

# University of Wolverhampton

School of Education, Walsall Campus, Gorway Road, Walsall WS1 3BD

## Inspection dates

13 to 16 June 2022

## Inspection judgements

Early years ITT (EYITT)

### Overall effectiveness

**Good**

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

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

The EYITT programme supports leaders' aspiration to be the university of opportunity. The programme offers an alternative pathway for employment-based graduates to achieve early years teacher status. Leaders are keen to develop trainees who are 'informed, inspired and influential'. They achieve this ambition.

The strategic leadership of the programme has been strengthened through the creation of the early years strategic partnership group. Over the last year this group has grown in membership. Their contributions, including supporting the design of the EYITT curriculum, have led to rapid improvements in the programme. The provider has plans to further develop the group's strategic involvement with the course.

Trainees make a positive contribution to their employed setting by sharing new learning with their colleagues. Ultimately, this has a positive impact on the outcomes for babies, toddlers, and young children within the setting. The provider is rightly proud of the far-reaching impact of the EYITT programme.

The provider places the well-being of trainees at the heart of what they do. Leaders have strengthened the range of pastoral support available to trainees. Trainees value the open communication with their tutors, the support from their mentors, and the flexibility of the course. This supports trainees to manage their workload and juggle the many demands on their time.

## **Information about this ITE provider**

- The provider caters for 740 trainees across four phases: early years, primary, secondary, and further education and skills (FES).
- There are seven trainees in the early years phase.
- All trainees in the early years phase are employment-based graduates. In this phase, the provider works alongside seven settings. The range of settings includes private day nurseries, nursery schools and primary schools.
- The provider works with educational settings that have been inspected by Ofsted. These settings have overall effectiveness grades ranging from good to outstanding.

## **Information about this inspection**

- The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the director of the school of education, the head of primary education and EYITT, the EYITT programme leader, the head of ITT partnerships, the associate dean for students and education, the head of employment-based routes, senior lecturers, the early years (EY) Lecturer, and other tutors. The lead inspector met with members of the strategic partnership group and members of the EY strategic partnership group.
- Inspectors visited five placement settings and spoke with five trainees. During these visits, inspectors visited trainees' lessons, observed mentor feedback, and held discussions with setting leaders, mentors and trainees.
- Inspectors conducted focused reviews in communication and language, literacy, expressive arts and design, and personal, social and emotional development.
- Inspectors considered responses to the trainee and staff online questionnaires.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including curriculum information, self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- When the EYITT phase of the University of Wolverhampton was last inspected by Ofsted in May 2021, it was judged as inadequate.

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

Leaders have developed the EYITT curriculum with support from their strategic partners. The curriculum content is rooted in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. As a result, trainees are immersed in phase-specific knowledge to support them in their day-to-day practice as early years practitioners. There is a core curriculum offer for all trainees. However, tutors adapt other areas of the curriculum based on trainees' prior knowledge and expertise.

Leaders have made well-informed choices about the order of the centre-based curriculum, such as beginning with the prime areas of learning. Training sessions focus on specific aspects, such as communication and language. These are then revisited and reinforced in other training sessions, so trainees understand how the prime areas of learning thread throughout all aspects of children's learning. The teaching of systematic synthetic phonics is given a high priority and is reinforced through additional online training. This gives trainees a secure foundation in teaching phonics, which they can then build upon in placement settings.

Trainees speak very positively about the quality and usefulness of training linked to teaching children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and children who speak English as an additional language. Centre-based sessions are supplemented by the inclusion conference to further develop trainees' understanding of how to support these groups of children.

Leaders have carefully considered the range and format of research that underpins the curriculum. Trainees understand the importance of using research to inform and improve children's learning experiences. They critically review and use learning from research well during their placements.

The provider has forged close working relationships with partnership settings. As a result, trainees have many opportunities to understand and deepen their learning from the centre-based training through their daily practice. The second placement ensures that all trainees gain experience of the full age range in the EY phase, including babies, toddlers and young children. Trainees visit other settings to gain first-hand experience of different aspects of the programme, such as managing behaviour and the rights of the child.

Mentors have a clear understanding of the centre-based training. They speak positively about the clear and open lines of communication with the university tutors. This helps mentors to guide and support trainees' development well. The provider has developed systems to monitor and support the work of mentors, such as joint lesson observations across the year.

Ongoing assessments of trainees feed into end-of-term and end-of-year overall assessments. Assessment information is drawn from a wide range of sources, such as lesson observations and 'evidence bundles'. All assessment information is uploaded to a virtual learning environment so that relevant partners can review it. However, in too many instances, the teachers' standards (early years) are being used too early to assess the progress of trainees through the course before they have completed the relevant training related to the standards.

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

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

- The provider has not made it sufficiently clear that the teachers' standards (early years) are used to assess trainees at the end of the EYITT programme. Consequently, the standards are used too early to assess the progress of trainees throughout the EYITT programme. Leaders should ensure that trainees are assessed against the content of the EYITT curriculum throughout their training to give an accurate overview of their progress through the curriculum.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

## **ITE provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70084
<b>Inspection number</b>	10220017

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 sets 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>	Early years Primary Secondary FES
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 to 14 May 2021

## **Inspection team**

Wayne Simner, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Her Majesty's Inspector

## Annex: Placement settings and schools

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

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)
Perton Primary Academy	143353	Early years
Marsh Hill Nursery School	103126	Early years
Perry Beeches Nursery School	103123	Early years
Puzzles Day Nursery	EY301347	Early years
Charlie Caterpillar's Day Nursery	EY548077	Early years

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