

University of the West of England

Faculty of Arts, Cultural Industries and Education, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QY

Inspection dates

7 to 10 March 2022

Inspection judgements

	Early years ITT	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase
Overall effectiveness	Good	Good	Good
The quality of education and training	Good	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable	Good	Good

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

From the interview onwards, trainees are aware that university staff have their best interests at heart. Across the partnership, centre-based and school-based staff prioritise trainees' personal well-being. Skilled practitioners support trainees who need to catch up, or are struggling emotionally, very effectively. Trainees know that they are given every chance to succeed.

Leaders have designed an ITE curriculum that is underpinned by academic rigour. Trainees show commitment to their course reading. They apply their academic learning in their teaching. Leaders' careful consideration of theory and practice deepens trainees' knowledge of subject content and teaching strategies.

Trainees are positive about their teaching placements. Most receive effective guidance from school-based mentors. However, there is some variation in the quality of mentors' work. This means that a minority of trainees do not benefit as much as their peers.

Communication between trainees, tutors, programme leaders and mentors across the partnership is generally timely and clear. Some trainees would prefer more notice when being assigned to their placement schools.

Early years trainees experience a well-thought-out curriculum that provides them with a deep understanding of child development from birth to five. This sets them up well to deepen their knowledge on placement. As a result, when they complete the course, they are ready to take on the early years teacher role.

Primary trainees benefit from a rich and well-structured training programme. Phonics lies at the heart of the primary course pathways. Important concepts such as sustainability and community permeate trainees' experiences. For example, a 'city schools project' develops trainees' awareness of equality and diversity. Trainees say that their training is well led. They describe leaders as 'responsive and personal'.

Secondary programme leaders have identified precisely what trainees need to know at each stage of the programme. Trainees say that their training is relevant preparation for employment. For example, trainees are well prepared for the practical realities of managing pupils' behaviour when they start teaching.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The University of the West of England has 688 trainees in total across the early years, primary and secondary phases. There are 18 trainees in the early years phase, 552 in the primary phase and 113 in the secondary phase.
- The majority of the early years trainees are taking a three-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) honours degree in Early Childhood with Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS). A small number of early years trainees are following an employment-based route. These trainees are studying for an MA in Education (Early Years) with EYTS.
- The primary-phase trainees follow a three-year undergraduate programme, a one-year postgraduate programme or a one-year School Direct fee-paid route. The undergraduate programme leads to the award of a BA honours degree in Primary Education covering the 5 to 11 age range. The postgraduate programme leads to either a Post-graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) in Primary Early Years Education, covering ages 3 to 7, or in Primary Education covering ages 5 to 11.
- In the secondary phase, the majority of trainees follow a one-year postgraduate programme or a one-year School Direct fee-paid programme. These programmes lead to the award of a PGCE. A small number of trainees are studying for a Bachelor of Science honours degree in Mathematics with qualified teacher status. This is a three-year undergraduate programme. Secondary PGCE trainees are enrolled on the following subject courses: art and design, biology with science, business, chemistry with science, computer science, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages, physical education or physics with science.
- The university works in partnership with approximately 280 schools and settings across 21 local authorities. This includes 13 nurseries, 187 primary schools, 77 secondary schools and one sixth-form college. Three of the secondary schools are independent schools. The School Direct fee-paid route is delivered for primary and secondary trainees in conjunction with four school partnerships or multi-academy trusts in the local area.
- The current inspection grades of schools and settings in the partnership range from requires improvement to outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by 10 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Ofsted Inspectors.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with a range of university staff and representatives from institutions in the partnership. Inspectors met with the deputy vice-chancellor, the executive dean of the faculty of arts, creative industries and education, the head of the department of education and childhood, the associate heads of department, programme leaders and partnership managers in early years, primary and secondary ITE. Inspectors met the faculty business manager and leaders with

responsibility for student experience, recruitment and student welfare. Inspectors met with subject leaders, tutors, school-based mentors, professional tutors, headteachers and representatives of the partnership steering group. Some of these meetings were carried out remotely.

- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including subject and phase curriculum plans, trainees' assignments, target-setting and mentoring records and information relating to the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Initial teacher training criteria'.
- Inspectors also reviewed a wide range of information relating to the leadership and management of the partnership. These documents included leaders' self-evaluation of their programmes and leaders' plans for improvement.
- Overall, inspectors visited 32 placement schools or settings.
- In the early years phase, inspectors completed focused reviews in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and mathematics and understanding the world. They visited five settings, met nine trainees and spoke with three former trainees. Some meetings were carried out remotely.
- In the primary phase, inspectors completed focused reviews in reading, history, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. They visited 18 schools, met 42 trainees and spoke with 20 early career teachers.
- In the secondary phase, inspectors completed focused reviews in art and design, computer science, English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. Inspectors visited nine schools. They met with 37 trainees and with four early career teachers.

