

Essex Teacher Training

The Harlow Centre, Partridge Road, Harlow CM18 6TE

Inspection dates

7 to 10 February 2022

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 receive a very uneven quality of teacher training. Their experience is too dependent on the strengths and weaknesses of their placement schools. Partnership leaders have not made clear what all trainees will learn. Trainers, tutors and mentors lack a shared clarity about what essential knowledge to teach trainees. Trainees do not receive consistent and effective support from centre- and school-based staff. Many trainees receive poor-quality mentoring and imprecise targets for improvement.

Trainees are not suitably prepared to adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Primary-phase trainees gain some essential knowledge about how pupils learn to read. Even so, this training is not planned effectively. Trainees do not benefit from a well-organised reading curriculum that is securely integrated into taught sessions and school placements.

Trainees do not receive sufficient guidance on how to use up-to-date educational research to improve their practice.

Trainees appreciate the pastoral support that they receive, including help to manage their workload. Trainees value the training on mental health and the opportunity to become mental health first aiders.

Information about this ITE partnership

- Essex Teacher Training is part of Essex County Council. It provides training for 72 primary and 58 secondary trainees.
- The partnership provides training in the 3 to 11 primary-age range and in the 11 to 16 and 14 to 19 secondary-age ranges.
- There are 110 schools in the partnership.
- Trainees undertake the SCITT, School Direct (salaried and non-salaried) or assessment only routes to qualified teacher status. There is an option for trainees to complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) with Anglia Ruskin University.
- The lead schools in the partnership are Academies Enterprise Trust, Chipping Hill Primary (Witham), Clockhouse Primary (Romford), The Eastwood Academy (Southend), Merrylands Primary School (Basildon), Old Ford Primary Academy (Tower Hamlets), Ortu Corringham Primary, St Alban's Catholic Academy (Harlow), St Thomas More's Catholic Primary (Colchester), Tidemill Academy (Deptford), Woodside Academy (Grays).
- Almost all partner schools are judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs), who met with the programme leaders, trainers and tutors of Essex Teacher Training. Inspectors also met with representatives of Anglian Ruskin University.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the executive and quality committee.
- Inspectors spoke with eight primary trainees and eight secondary trainees. Inspectors also spoke with mentors and early career teachers.
- In the primary phase, inspectors completed focused reviews into early reading and foundation subjects as a whole. In the secondary phase, inspectors undertook focused reviews in chemistry, English, mathematics and physical education.
- Inspectors visited five primary schools and six secondary schools to meet with trainees, mentors and headteachers. Some observations were made of trainees' teaching.

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

Systems for recruiting trainees are rigorous. Almost all trainees secure employment in partnership schools. Most trainees feel well supported by leaders and tutors at the centre, as well as by mentors in their placement schools. All trainees develop essential knowledge about managing pupils' behaviour and the safeguarding of pupils.

Programme leaders have not designed an ambitious, coherent curriculum. They have not ensured that the Department for Education's 'ITT Core Content Framework' (CCF) has been fully integrated into the ITE curriculum. Trainees are not receiving the minimum curriculum content to which they are entitled.

Programme leaders do not have systems in place that provide them with sufficient control or oversight of the quality and content of the training. They have not ensured that school- and centre-based training consistently align. Subject training is often designed in isolation and does not set out the important knowledge trainees need to know. So, the quality of subject training is too variable. This lack of a systematic approach to ensuring that all trainees gain the knowledge that they need leads to individual primary- and secondary-phase trainees experiencing a very different quality of training. Leaders at all levels are not well placed to correct the failings that exist. For example, weaknesses in training in some subjects have meant that trainees are not taught the correct terminology or important concepts in core subjects such as mathematics.

The quality of training and support for mentors is too inconsistent across the partnership. Programme leaders have not set out clear standards and expectations for the role of mentor. So, the quality of mentoring trainees receive is too dependent on the support given by each placement school. Too many partnership leaders do not understand the role and purpose of the CCF. External tutors and mentors use the CCF and the teachers' standards inappropriately to assess trainees' progress throughout the course. Trainees are too often set targets that are imprecise or unhelpful in supporting them to make progress. Leaders responsible for quality assurance do not make enough checks on the quality and appropriateness of the targets that are set.

The primary and secondary programmes do not define the knowledge trainees need so they can plan, adapt and teach a curriculum effectively for pupils with SEND or those who speak EAL. This leaves trainees ill-prepared to improve the quality of education for pupils with additional needs.

Programme leaders do not provide opportunities for trainees to learn how to become critical thinkers. Training manuals encourage trainees to access a range of research. However, there is no clear rationale for the choices of literature within the programme. There is insufficient direction and expectation as to how trainees should apply this aspect of their learning in their teaching practice.

Trainees receive training to teach early reading, including decoding using systematic synthetic phonics. However, this is not sufficiently woven into the partnership programme. There is too little focus on teaching trainees how to adapt for and support pupils who find learning to read challenging.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- The ITE curriculum lacks coherence and does not cover the minimum entitlement described in the CCF. Leaders should carry out a rigorous review of the curriculum in

each phase and subject. Leaders should then take appropriate steps to make sure that the curriculum: is suitably ambitious; covers the full entitlement described in the CCF; and is designed around subject and age-phase dimensions.

- Leaders, tutors and mentors misunderstand the role and purpose of the CCF. This means that trainees' ongoing progress through the curriculum is not accurately assessed. Consequently, there are significant gaps in trainees' curriculum and subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that tutors and mentors develop a thorough understanding of the CCF and its appropriate use. Leaders should ensure that tutors and mentors assess trainees using the teacher-training curriculum as the progression model. Leaders must then ensure that trainees know and remember more of the intended teacher-training curriculum.
- The quality of mentoring is too variable. Too often, the targets mentors set for trainees lack the precision necessary to improve trainees' teaching and curriculum expertise. Leaders should make certain that mentoring, including setting targets, broadens and enriches trainees' subject curriculum knowledge and supports improving the quality of trainees' teaching expertise.
- Leaders across the partnership do not have an accurate oversight of the quality of the teacher-training curriculum. Leaders are poorly placed to evaluate and improve the quality of the training programme with sufficient clarity or focus. This means that they do not spot, and take appropriate action, when trainees receive a poor-quality experience. Leaders must ensure that they put in place suitable quality assurance systems to make sure trainees experience at least good-quality teacher training.

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, in this case, 3 to 11 primary-age range and in the 11 to 16 and 14 to 19 secondary-age ranges
- criterion C3.4, which requires ITT partnerships to monitor, evaluate and moderate all aspects of provision rigorously and demonstrate how these contribute to securing improvement in training and assessment of trainees.

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70265
Inspection number	10189273

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) 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	4 to 7 March 2013

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Katherine Douglas	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kim Hall	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul 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:

Name	URN	ITE phases	Date joined partnership	Current Ofsted grade
Great Baddow High School	136904	Secondary	September 2013	Good
New Rickstones Academy	135651	Secondary	September 2013	Good
Ortu Gable Hall	136854	Secondary	September 2013	Requires Improvement
Pemberley Academy	140380	Primary	September 2016	Good
Southchurch High School	143144	Secondary	January 2022	Not yet inspected
Southend High for Girls	136444	Secondary	September 2021	Outstanding
St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School	138164	Primary	September 2013	Outstanding
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School	138311	Primary	September 2013	Outstanding
St Albans Catholic Academy	137056	Primary	September 2013	Good
The Henry Moore Primary School	142253	Primary	January 2022	Good
The Sandon School	137240	Secondary	September 2013	Good

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