

University of Gloucestershire

Francis Close Hall Campus, Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ

Inspection dates

13 to 16 June 2022

Inspection judgements

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

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

Trainees are well prepared for the realities of a career in teaching. They follow a curriculum that is carefully constructed and coherent. It is based on national and international research and local needs. A unique feature is the partnership's emphasis on sustainability. This provokes trainees' debate on the role that education plays in a sustainable future.

The ITE curriculum prioritises teaching about equality and diversity across all routes. By considering education from many perspectives, trainees are well equipped to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language.

Centre-based staff take the welfare of trainees seriously. They listen and respond to trainees and provide help and support. Trainees value these strong working relationships.

Trainees benefit from a good balance of centre-based teaching and school placements. This enables them to translate theory into practice and deepen their skills and knowledge effectively.

A strong partnership between the university and schools enables many trainees to benefit from a robust mentoring programme. However, leaders' work to enhance the mentoring programme further is at an early stage.

The personalised support that primary-phase trainees receive means that their needs are met exceptionally well. The centre- and school-based training support trainees to teach their subject and phase with confidence, including systematic synthetic phonics and early reading.

Secondary trainees learn appropriate content at the right time. Professional skills are interwoven with the subject knowledge trainees need to be successful. Regular 'revisit' sessions with subject leaders help cement trainees' knowledge and skills well. Trainees are enthusiastic and feel ready to begin their teaching careers.

The curriculum for early years trainees covers the full content of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. However, this has been a difficult year for trainees. Mentors and trainees have been disappointed by poor communication about the changes in the leadership structure that have had to be made.

Information about this ITE provider

- The University of Gloucestershire has 380 trainees in total across the early years, primary and secondary phases. There are eight trainees in the early years phase, 332 in the primary phase and 40 in the secondary phase.
- Early years trainees follow a route that leads to the award of early years teacher status (EYTS).
- The primary-phase trainees follow a three-year undergraduate programme, a one-year postgraduate programme or a one-year School Direct fee-paid route. The undergraduate programme leads to a Bachelor of Education degree with qualified teacher status. The postgraduate programmes lead to a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). Trainees opt for either the 3 to 7 primary-age phase or the 5 to 11 primary-age phase. Undergraduate trainees may also choose a subject strength in mathematics.
- In the secondary phase, trainees follow a one-year postgraduate programme or a one-year School Direct fee paid programme. These programmes lead to a PGCE. Trainees on the School Direct programme choose the 7 to 14 age phase or the 11 to 18 age phase and enrol in the following subject courses: mathematics, drama and physics. Other secondary PGCE trainees are enrolled on the following subject courses: art and design, English, geography, history, mathematics and physical education.
- The partnership works with 370 schools in 17 local authorities and five School Direct providers.
- The current inspection grades of schools and settings in the partnership range from requires improvement to outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by 10 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and partners, including the head of the school of education and humanities; the academic subject leader: teacher education; other senior leaders and university phase leaders; members of the quality steering group; headteachers and senior leaders in schools and settings and teaching school leaders.
- Inspectors evaluated a wide range of documentation from the partnership. Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted surveys for staff and trainees that were carried out during the inspection.
- In the early years phase, inspectors spoke with eight trainees. In the primary phase, inspectors spoke with 20 trainees and six early career teachers. In the secondary phase, inspectors spoke with 24 trainees and eight early career teachers.
- Inspectors conducted three focused reviews in the early years phase. These looked at communication and language, mathematics and expressive arts and design. In the primary phase, the focused reviews looked at early reading, computing, geography, mathematics and physical education. In the secondary phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in art and design, English, history, mathematics and physical education.

- During the visit, inspectors visited six early years settings, 15 primary schools and eight secondary schools. Overall, inspectors visited 29 placement settings.

Early years phase report

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

Since the previous inspection, unforeseen staffing turbulence has led to significant difficulties with the organisation and implementation of the curriculum. Consequently, trainees have not been able to get the most from their learning and some have felt let down.

Recently, leaders have listened to trainees' concerns and taken the right action to re-establish positive relationships. As a result, most trainees now feel well supported and say their workload is considered. The centre-based team are responding to trainees and helping them through the final parts of the programme.

