

Mid Somerset Consortium for Teacher Training

Crispin School, Church Road, Street BA16 0AD

Inspection dates

14 to 17 February 2022

Inspection judgements

Secondary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education and training

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

Trainees speak favourably about training as a member of this partnership. Many have chosen this route because of its flexibility and emphasis on learning in schools. They look forward to joining the teaching profession. Trainees are prepared well to meet the standards expected of professional behaviour. They see themselves as part of the school community and are treated as such.

Time spent in school and centrally based training support trainees to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Trainees understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe from harm. Effective communication and timely support from partnership leaders and school colleagues enable trainees to achieve qualified teacher status.

Leaders have not built the curriculum around the subjects that trainees teach. There is too much emphasis on generic approaches to teaching rather than what it means to be an emerging teacher of a subject. For example, there is not sufficient subject-specific depth for trainees to understand fully how to adapt teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

There is not enough cohesion and integration between different parts of the curriculum. School partners' depth of understanding of centre-based training is variable. This results in disparity in how well trainees consolidate their understanding in their school placement.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The partnership currently has 21 trainees.
- The partnership covers the secondary phase.
- At the time of the inspection, trainees were placed in 12 secondary schools in Somerset and North Dorset.
- The partnership operates postgraduate, School Direct fee-paying and salaried routes and apprenticeship routes into teaching. Trainees are offered the chance to study for a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education.
- The partnership includes schools that were judged as outstanding, good and requires improvement at their previous inspection. One school visited during this inspection was an independent school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team included two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with partnership leaders, members of the management group and members of the strategic partnership groups. Inspectors also spoke with trainees, former trainees, school-based mentors, professional tutors, a visiting tutor from the partnership and senior leaders in schools.
- Inspectors met with 10 trainees and six former trainees.
- As part of the inspection, focused reviews were carried out in English, science and drama.
- Inspectors visited eight partnership schools.

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

Partners are committed to the development of this teacher training programme. They see it as a valuable pathway into teaching for trainees who have a diverse range of experiences prior to joining the course. Over time, it has proved to be a positive source of recruitment. The selection process to become a trainee is rigorous. Leaders check both trainees' motivation and experience to become a teacher. Trainees' placements are selected carefully, and many go on to work in partnership schools.

Governors and leaders seek the views of partners to inform their oversight. However, there is an over-generous view of the quality and consistency of the provision. This is because quality assurance processes do not have sufficient rigour or objectivity. Too much onus is placed on what leaders are told rather than a robust evaluation of whether the ITE curriculum is implemented as expected.

Mentors attend training and leaders disseminate regular information about centrally based training. Nonetheless, there is inconsistency in how well the expectations of school

partners are put into practice. Where there is stronger practice, trainees increase their confidence in the classroom. Where this is weaker, school partners do not understand how their role aligns explicitly with the centre-based programme. In these cases, there is too much reliance on what trainees perceive their needs to be.

The curriculum complies with statutory requirements. Leaders are starting to think about how to build up trainees' understanding incrementally. There are some strengths, such as how trainees develop their expertise in behaviour management. Crucially, however, the curriculum is not yet designed around trainees' respective subjects. The curriculum does not sufficiently familiarise trainees with the scope and richness of the knowledge that pupils can acquire in their subject. Trainees are not guided well enough to understand the complexities of ordering pupils' learning in a way that supports them to know more and remember more over time.

Trainees do not draw routinely on educational research to inform and extend their development. Leaders have begun to address this but, at present, the academic grounding of the curriculum is underdeveloped. For example, trainees talk about and experiment with generic pedagogical approaches. However, they do not talk knowledgeably enough about the evidence-based research that underpins these or how they can apply this to their subject.

While leaders are developing the use of formative assessment to develop trainees' practice, this is not understood fully by all. There is still premature use of generic criteria adapted from the teachers' standards and the Department for Education's 'ITT core content framework'. The 'progression matrix' does not gauge specifically how well trainees are acquiring the knowledge set out in the curriculum. Furthermore, the quality of the targets that trainees devise is variable. They do not always pinpoint exactly what it is that trainees need to develop and how they can achieve this.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not developed the curriculum astutely enough around the subject-specific content that trainees need to know. This means that trainees are not as well prepared as they could be to be a teacher of their subject. Leaders need to ensure that trainees know how to make meaningful connections between the generic principles that they study and their application in particular subjects.
- The different elements of the curriculum do not link together into a coherent and well-sequenced whole. School partners who provide training do not always use the information they are given by the partnership to plan accordingly. At times, a focus on school priorities takes precedence over the expectations of what trainees should cover as part of their training. Leaders need to ensure that all trainees consolidate and develop their understanding of all aspects of the ITE curriculum in their school placement.
- There is too much variability in the training that trainees receive in placement schools. Leaders rely too much on what they have been told rather than balancing

this with an objective view of the impact their actions are having. Leaders need to ensure that they use their quality assurance processes robustly to gain an accurate picture of the quality and implementation of the curriculum.

- There is a lack of clarity about how trainees' competencies are assessed throughout the course. When trainees review their practice, their next steps are sometimes too generalised to understand fully how they can make progress towards achieving them. Leaders need to develop their use of assessment, including ongoing formative assessment, so that it is aligned closely to what trainees should know and understand from the planned curriculum.
- The use of credible evidence-based research to inform trainees' practice is developing but is not embedded within the curriculum. Trainees do read educational research, but they are not guided explicitly enough towards what it is important for them to consider and how this underpins their practice. This means that trainees sometimes use generic approaches without the depth of insight needed to know why these might be appropriate for what they are teaching. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is grounded in sufficient academic rigour to further develop trainees' understanding and expertise.

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	70231
Inspection number	10213532

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	Secondary
Date of previous inspection	14 to 17 January 2013

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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