Early years phase report

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

Course leaders and central teaching staff have strong subject expertise. Staff have high expectations of all trainees. Staff check trainees' subject knowledge systematically and adapt their teaching so that trainees learn quickly. Trainees apply their knowledge on placement and when undertaking research. As a result, they become highly skilled and reflective early years practitioners. There is a weighty focus on trainees gaining detailed knowledge of how to safeguard children and work with multi-agency staff. This means that trainees develop the key skills they need to lead in early years settings.

The centre-based curriculum is continuously improving. This year there is a much sharper focus on teaching phonics, early mathematics and the changes to the statutory requirements in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). This is increasing trainees' knowledge well. Trainees now gain placement experiences with babies earlier in the course, and this sets them up well for what comes next.

The curriculums for communication and language and personal, social and emotional development are particular strengths. They underpin the course. As a result, trainees understand the complexity of child development at the same time as identifying the individual strands of areas for learning. For example, leaders ensure that trainees identify PSED within their broader understanding that includes a focus on the unique child and the importance of attachments.

There is a considerable focus on helping trainees to support children's physical development. However, the curriculum does not distinguish this area of learning separately from other aspects of child development sufficiently well. This makes it more difficult for trainees to understand how to assess and intervene in a child's physical development.

Trainees gain a deep knowledge and understanding of the learning and development of babies and young children. The course prepares trainees very well for employment in any Nursery setting. Trainees gain significant knowledge on their final placements in Reception and/or Year 1. However, centre-based training does not provide trainees with sufficient curriculum knowledge beforehand. This makes it more difficult for trainees to expand and apply their understanding of observation, assessment and evaluation in the last year of the EYFS.

The involvement of partnership settings is effective. University staff communicate well with setting-based mentors and provide them with training. However, they do not quality assure the mentoring systems consistently well. The work of the Early Years Steering Committee is strengthening after a dip caused by the recent pandemic.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in the quality assurance arrangements for checking the quality of setting-based mentoring. Trainees' experiences of mentoring can vary across placements. The partnership needs to ensure that the quality assurance of mentoring strengthens so that mentoring practices are effective for all trainees on every placement.
- The curriculum provides trainees with the knowledge they need, but some areas of learning are not as clearly defined as others. Not as much attention is given to children's learning in the Reception year. Leaders should address these issues so that trainees have the same deep knowledge in all aspects of the early years curriculum.

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 have thought carefully about their ITE curriculum. They have successfully designed and implemented an ITE curriculum that develops trainees' pedagogical and subject expertise well. Leaders have ensured that the Department for Education's core content framework is included in full.

Leaders are highly ambitious for trainees. This is an important factor in trainees' choice of the programme. It is also an important reason why schools join the partnership. Many school leaders are strikingly positive about appointing trainees from these programmes. They feel that trainees are well prepared for the demands of teaching.

Relevant and up-to-date educational research and practice inform the curriculum design. Programme leaders and tutors use their wider expertise effectively to enhance the curriculum. Partners praise the disciplinary subject knowledge that trainees acquire prior to starting their school placements. Underpinning all training routes is a curriculum that is deeply rooted in leaders' values. Leaders have made sure that 'sustainable education' is interwoven throughout the curriculum content. This provides trainees with additional knowledge of local, national and global educational challenges.

Trainees are fully prepared to teach early reading and systematic synthetic phonics. The programme is suitably organised so that trainees have an in-depth understanding of how to teach phonics. Programme leaders make robust checks to ensure that trainees have the knowledge they need before attending their placement schools. They provide trainees with wider opportunities to work with pupils who find reading challenging. This leads to trainees developing their expertise very quickly.

Partners at placement schools are positive about the communication and support that they receive. However, leaders' checks on the quality of mentoring are not as thorough as they should be. For example, some mentors are uncertain about the centre's new approach to checking trainees' progress. In part, this is due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, this has led to some variability in target setting for some trainees.

Trainees know how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). They understand the significance of their role in ensuring that pupils can access learning and reach their full potential.

Programme leaders have suitable systems in place to check on the impact of the curriculum on trainees. However, leaders do not use their quality assurance processes as well as they should. For example, the information gathered from their checks on trainees is sometimes not used precisely enough. As a result, some curriculum content is not always having the desired impact on trainees' progress.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- Programme leaders use many systems to check the impact of their training programmes on trainees' learning. However, leaders do not always use this information well enough to develop the ITE curriculum further. This means that trainees do not understand some curriculum content as deeply as they should. Leaders need to use the information that they receive with greater precision to strengthen their training programmes further.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of mentoring across the partnership are not as robust as they need to be. Some mentors are not meeting the partnership's expectations. For example, some mentors are not confident in implementing the new system for assessing trainees' learning. Centre leaders should ensure that they develop their systems for quality assurance so that all trainees benefit from a high standard of mentoring.

