

University of Northampton

The University of Northampton, Waterside Campus, University Drive NN1 5PH

Inspection dates

23 May to 26 May 2022

Inspection judgements

Primary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education and training	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

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

A mentor conveyed the high regard in which the university's training programme is held: 'We feel confident in the new generation of teachers being trained in the university.'

Trainees are well prepared for their first teaching positions in a 'super supportive' environment. Staff invest in trainees developing the knowledge and skills required to become effective future practitioners. Relationships between trainees and staff are positive. Many who shared their views value the responsive communication and tailored support afforded by staff. They enjoy the course and would recommend it to others, particularly placement experiences. One trainee, typical of many, said: 'This course has cemented in my mind that teaching is exactly what I am meant to be doing.' Trainees receive high-quality mentoring in schools. They take advantage of the distinctive and well-stocked education resource library.

Trainees are introduced to the demands of teaching right from the start. The recruitment process is rigorous. The training programme, including how pupils learn to read, is ambitious and well informed by academic research. Recent enhancements are beginning to strengthen trainees' understanding of effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, particularly linked to physical education.

Information about this ITE provider

- The partnership opened in September 2004.

- The partnership currently has 266 trainees, all training in the primary phase.
- The primary phase has trainees on the following training routes: Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) route; PGCE School Direct fee-paid route; and the undergraduate Bachelor of Arts with Qualified Teacher Status (BA QTS) route.
- There are 221 schools involved in the primary-phase partnership, across 10 local authorities.
- The provider works with a range of schools of different sizes, local contexts and Ofsted judgements at their most recent inspection. A few schools have not yet had an inspection as they have recently become academies. One school visited during the inspection of the partnership had not yet received a school inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and partners, including the lead for the primary education programme, the professional lead for QTS, other senior leaders and course tutors. Inspectors also spoke with the dean of the faculty of health, education and society and the deputy dean.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the partnership development group and senior leaders of multi-academy trusts, the Northamptonshire Teaching School Hub and schools involved in the partnership.
- Inspectors spoke with 37 trainees from both the PGCE and BA QTS routes.
- Inspectors carried out focused reviews of reading, English, mathematics, science and the foundation subjects.
- Inspectors made visits to 12 schools to meet with trainees, mentors, training coordinators and headteachers.

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

Leaders have a clear vision for generating high-quality teachers for the region. The partnership is strongly valued, underpinned by a culture of collaboration and mutual respect. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, understand the strengths and development priorities of the partnership well. Robust quality assurance processes ensure that high-quality training and delivery of the taught and placement components of the courses uphold high expectations. Moderating tutors play a pivotal and effective role in assuring the purposeful integration of the curriculum between the university and school settings. As one partnership leader said: 'Recent changes to leadership have helped things to move forward with greater clarity over the last few years.'

The curriculum has been recently redeveloped to ensure that it is ambitious and consistently informed by academic research. It is well aligned with the requirements of the

Department for Education's core content framework, which is met in full. The courses are ambitious and well sequenced overall. They help trainees to build and apply secure knowledge of the national curriculum subjects and how pupils learn, including themes such as knowledge retrieval, questioning and checking pupils' understanding. Subject knowledge is well developed, including in all foundation subjects. The innovative use of digital technology supports all trainees in developing independence in their subject knowledge. Many take the opportunity to share their successes with other trainees and staff. However, trainees' understanding of the importance of relationships education, the protected characteristics and fundamental British values is not as consistently secure as it could be.

All trainees are taught to use systematic synthetic phonics in their teaching of reading, commencing with the 'phonics festival' early in the course. Phonics is particularly well developed in the postgraduate course.

An effective system of formative assessment has been implemented against five core areas of training: professional behaviours; classroom practice, subject and curriculum knowledge; adaptive teaching; assessment; and managing behaviour. The 'My Progress' record requires trainees to constantly reflect on their practice, with the close support of well-trained mentors and tutors. Module assignments enable trainees to deepen their understanding of the academic theories and principles which underpin their training. However, these details are not readily shared with placement leaders and mentors. As a result, mentors are not always able to reinforce important research findings during placement experiences. Partnership leaders say that they would like this information to be shared with them to further strengthen the curriculum integration between the university and schools.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- The university's curriculum is well informed by academic research. However, leaders do not pass on details of this learning directly to mentors or training coordinators. Consequently, they are unable to reinforce the academic theory which underpins trainees' practice. Partnership leaders say they would like to receive this information. Leaders should ensure that mentors and partnership leaders know what trainees learn in university-based sessions so that they can build on this work with their trainees, further strengthening the successful integration between the university and local schools.
- Trainees are not consistently able to recall the important knowledge they need to promote equality and diversity in schools. Some have gaps in their knowledge about fundamental British values, relationships education and protected characteristics. Trainees say they would like more specific training on these elements of the programmes. Leaders should further develop this area of the curriculum so that it is as ambitious as other aspects of the training course.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70050
Inspection number	10238510

This inspection was carried 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 provider	Higher Education Institution
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	11 June and 1 October 2014

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Davies	Her Majesty's Inspector
Hazel Henson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephanie Innes-Taylor	Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement settings, schools and colleges

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
Barby Church of England Primary School	141044	Primary
Crick Primary School	121812	Primary
Delapre Primary School	122069	Primary
Duston Eldean Primary School	121945	Primary
Harpole Primary School	121976	Primary
Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School	121899	Primary
Kingsthorpe Grove Primary School	121943	Primary
Kingsthorpe Village Primary School	133732	Primary
Millway Primary School	122086	Primary
Little Stanion Primary School	135283	Primary
Oakway Academy	140853	Primary
Standens Barn Primary School	144177	Primary

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