

# The Grand Union Training Partnership

Sponne School, Brackley Road, Towcester NN12 6DJ

## Inspection dates

20 June to 23 June 2022

## Inspection judgements

Secondary 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?

Partnership leaders, curriculum leaders and mentors listen carefully to the needs of trainees. They willingly adapt aspects of the programme to help trainees manage their workload and succeed. One trainee spoke for many when they said: 'The partnership is a supportive environment where there's a lot of expertise. If you need something, you only need to ask!'

The curriculum design is coherent and clear. It prepares trainees well for the realities of teaching. Trainees understand the barriers to learning faced by some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. They receive a thorough grounding in safeguarding. They know how to keep pupils safe.

Trainees receive a rich experience of teaching their chosen subject to pupils aged from 11 to 18. They have high expectations of pupils' achievement and conduct. They quickly become valued members of their placement schools.

Many of those trained by the Grand Union Training Partnership (GUTP) go on themselves to become partnership curriculum leaders and mentors. Trainees express their desire to 'give back to others the fabulous support that we have received'.

## Information about this ITE provider

- The Grand Union Training Partnership opened as a school-centred initial teacher training provider in 1997.
- The partnership has 31 trainees.

- The partnership offers the School Direct route towards qualified teacher status. The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) is validated by the University of Leicester.
- There are 14 schools in the partnership. The lead school in the partnership is Sponne School.
- The partnership includes schools that were judged outstanding, good and requires improvement at their previous inspection.

## **Information about this inspection**

- The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with the director and the two deputy directors of GUTP. They met with curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with the accounting officer and members of the governing body. She spoke with the steering committee.
- Inspectors spoke with 17 trainees and six early career teachers.
- Inspectors undertook focused reviews in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, science and physical education in the secondary phase to evaluate the quality of education and training across the partnership.
- Inspectors visited seven secondary schools to meet with trainees, mentors and headteachers. These visits included observations of trainees' teaching.

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

Leaders are ambitious for trainees. Their vision is to develop reflective teachers who go on to educate pupils within local schools. All aspects of the curriculum are carefully aligned between the central and school-based training. It meets the requirements set out in the Department for Education Core Content Framework. Trainees use their centre-based learning and school experiences to shape their understanding of how to teach their subject. They are prepared well. Trainees are quickly 'snapped up' by headteachers in partnership schools. Headteachers said that this is because they know that they will gain 'early teachers of quality'.

Trainees engage with pertinent research through their PGCE assignments and study. They engage in academic reading. They conduct their own research in placement schools. In most subjects, particularly science, trainees learn about up-to-date subject research. However, in some subjects, they do not gain enough of an introduction to the key research.

Leaders are constantly seeking the views of trainees to improve the quality of training. They regularly consult with partners. Headteachers in partnership schools praise the partnership for being 'proactive and reactive'. They appreciate that their feedback informs precise improvement priorities. For example, leaders are working with partners to develop and hone the quality of their formative assessment of trainees. They have rightly recognised that some elements of assessment are still a little burdensome. They are working to quickly address this.

Partnership leaders, curriculum leaders and mentors work closely together. Trainees view this as a helpful and cohesive team of support. Mentors receive regular and helpful 'expresso shot' training that is highly valued. Their effectiveness is closely monitored. Consequently, the quality of mentoring is high. Mentors are instrumental in ensuring that trainees successfully embed their centre-based learning in a classroom context. Trainees value their mentors. One spoke for many of their peers when they said: 'The support I have received from my mentors at both placements has been incredible. I have nothing but positive things to say about my experiences.'

Trainees' well-being is a key priority. Trainees say that they have been supported well through the 'highs and lows' of the training year. Some trainees that are also parents have found the training particularly challenging at times. They praised the work of the support group which was set up to help meet their additional needs. Trainees said that they know that their views are represented and listened to, both as a student group and as individuals. They describe the course as a 'demanding and highly professional experience' that guides them to become the 'best teacher that you can be'.

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

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

- In some subject-based training, there are insufficient opportunities for trainees to engage with the most current research and critical thinking. Some trainees do not gain the same depth of understanding as others on which to build their subject expertise. Leaders should ensure that all trainees receive a rich understanding of the most current research within the subjects that they study.
- A few aspects of trainees' assessment can be burdensome. Leaders have recognised this and are well on their way to addressing the issue. They should continue their work to ensure that assessment is formative and does not place unnecessary demands on trainees.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

## **ITE provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70028
<b>Inspection number</b>	10245156

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.

<b>Type of ITE provider</b>	School-centred initial teacher training
<b>Phases provided</b>	Secondary
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 to 5 December 2013

## **Inspection team**

Jayne Ashman, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Di Mullen	Her Majesty's Inspector
Hazel Henson	Her Majesty's Inspector

## Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
Abbeyfield School	138858	Secondary
Campion School	137087	Secondary
EWS South Campus	143421	Secondary
Guilsborough Academy	136489	Secondary
Magdalen College School	139158	Secondary
Moulton School and Science College	137614	Secondary
Sponne School	136488	Secondary

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022