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?

University leaders see it as a moral imperative to provide professional and competent teachers who understand local and national issues. Leaders work with integrity. Consequently, they have devised a logically sequenced ITE curriculum that includes the minimum entitlement of the core content framework and goes much further. The provider's transformational teaching framework adds important elements such as autonomy and equity that enhance trainees' understanding and practice.

The secondary programme produces trainees with the skills and up-to-date knowledge of subject curriculums that they need to start work as teachers. Partnership school leaders readily recruit trainees from the secondary programme. Trainees have a proficient understanding of behaviour management, fundamental British values and how to support pupils that may be vulnerable. Trainees receive high-quality centre-based training from subject experts. The great majority of trainees put this training into practice in their placement schools. However, a small number of trainees do not apply fully their learning about provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language.

The information that school-based staff receive from provider leaders is comprehensive. It explains exactly what education trainees receive in the centre before their first placement and in the four weeks between placements. As a result, staff in partnership schools and the centre have a shared understanding of how the different aspects of the programme fit together.

The centre-based staff use suitable formative assessment processes to ensure that trainees are learning the intended curriculum. They receive regular information from trainees on placement and so they are well informed about how trainees' learning is developing. Both trainees and centre staff are highly reflective.

Provider leaders give school-based mentors clear expectations of what to do in their role. They have managed this effectively despite the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is variability in mentors' subject-specific skills. Consequently, a minority of trainees have not developed the same depth of understanding in their subject as their peers.

Partnership leaders have established systems of monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of the ITE curriculum. These systems work well for most schools in the partnership as they have a long-standing relationship. In some schools, particularly schools that have joined the partnership more recently, monitoring has not been as successful. As a result, some variations in the quality of mentoring remain.

Trainees have many ways to evaluate and feedback on their experiences to provider leaders: discussions, surveys, assignments and through trainee representatives. Leaders take note and have made changes, often to ease the workload.

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

[Information for the partnership and appropriate authority]

- The arrangements for the appointment and induction of new mentors are not sufficiently demanding. This leads to differences in trainees' experiences of mentoring. The partnership should ensure that the arrangements for the quality assurance of mentoring are strengthened further.
- The quality of centre-based training on the provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is secure. However, some trainees are not demonstrating a sufficient understanding in their own teaching. This is often compounded by their school experiences. Partnership leaders should ensure that school-based training fully equips trainees to adapt their teaching when on placement in schools.

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	70079
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This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) 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 Provider	HIE
Phases provided	Early Years Primary Secondary
Date of previous inspection	2 to 5 December 2013

Inspection team

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Jen Gibbs	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Reynolds	Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Partnership settings, schools and colleges

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

Name	URN	ITE phase	Current Ofsted grade
Baker Street Nursery	EY551871	Early Years	Good
Halley Day Nursery	EY348818	Early Years	Good
Oldfield Road Nursery	EY549031	Early Years	Good
St Pauls Nursery School & Children's Centre	108901	Early Years	Outstanding
Little Foxes Forest School	2652715	Early Years	No grade
Avonmouth CofE Primary School	109140	Primary	Good
Ashcombe Primary School	109096	Primary	Good
Badocks Wood E-Act Academy	144779	Primary	No grade
Blackhorse Primary School	109121	Primary	Good
Bowsland Green Primary School	130257	Primary	Good
Cabot Primary School	108992	Primary	Good
Christ Church CofE Junior School	109165	Primary	Good
Elmlea Infant School	147476	Primary	No grade
Frampton Cotterell CofE Primary School	109160	Primary	Good
Hannah Moore Primary	109110	Primary	Good
Henbury Court	139116	Primary	Good
Henleaze Infant School	108934	Primary	Good
Portishead Primary School	143282	Primary	Good
St Peter's Portishead	143285	Primary	Good
St Martins CofE Primary School	144921	Primary	Good
Victoria Park Primary	144863	Primary	Good
Wraxall CofE Primary School	146004	Primary	Good
Yatton CofE Junior	145263	Primary	Good
Blaise High School	147219	Secondary	No grade
Bristol Cathedral Choir School	135575	Secondary	Good
Bristol Grammar School	109369	Secondary	Not applicable
Lydiard Park Academy	137264	Secondary	Good
Great Western Academy	145883	Secondary	No grade
Hanham Woods Academy	141042	Secondary	Good
Priory Community School	137300	Secondary	Outstanding
St Katherine's School	142853	Secondary	Good
Wydean School and Sixth Form Centre	137382	Secondary	Good

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