After the previous inspection, the curriculum was revised fully. It now ensures that the full range of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements are covered. However, some aspects of the course are not sufficiently demanding or consistently ambitious, based on trainees' different starting points. Therefore, some trainees have not learned all that they could.

Senior leaders have not pre-checked all placement settings well enough. The quality of trainees' experiences at alternative placements in other early years settings is too variable. A few trainees have been deployed to settings which are not good enough. In these instances, trainees do not see best practice.

Despite these shortcomings, the curriculum does provide trainees with a secure understanding of essential knowledge for early child development. The prime areas of the EYFS statutory framework are taught well. These include enabling trainees to understand the importance of effective communication and language and early reading. School-based placements help trainees to see this in action. This deepens their knowledge of systematic, synthetic phonics, including for pupils in key stages 1 and 2.

Trainees learn about safeguarding effectively. They know how to keep children safe. The curriculum also promotes effective practice for inclusion, to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a result, trainees quickly learn about the importance of swift, accurate identification of children's needs.

The curriculum is underpinned by sound assessments of trainees' knowledge and skills. These ensure trainees are supported to reach the teachers' standards (early years) and award of EYTS.

Since the previous inspection, the arrangements for mentoring have improved. However, mentor and centre-based tutors' targets are sometimes not aligned. This creates some minor complications for trainees. The recently introduced link tutors provide a useful point

of contact. They have been instrumental in ensuring trainees now feel listened to, supported and nurtured. They have quickly established strong professional relationships with trainees.

What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the early years phase?

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders have not taken timely or effective action to keep trainees informed of the changes to the course over the year. The arrangements and expectations have not been consistently well communicated or managed. As a result, some trainees and mentors have felt confused and frustrated. Leaders intend to close this course at the end of this academic year. Therefore, they have not recruited any trainees for next year. However, leaders must continue to implement plans to ensure trainees feel fully supported and enabled throughout the last weeks of the course.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently ambitious, particularly in building on trainees' previous knowledge. As a result, trainees' progress and accumulation of new knowledge are not strong enough. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is ambitious and takes full account of trainees' different starting points.
- The quality of alternative placements in early years settings is too variable. These have not consistently added value to trainees' knowledge, understanding or development. Leaders must ensure that all settings are fully checked and vetted so that trainees get the best experiences in all placements.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Primary phase report

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

The primary phase ITE curriculum is well sequenced. Trainees develop their knowledge and skills well. The ITE curriculum sets out precisely the fundamental knowledge that trainees need to know to be able to teach all subjects. Leaders' checks ensure that the curriculum content is equitable across all training routes. Trainees apply up-to-date research to their teaching. Through wider opportunities, such as learning about sustainable education, trainees enhance their knowledge of teaching further. Leaders are ambitious and have high aspirations for trainees.

There is a sharp focus on preparing trainees to teach early reading. Leaders ensure that trainees have a strong understanding of systematic synthetic phonics. As a result of the high-quality phonics training, trainees are well prepared to teach phonics and the great majority of trainees feel confident to teach early reading.

Leaders ensure that trainees have a secure knowledge of how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND and for those pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders have effectively woven the principles of the core content framework throughout the ITE curriculum. Through a professional studies programme, trainees learn the wider knowledge and skills needed to be a teacher. However, the content of the professional studies programme is not as well sequenced as it needs to be. This leads to some trainees not fully understanding the content.

Leaders have raised the expectations of mentoring. Training for mentors is effective. New mentors appreciate the comprehensive support they receive. Trainees have regular and purposeful sessions with mentors. Centre-based staff review trainees' weekly targets and provide swift responses to support trainees' progress. The link tutor role provides a valuable layer of oversight to programme leaders. Trainees receive effective personalised support which they value. Leaders' and mentors' evaluations of trainees are accurate. This is because assessment systems are comprehensive and rigorous.

Leaders have recently developed their approach to quality assurance. As a result, leaders know quickly if a trainee needs additional help. Trainees say they feel well supported by centre-based staff. However, the new approach does not provide enough information for mentors about how well they are supporting trainees. Therefore, some mentors are unclear about how they can improve.

