

# Coventry University

National Institute of Teaching and Education, Coventry University, Whittlebury Park,  
Towcester NN12 8WP

## Inspection dates

3 to 6 May 2022

## Inspection judgements

	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Good	Good
The quality of education and training	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	N/A	N/A

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

The provider offers an innovative and flexible delivery model. The great majority of centre-based training is delivered online to trainees who are located across the country. Full-time trainees spend five days a week in placement schools and can choose when to access their online learning. The provider offers employment-based and tuition-fee training routes, multiple start dates in the year, and part-time options. The high degree of flexibility is a key reason why many trainees choose this provider.

All training routes prepare trainees well for their future teaching careers. Centre-based and in-school training complement each other well. Trainees become confident in teaching their subjects and phases. They learn how to manage behaviour and how to adapt their teaching to meet the additional needs that some pupils have.

Trainees are supported well throughout their course, both in placement schools and by university staff. University lead mentors (ULMs) meet a small group of trainees each week. They are on hand whenever additional help is needed. Trainees speak very highly of their ULMs and the support they provide.

Leadership is very effective. Leaders constantly review the course's quality, using feedback from trainees and placement schools. They have successfully addressed early issues such

as communication with partner schools. They are continuing to refine and improve the content and delivery of the initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum.

## Information about this ITE provider

- The provider has been operating since September 2020.
- There are 322 trainees in training this academic year. There are 173 trainees in the primary age-phase and 149 trainees in the secondary age-phase.
- This provider has 552 partner schools. Partner schools comprise 267 primary schools, 259 secondary schools and 26 special schools. There are 452 schools that have placed at least one trainee during this academic year. The Ofsted inspection judgements of the partner schools that have placed trainees this year range from outstanding to requires improvement.
- The provider offers provider-led postgraduate teaching apprenticeship and School Direct routes into teaching. All trainees who complete their programme achieve a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Primary-phase trainees qualify in ages five to 11 or seven to 11. Secondary-phase trainees qualify in ages 11 to 16, 11 to 18 or 14 to 19.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by seven of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector.
- Inspectors met with the executive director of the National Institute of Teaching and Education (NITE), the acting head of initial teacher training (ITT), who is also head of primary course management, the head of secondary course management, the deputy executive director of operations, and the primary and secondary schools partnership development managers. Inspectors also held meetings with members of the NITE governing board, representatives from the school steering group and a group of ULMs.
- Inspectors visited seven secondary schools and eight primary schools. On these visits, they visited trainees' lessons, observed in-school mentor feedback and held discussions with headteachers, professional tutors, in-school mentors, trainees and early career teachers (ECTs).
- Inspectors conducted focused reviews in early reading, mathematics, humanities and creative subjects in the primary age-phase, and English, mathematics, science, music, art and design, languages and physical education in the secondary age-phase. They sampled areas of the ITT core content framework (CCF) as part of these focused reviews.
- Inspectors spoke to 53 trainees and 14 ECTs.
- Inspectors considered responses to the trainee and staff online questionnaires.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including provider policies, self-evaluation documents and development plans.

# Primary phase report

## **What works well in the primary phase and what needs to be done better?**

Leaders' vision for the primary phase is ambitious and they are keen to improve even further. The centre-based training is built around professional studies and subject-specific training. Where appropriate, these two strands dovetail and what is learned in one supports learning in the other. Leaders have carefully considered the content and order of training. As a result, trainees' knowledge and skills develop well over time. Trainees have many opportunities to put their training into practice through the ongoing school-based element of their course.

Leaders used the CCF as the starting point when designing the ITE curriculum. They have threaded the CCF throughout the programme successfully. There are many examples where the ITE curriculum goes beyond the CCF. Relevant and up-to-date research underpins the entire programme.

The subject-specific strand of the programme is weighted in favour of the core subjects. The remainder of the training is equally divided between the foundation subjects. The teaching of systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) is given a high priority. This gives trainees a secure grounding in phonics on which they build when teaching phonics in their school placement. The SSP training is a key part of the early reading element of the course. Trainees are prepared to teach early reading well through this comprehensive programme.

The provider has forged close working relationships with its partnership schools. These relationships are supported by close links between ULMs and in-school mentors. In-school mentors speak positively about the clear and open lines of communication with the university. They get a swift response from ULMs if they have any concerns or questions. Trainees also appreciate the purposeful support and guidance they receive from their ULM.

The role of the in-school mentor is crucial to ensuring that trainees get the opportunity and guidance to put their centre-based training into practice. Many in-school mentors have a clear understanding of the centre-based training, and they support this process well. However, course leaders have not ensured that all in-school mentors fully understand the course content. This means that there are some inconsistencies in the quality of mentoring.

Trainees speak very positively about the quality and usefulness of training about teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They also value the safeguarding training that is delivered at the start of the programme. Both are built on during their time in school. However, although trainees recall training about the Equality Act 2010, their understanding of equalities is limited.

The assessment of trainees is rooted in ongoing formative assessments that feed into termly summative assessments. The assessment process is multi-layered and checks that trainees are learning the intended ITE curriculum. All assessment information is recorded in an online tool to which trainees, in-school mentors, ULMs and visiting assessors have

access. This further supports the joined-up working between the university and the partnership schools.

