

# University of Buckingham

Vinson Building, Hunter Street, Buckingham MK18 1EG

## Inspection dates

9 to 12 May

## Inspection judgements

Primary age-phase

### Overall effectiveness

**Good**

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

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

A strong team of centre- and school-based trainers support trainees to succeed. Trainees forge positive professional relationships with their mentors, tutors and colleagues. They make valuable contributions to the wider life of their schools.

Centre-based training provides trainees with models of subject-specific pedagogy, which trainees then apply to their teaching. Working with subject advisers and specialist teachers in schools helps trainees to improve their subject knowledge and boosts their confidence in teaching across the primary curriculum.

Leaders communicate regularly with trainees and provide helpful documentation and resources, including videos, recorded online training sessions and newsletters. The professional development plan and the e-portfolio help trainees to organise their work and make sure that they keep up with all the requirements of the course.

While trainees are largely based in one school for the entirety of their training, they have valuable opportunities to experience contrasting settings. They learn and develop new approaches to behaviour management and working with pupils with a diversity of backgrounds and needs. They are alert to any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders ensure that trainees receive support and guidance so that they cope well with the rigours of the course, including managing their workload. Trainees are well prepared to apply their training in any school.

## **Information about this ITE provider**

- The University of Buckingham Faculty of Education offers a wide range of initial and additional teacher and leadership training courses. This inspection only considered those routes leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) in the primary phase.
- The University of Buckingham initial teacher education (ITE) partnership offers a post graduate certificate in education (PGCE) with QTS, assessment-only and apprenticeship routes into teaching.
- The partnership comprises schools located across England. Approximately two thirds are independent schools. Most of the schools are graded good or above, either by Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate. Occasionally, overseas schools work with the partnership.
- In order to be eligible to join the programme, applicants must be employed as a non-qualified teacher in a school where the school-based elements of the training will take place.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 120 trainees on primary-phase QTS routes.
- The partnership works with external employment partners for those completing a teaching apprenticeship, and to support the recruitment of trainees employed previously as teaching assistants in state schools.

## **Information about this inspection**

- This inspection was conducted by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).
- This was a reinspection of the primary phase following the judgement of requires improvement of the primary phase at the previous inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with university leaders, including the dean of education, the director of programmes, the head of primary teacher training and the head of apprenticeships. Inspectors also met with subject advisers, lead tutors, tutors, the head of mentors and the operations manager. Inspectors visited six partnership schools and communicated with a further 22 schools. Inspectors met with 21 trainees representing all primary QTS training routes, 11 mentors and four early career teachers. They also met with school leaders, including members of the partnership's advisory group. Some meetings were held virtually.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of partnership documents, including those related to curriculum planning, course review and evaluation, quality assurance and minutes of meetings of the advisory group. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of training materials and resources, including videos and a live online training session.
- Inspectors looked at the responses completed by 66 centre- and school-based staff and 65 trainees.
- Inspectors undertook focused reviews in art, early reading, geography, modern foreign languages and science.
- In order to check the partnership's conformity with the ITE compliance criteria, inspectors met with university staff and reviewed documents relating to recruitment and selection, the partnership agreement and records of safeguarding checks.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious and well-organised ITE curriculum, underpinned by educational theory and academic research. Subject leaders and course tutors give careful thought to the key content and sequence of centre-based training. Trainees acquire essential knowledge and skills early in the course to enable them to embark on their school-based training with growing confidence. As they progress, trainees take a more in-depth approach to key aspects of their professional practice. For example, they develop knowledge and expertise in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, drawing on their experiences in school.

Leaders have cross-referenced all aspects of the ITE curriculum to the core content framework so that the required elements of trainees' learning are integrated through the course.

The provider has strong and productive links with partnership schools. School-based trainers are clear about the course requirements because of leaders' explicit expectations. The last year has seen effective work to bolster trainees' preparedness to teach across the primary curriculum. Mentors and tutors track trainees' progress and use a range of formative assessment strategies to identify areas for further development.

Leaders expect that learning to teach early reading is a priority for all trainees. The course programme, including lectures and follow-up sessions, provides trainees with a strong understanding of the importance of systematic synthetic phonics. Trainees recall well the taught content of the course and apply this effectively to their experiences in school.

Leaders and tutors oversee the quality of provision for trainees well, including scrutinising the readiness of mentors to fulfil their role. Leaders provide a range of professional development opportunities for school-based trainers to address any training needs and to maintain high-quality provision. Leaders check that trainees and mentors have completed expected activities and experiences. There are a few instances where shortfalls are not picked up as promptly as leaders expect, for example that trainees and mentors access specific training opportunities. Leaders have recently revised their systems, including introducing the new role of lead mentors, to further tighten the quality assurance processes.

Leaders have built up an extensive range of online resources that has been integrated with the return to in-person centre-based training following the easing of pandemic restrictions. While seen to be valuable to those who regularly use the course materials and training, the volume and how these are organised are overwhelming for a few, and helpful information is sometimes missed. Leaders are reviewing the styles of presentation of training and accompanying resources.

Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the partnership and recognise and respond productively to priorities for improvement. The newly formed advisory board provides a forum for schools to work in partnership with the university to contribute to the strategic leadership of the ITE provision.

## **What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the primary phase?**

### **(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders' overview of school-based training occasionally misses when trainees and mentors have not completed an activity as expected as part of the training programme. Leaders should embed their revised quality assurance processes so that any gaps in trainees' and mentors' training experiences are identified swiftly and resolved.
- The training programme uses a wide range of course materials, guidance, and recorded and in-person training sessions. The extent and accessibility of the resources are overwhelming for some, meaning that key documents and training opportunities are occasionally missed. Leaders should ensure that their review of the delivery and organisation of training materials identifies the optimum presentation so that key documents are accessed by all trainees.

## **Does the ITE provider's primary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?**

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

## **ITE provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70172
<b>Inspection number</b>	10230359

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 set out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2020.

<b>Type of ITE provider</b>	Higher education institution
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary Secondary
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 to 17 June 2021

## **Inspection team**

Amanda Carter-Fraser, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Colenso	Her Majesty's Inspector
Noeman Anwar	Her Majesty's Inspector

## Annex: Placement settings, schools and colleges

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

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)
Claire's Court School	110153	Primary
New College School	123291	Primary
Robertswood School	110360	Primary
Selborne Primary School	101886	Primary
St Mary's School	110544	Primary
Summer Fields School	123293	Primary

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