Headteachers, programme staff and trainees have great confidence in the partnership. They recognise the improvements that leaders have made this year. Many trainees secure employment in partnership schools.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' quality assurance systems do not yield enough information for mentors. As a result, some mentors are unclear about how well they develop and support trainees. The partnership should strengthen the arrangements for the quality assurance of mentoring.
- The curriculum sequencing of professional studies does not consider well enough the order of knowledge that trainees need to know. This leads to trainees not fully understanding some content as well as they could. Leaders must ensure that they improve further the sequencing of professional studies so that trainees develop their knowledge incrementally.

Does the ITE provider's 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?

Leaders are ambitious for trainees. They have designed a distinctive ITE curriculum that carefully amalgamates professional studies, the subject curriculum and school placements. This fully complies with the core content framework. Trainees use their university learning and school experiences well to shape their understanding of how to teach their subject.

Subject leaders have coherently mapped out what they want trainees to learn. They reinforce learning in 'revisit Wednesdays' where trainees recall knowledge and discuss their experiences. Trainees have a good grounding in educational theory. Nevertheless, a minority of trainees do not apply this well. They do not understand the importance of carefully sequenced component knowledge so that pupils learn effectively.

School-based professional leads and mentors know the centre-based curriculum well and align school placements to the university programme. Where mentoring is strong, trainees value the curriculum expertise and educational literature that mentors share with them. This builds on their centre-based learning. However, this is not a feature of all mentoring. Sometimes, trainees' support is not informed by current educational thinking. This does not help to strengthen their understanding of curriculum.

Trainees have a secure understanding of teaching pupils with SEND. The programme provides useful insight into specialist provision. Trainees use their knowledge well to plan adaptive teaching.

Leaders assess trainees' progression through three distinct phases of the curriculum: developing, broadening and enhancing. Trainees appreciate formative feedback from subject leaders and mentors. The newly sharpened targets help trainees to understand their next steps. In addition, leaders' quality assurance provides professional leads and mentors with useful feedback, modelling and guidance to help them better support trainees.

Trainees say that the partnership is responsive to their personal needs and well-being. Subject leaders know trainees well and help them to balance their workload.

The secondary phase is well led. Partners are keen to contribute to its development. Leaders have created a genuine partnership with local schools. School leaders are confident that trainees will contribute fully to the life of their schools.

Leaders and the School Direct partner work productively together to provide a distinctive curriculum with parity to the PGCE programme. School Direct trainees describe an enriching experience that has deepened their subject knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a teacher.

Leaders respond to the needs of schools in the local area and have adapted the curriculum to include areas such as sustainability. Leaders have successfully piloted trainees' development of a second specialist subject. This has improved trainee employability. Leaders are keen to develop this further to address local staff shortages in particular subjects.

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

[Information for the provider and appropriate authority]

- A few trainees do not connect curriculum theory to their practice. They do not understand the importance of carefully sequenced component knowledge so that pupils learn effectively. Leaders should ensure that all trainees apply their academic thinking on curriculum design to their practice.
- There is variation in the quality of mentoring. While some mentors share curriculum thinking informed by educational research, others do not have this knowledge. This does not help trainees to strengthen their understanding of curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that their improvement plans for mentoring are finalised and enacted with impact.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70045
Inspection number	10216922

This inspection was carried out 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	Early Years Primary Secondary
Date of previous inspection	21 to 24 June 2021

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, Overall lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Sue Costello	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Favager-Dalton	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector
Lydia Pride	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marie Thomas	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Placement settings, schools and colleges

Inspectors visited the following settings and schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
Winchcombe School	136764	Secondary
Dean Magna School	137387	Secondary
Cleeve School	136772	Secondary
Henley Bank High School	145480	Secondary
Holmleigh Park High School	147300	Secondary
All Saints Academy	136016	Secondary
Gloucester Academy	148036	Secondary
Charlton Kings Junior School	137266	Primary
Fairford CE Primary School	115622	Primary
Badsey First School	145000	Primary
Ashton-under-Hill First School	116650	Primary
St Lawrence CE Primary School	145524	Primary
Belmont School	147577	Primary
Bishops Cleeve Primary School	137271	Primary
Gardners Lane Primary School	131249	Primary
Andoversford Primary School	115735	Primary
Robert Le Kyng Primary School	126281	Early Years
Angel Day Nursery	EY480940	Early Years
Lake View Nursery	EY 454697	Early Years
Madresfield Early Years Centre	205288	Early Years
Walford Nursery and Primary School	116743	Early Years

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