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

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

- Leaders have not ensured that all in-school mentors have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the centre-based training. In these instances, trainees' centre-based training and school-placement experiences are not as well integrated as they could be. Leaders need to increase the level of purposeful engagement from in-school mentors, so that they have a clearer understanding of the centre-based training element of the programme.
- Some trainees have a limited, and at times confused, understanding of the Equality Act 2010. As a result, they are not sufficiently aware of some of the groups with protected characteristics who are at risk of direct or indirect discrimination. Leaders need to ensure that all trainees have a clear understanding of the Equality Act 2010, including how they can promote and integrate it into their teaching practice.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

# Secondary phase report

## **What works well in the secondary phase and what needs to be done better?**

The secondary ITE curriculum is ambitious and demanding. Trainees learn through a blend of online professional studies modules, training in school, tutorials and reading. Trainees complete pertinent in-school tasks. These bind the programme together well. They help trainees to connect teaching theory and practice and ready them for the profession.

Leaders have woven up-to-date and relevant research through the ITE curriculum. This enables trainees to extend, discuss, explore and question their knowledge. Leaders' careful selection of research and reading has ensured that trainees' learning goes beyond the scope of the CCF. For instance, trainees learn in detail how brain development affects pupils' behaviour and learning.

Leaders have designed a series of subject-specific webinars to complement trainees' other learning. In some subjects, these are an integral part of the ITE curriculum. However, in a few subjects, this is not so. Some trainees commented that these sessions are interesting, but not always well timed or linked with their other learning. Other trainees remarked that the material focuses too much on subject content, rather than on how to teach it. As a result, this element of the ITE curriculum does not have as much impact in improving trainees' subject teaching as it could.

Skilled ULMs support trainees academically and pastorally. ULMs meet with trainees each week to discuss the professional studies modules and their school placements. They offer appropriate challenge, advice and guidance. Trainees value and benefit from this excellent support.

Leaders make appropriate checks to ensure that trainees receive good-quality in-school mentoring. They select and train in-school mentors carefully. Leaders set out the expectations of in-school mentors clearly. Visiting assessors observe in-school mentors' practice and give constructive advice. Consequently, most mentoring is effective. However, leaders have not ensured that all in-school mentors engage with, and understand fully, other aspects of the ITE curriculum. This means that discussions are sometimes reliant on trainees setting the agenda for meetings rather than these being driven by the in-school mentors' knowledge of what trainees have learned. Leaders' improvement plans rightly focus on this.

Trainees' progress in learning the ITE curriculum is reviewed regularly by in-school mentors and ULMs. Trainees work with their in-school mentor to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and set purposeful targets. Leaders set trainees regular formal assignments that bring together everything they have learned. As a result, leaders know how trainees are progressing and can offer support when appropriate.

The secondary phase is well led. Leaders constantly review the effectiveness of the course. They know its strengths and areas for development well. As a result, they continue to make considered changes to develop and improve the course. Leaders seek trainees' views, acting quickly to make further improvements. For example, trainees raised concerns about workload. Leaders listened and made changes, reducing the number of in-school tasks and simplifying processes for uploading work.

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

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

- Leaders have not ensured that all in-school mentors have an in-depth knowledge of the scope and content of the ITE curriculum. Consequently, some mentoring does not help trainees build and strengthen their knowledge of the centre-based training as well as it could. Leaders should ensure that all in-school mentors understand the professional studies and subject-specific elements of the ITE curriculum, so that they can bring further depth to their discussions with trainees.
- In some subjects, centre-based training concentrates too much on the subject content, rather than how to teach it. In some cases, it is not well aligned with the other aspects of the ITE curriculum. This means that trainees do not develop their subject teaching as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that in all subjects, this element of the ITE curriculum explores fully with trainees how to teach their subject. When considering this, leaders should ensure that subject-specific centre-based training is well aligned and sequenced to meet the needs of each cohort of trainees.

## **Does the ITE provider secondary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?**

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

## ITE provider details

**Unique reference number** 2574148

**Inspection number** 10213949

This inspection was carried out 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.

**Type of ITE provider** Higher education institution

**Phases provided** Primary  
Secondary

**Date of previous inspection** Not previously inspected

## Inspection team

Alun Williams, Overall lead inspector Her Majesty's Inspector

Wayne Simner, Phase lead inspector (primary) Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Tustian, Phase lead inspector (secondary) Her Majesty's Inspector

Eve Morris Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Forrest Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Morris-King Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Howes Her Majesty's Inspector

Richard Gill Ofsted Inspector



## Annex: Provider settings, schools and colleges

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

<b>Name</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>ITE phase(s)</b>
Abington Vale Primary School	138952	Primary
Bilton School	145575	Secondary
Bloxham School	123275	Secondary
George Eliot Academy	137079	Secondary
King's Oak Primary School	109502	Primary
Shortstown Primary School	144546	Primary
Southam College	143905	Secondary
St Michael's Catholic School	110516	Secondary
St Peter's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy	142724	Primary
Stoke Primary School	103679	Primary
The Revel Church of England (Aided) Primary School	130878	Primary
Thomas Becket Catholic School	142747	Secondary
Walgrave Primary School	121864	Primary
Weston Favell Academy	136948	Secondary
Wolsey House Primary School	120039	Primary

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