It enables trainees to build up knowledge, understanding and professional practice steadily and successfully. Trainees rapidly become familiar with generic teaching strategies, adapting and applying these to their specific subjects. Primary-phase trainees strengthen their essential knowledge and understanding across the primary curriculum. In the secondary phase, trainees build on their prior knowledge and understanding of secondary subject specialisms.

Subject and phase leaders are well qualified and fulfil their ambitious vision for the ITE subject and professional studies curriculum. Close communication between subject leaders and school-based trainers, and with professional studies leads, helps to align different aspects of training. Dedicated primary and secondary centre-based tutors play a pivotal role in the ATT partnership's comprehensive quality assurance processes. They ensure continuity and consistency of training across the entire programme. Crucially, they get to know trainees, mentors and school leaders very well. If there is ever any shortfall in provision, ATT partnership's tutors are swift to implement improvements to enable trainees to gain the most from their training.

Primary-phase trainees receive high-quality training in the teaching of early reading based on relevant, up-to-date research. Trainees gain secure knowledge enabling them to understand the principles behind the teaching of early reading and to use any approved phonics programme.

Leaders, including the steering group, have an accurate view of the strengths of the partnership. In identifying areas they want to continue to develop, they demonstrate a relentless pursuit of excellence. Since the previous inspection, leaders have maintained their high expectations of trainees' school-based training. This includes clear requirements on the time mentors and coaches should spend working with trainees. The impact of this is substantial. Weekly review meetings, team teaching, real-time coaching and joint planning all provide guidance and feedback that helps trainees to improve their practice securely.

School-based mentors benefit from a comprehensive programme of support and training. This ensures they are familiar with the requirements of the course and provide trainees with productive opportunities to apply their centre-based training to their work in schools.

Trainees receive highly effective safeguarding training. They are familiar with the local safeguarding risks of their placement schools and with referral processes should they have any concerns.

Leaders seek and respond to trainees' feedback to make improvements to the course, for example to support the management of workload.

There is a well-organised and well-established approach to the recruitment and selection of trainees. School leaders value the contribution that their work with the ATT partnership makes to help overcome recruitment challenges.

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

- The partnership meets the Department for Education statutory compliance criteria.

## ITE partnership details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70292
<b>Inspection number</b>	10216360

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.

<b>Type of ITE partnership</b>	SCITT
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary and secondary combined
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 May and 23 November 2016

### Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Bedeau	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lucy Bruce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jude Wilson	Her Majesty's Inspector

## Annex: Partnership settings, schools and colleges

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>ITE phases</b>
Ark Academy	135600	Primary and secondary
Ark Acton Academy	146318	Secondary
Ark Alexandra Academy	139821	Secondary
Ark All Saints Academy	139718	Secondary
Ark Atwood Primary Academy	137323	Primary
Ark Blacklands Primary Academy	141021	Primary
Ark Byron Primary Academy	142110	Primary
Ark Castledown Primary Academy	144083	Primary
Ark Conway Primary Academy	137331	Primary
Ark Elvin Academy	141019	Secondary
Ark Evelyn Grace	135830	Secondary
Ark Franklin Primary Academy	139830	Primary
Ark Globe Academy	135584	Secondary
Ark John Keats	139815	Primary and Secondary
Ark King Solomon Academy	135242	Primary and Secondary
Ark Priory Primary Academy	139699	Primary
Ark Putney Academy	138681	Secondary
Ark Tindal Primary Academy	138397	Primary
Ark Victoria Academy	141752	Secondary
Ark Walworth Academy	135315	Secondary
Bobby Moore Academy	144739	Secondary
City of London Academy (Southwark)	134222	Secondary
Goresbrook School	140962	Secondary
Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy	140210	Secondary
Phoenix Place	141701	Independent special school
Robertsbridge Community College	114588	Secondary

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