

TES Institute

TES Global, 26 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4HQ

Inspection dates

9 to 12 May 2022

Inspection judgements

	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase
Overall effectiveness	Good	Good
The quality of education and training	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement	Requires improvement

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

Trainees at the TES Institute become confident, reflective teachers. They benefit from personalised advice from experienced mentors and pathway tutors, who are, as trainees say, 'only a text message away'. Trainees get a thorough grounding in subject knowledge, which helps them to understand what to teach and how to teach it. Trainees are proud of the contribution they make to their placement and employing schools. Headteachers said that trainees are not just 'passive recipients' of training but are 'active professionals'. Across the partnership, collaborative working is strong.

Trainees value the insights they get into the realities of teaching. One trainee, capturing the views of many said, 'We are not wrapped in bubble wrap.' Managing behaviour, safeguarding and meeting pupils' needs are initial priorities and revisited with increasing levels of sophistication. Trainees are well prepared to teach relevant subjects, including early reading. Learning how to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the programme, ensuring that trainees know what it means to be a teacher right from the start.

Trainees' carefully planned placements provide rich and varied experiences. Trainees know that their strengths and areas to improve are being assessed accurately, whether they are on the School Direct, apprenticeship or assessment-only route.

Information about this ITE provider

- The TES Institute has been operating since 2014. It is a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) consortium, working in partnership with schools in south and east London, Essex and Kent. The SCITT is based at TES Global, in central London.
- The SCITT provides a one-year School Direct programme, the level 6 apprenticeship route and the 12-week assessment-only route.
- Trainees who successfully complete the course are awarded qualified teacher status. Trainees on the School Direct route may choose to complete the Post Graduate Certificate in Education with the University of East London.
- There are 250 trainees enrolled on the programme, of which 103 are in the primary age-phase and 147 on the secondary age-phase. Of these, 21 primary and five secondary trainees are following the apprenticeship route.
- At the time of the inspection, 170 candidates had completed the assessment-only route over the last year.
- TES Institute works with eight school partnerships, which have 155 schools with places for trainees. Most schools were judged good or better at their most recent inspection, with 11 judged requires improvement.

Information about this inspection

- When the TES Institute was last inspected in July 2021, the primary and secondary phases were judged to require improvement.
- This inspection was carried out by five of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with partnership leaders, the programme directors, the global director of TES Institute, pathway tutors and mentors. Meetings were also held with partnership headteachers, initial teacher training coordinators, representatives of the governance board and the external moderator. Some of these meetings were held online.
- Inspectors reviewed documents provided by candidates on the assessment-only route. They spoke to some of their pathway tutors.
- Inspectors spoke to 27 primary trainees and 33 secondary trainees on school visits and in online meetings. Inspectors also spoke with apprentices and early careers teachers.
- In the primary phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading, mathematics, art and design, history and geography. In the secondary phase, inspectors undertook focused reviews in English, history, art, drama, biology and chemistry. Inspectors met with pathway tutors, reviewed training plans and scrutinised trainees' documentary evidence. Inspectors visited six primary schools and six secondary schools, where they spoke to trainees, mentors and school leaders. Where possible, they observed trainees teaching the subjects being reviewed.

- Inspectors took into account 124 responses to the trainee survey and 79 responses to the staff survey.

Primary phase report

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

The curriculum is ambitious and reflects programme leaders' high expectations. It prepares trainees well to teach the primary age range and to meet the teachers' standards by the end of the course. The partnership makes effective use of expertise from local schools and national specialists. The programme complies fully with the core content framework. Trainees understand their wider professional responsibilities, including their duty to keep pupils safe and to promote equalities. Programme leaders assiduously review and improve the quality of training.

Leaders ensure that the centrally delivered curriculum is well integrated with the other elements of the programme. Materials that support the curriculum in metacognition, pedagogy, English and mathematics are current and pertinent. However, materials designed to support some other subjects do not consistently reflect current research into the curriculum. As a result, sometimes trainees' reflections on their training in these areas are not as fully developed.

Trainees understand the importance of early reading. They learn how systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) is used to teach pupils to decode and read fluently and accurately. Trainees deepen their understanding by accessing current research. Local partnerships support trainees in applying what they have learned when teaching schools' own SSP programmes. Trainees develop their understanding of a specific foundation subject through the 'depth-study'. They research how the subject progresses from early years through to key stage 4. This helps trainees to understand curriculum sequencing, and progression in other subjects.

Pathway tutors have been carefully selected and well trained. They have a clear understanding of the partnership's curriculum and expectations. They provide a conduit, linking central training with the school-based programme and trainees' practice. Pathway tutors provide timely and detailed feedback that aligns well with the taught curriculum and associated reading. They set targets that are broken down into helpful steps for trainees. This contributes well to assessing trainees' readiness to teach, and when necessary, arranging additional, personalised support. Programme leaders have made sure that arrangements to assess and moderate the evidence from candidates on the assessment-only route are thorough.

Additional support, training and quality assurance form part of leaders' thorough work to improve the quality of the overall mentoring programme. Leaders are determined to ensure that all trainees receive guidance that is finely tuned to their needs and the aims of the initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum.

Trainees, school-based mentors and school leaders hold the programme in high regard. They described the clarity of communication and timeliness of support as particular strengths. Early career teachers spoken with during the inspection stated that they felt well prepared to teach.

Effective systems help trainees to organise their workload and maintain their well-being. For example, the curriculum has been sequenced to support trainees in managing different challenges across the academic year. Leaders ensure that there is also bespoke support for trainees who need it, including a dedicated support tutor. Trainees value this provision.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- While some materials that support the primary curriculum are up to date, this is not the case in all foundation subjects. As a result, some trainees miss out on deepening their understanding fully, and some mentors' feedback is not rooted in the latest curriculum research. Leaders should ensure that all materials reflect current curriculum research about subject knowledge.

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

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria, including for the assessment-only route.

Secondary phase report

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of School Direct and apprenticeship trainees. Trainees follow a demanding online curriculum, which is enhanced through in-person experiences at their placement schools. Leaders have carefully sequenced the curriculum to prioritise trainees' initial needs and what they must revisit frequently. For example, trainees learn about safeguarding at the start of the course, which is then reinforced several times on their placements. Theories of learning and how to adapt teaching to meet the needs of all pupils are threaded through the programme.

Leaders make sure that the content is planned so that trainees develop their knowledge and skills over time. For example, behaviour management training is delivered early on in the course. It is then revisited termly to support trainees as they refine their approach and apply their knowledge in their secondary-school placements.

The core content framework has been fully integrated into both the online curriculum and the placement-based training. Leaders work closely with partnership schools to ensure that all trainees receive a consistent curriculum. Trainees are well prepared to teach their specialist subjects. Programme leaders have ensured that online sessions are based on the latest valid research into subject content and how to teach it. Trainees' knowledge is further enhanced by additional in-person training led by subject experts.

Programme leaders prize the vital role that school-based mentors play in developing trainees. Mentors are thoroughly and regularly trained. Specialist pathway tutors oversee the work of mentors and also trainees' progress. Pathway tutors act as a 'critical friend' and are advocates for the trainee and the integrity of the programme. Trainees particularly value the guidance and expertise of the pathway tutors, who are able to intervene and arrange additional support or training when necessary. Most trainees also benefit from the day-to-day expert advice from their school-based mentors. However, there are some instances when school-based mentoring is not as strong as is required to implement the partnership's ambitious curriculum.

Programme leaders have set up rigorous systems to assess trainees' progression through the curriculum. School-based mentors and pathway tutors oversee trainees' weekly training plans. Evidence of trainees' progression is accumulated and checked purposefully over the course of the programme. In this way, pathway tutors and programme leaders get to know trainees very well and can quickly identify any who need specific support. Thorough arrangements are in place for assessing and moderating evidence from candidates on the assessment-only route.

The training programme is necessarily demanding. Throughout the course, leaders prioritise and support trainees' well-being. For example, sometimes there are 'pinch points' in the year when trainees can start to feel overwhelmed. Wisely, programme leaders have introduced a

'pause and prioritise' approach, which helps trainees to manage their time and workload. As a result, trainees feel supported and nurtured.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- In a few cases, some elements of the school-based mentoring programme do not meet programme leaders' aspirational expectations. As a result, the impact of mentoring on trainees' professional practice and experience is, at times, inconsistent. Leaders should ensure that at all levels, the mentoring programme matches the intent of the curriculum at the highest standard and has a consistently positive impact on trainees' learning.

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

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria, including for the assessment-only route.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70275
Inspection number	10230667

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 provider	School-centred initial teacher training
Phases provided	Primary Secondary
Date of previous inspection	5 to 8 July 2021

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, overall lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Turvey, phase lead inspector (primary phase)	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Smith, phase lead inspector (secondary phase)	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alice Clay	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Gale	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Holden	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Rawlings	Her Majesty's Inspector
Abigail Wilkinson	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)
Branfil Primary School	135588	Primary
Cornwallis Academy	135371	Secondary
Davenant Foundation School	136625	Secondary
Gidea Park Primary School	102308	Primary
Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Temple Grove Free School	139672	Primary
Maidstone Grammar School	118835	Secondary
The Mawney Foundation School	131426	Primary
Scotts Primary School	102316	Primary
Upminster Infant School	138943	Primary
Walderslade Girls' School	137630	Secondary
West Hatch High School	136758	Secondary
The Skinners' School	140595	Secondary

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