

Altius Teacher Training

Laurus Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle Road, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 5GB

Inspection dates

20 June to 23 June 2022

Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

Trainee teachers are known as associate teachers at Altius Teacher Training. This is because leaders expect trainees to be an integral part of a school's teaching staff right from their very first day of training.

Trainee teachers receive high levels of pastoral and academic support. Every trainee said that they value this level of guidance and training. They explained that the high expectations of staff, coupled with an ambitious ITE curriculum, help them to achieve highly and prepare them well for their future career in teaching.

Trainee teachers across both the primary and secondary age-phases benefit from centre-based training that is well planned and delivered. Through this centre-based training, trainees are introduced to appropriate research, reading and debates in current educational thinking.

Primary age-phase trainee teachers benefit from a strong grounding in the importance of using systematic synthetic phonics in helping pupils to learn to read. They securely learn how to plan and deliver a series of lessons across the wider national curriculum, for example in history and geography. Trainee teachers in the secondary age-phase learn about the distinctiveness of their subjects.

Across the partnership, trainees are very well prepared to manage pupils' behaviour. They know their critical responsibility to safeguard pupils and protect pupils' welfare and well-being. Trainee teachers are taught how to adapt the delivery of their national curriculum

subjects for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Equally, they receive effective training in how to support pupils who speak English as an additional language.

At Altius Teacher Training, trainee teachers are supported and guided effectively by mentors across different placement settings. They said that they value the ongoing support that mentors and other professionals afford them in their placement schools.

Trainees are well prepared to carry out their wider professional responsibilities as a teacher to the highest standard.

Information about this ITE provider

- Altius Teacher Training is a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider.
- The SCITT has been providing teacher training since September 2015.
- Trainee teachers who follow the primary age-phase programme are trained to teach the 5 to 11 age phase. Trainee teachers on the secondary age-phase programmes are trained to teach the 11 to 16 age phase. Trainees in the secondary age-phase choose from a subject specialism in art and design, biology, computer science, chemistry, design and technology, drama, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education or physics.
- All trainees gain qualified teacher status (QTS). Since September 2015, the SCITT has been working in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University for all trainee teachers to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Education.
- In the 2021/22 academic year, there were 30 trainee teachers enrolled on the SCITT's programmes. This included 13 primary and 17 secondary age-phase trainee teachers.
- The SCITT is based at Cheadle Hulme High School, which is part of the Laurus Trust.
- The partnership includes eight primary and seven secondary schools across four local authorities.
- The schools in the partnership have been judged as outstanding or good by Ofsted. Currently, there are no partner schools that are graded as requires improvement or inadequate by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of SCITT leaders, staff and partners, including the chief executive officer of the Laurus Trust, the head of school of Laurus Cheadle Hulme and the head of ITE. Inspectors met with several members of the primary and secondary leadership boards. They also met with members of the overall strategic board.
- Inspectors sampled a wide range of documentation relating to the ITE training programmes. This included: subject and phase curriculum information; trainee teachers' assignments and their records of target-setting and mentoring; and information relating to the Department for Education's (DfE) ITE criteria and supporting advice.

- Inspectors also reviewed a wide range of information relating to the leadership and management of the partnership. This information included leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning documents.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's trainee online survey. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspection was carried out through face-to-face meetings, remote meetings and on-site visits to partner schools.
- During the visit, inspectors visited five schools across the primary and secondary age-phases. It was not possible to see any trainees teach during this inspection as they had concluded their training programme.
- In the primary age-phase, inspectors spoke with 13 trainee teachers, four early career teachers and 10 mentors, either face to face or remotely.
- In the secondary age-phase, inspectors spoke with nine trainee teachers, four early career teachers and 17 mentors, either face to face or remotely.
- In the primary age-phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading and the foundation subjects.
- In the secondary age-phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in English, history and modern foreign languages.

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

Leaders have carefully designed an ambitious and challenging ITE curriculum for trainee teachers at Altius Teacher Training. Trainee teachers in both the primary and secondary age-phases benefit from a carefully planned and well-sequenced ITE curriculum that reaches beyond the expectations of the DfE's core content framework.

Leaders and staff ensure that the programme content is well matched to the phase and/or subjects that trainee teachers are preparing to teach. For example, in the primary age-phase, trainees are well prepared to teach early reading and all the subjects, including the foundation subjects, which are contained within the primary national curriculum. In the secondary age-phase, trainees receive a very secure grounding in what is unique about their subject specialisms.

Leaders ensure that the staff who deliver the centre-based training are experts in their fields. These staff skilfully deliver important generic and phase- and subject-specific training. This ensures that all trainee teachers make a highly confident start to their careers in teaching.

Through the centre-based training, trainee teachers in both the primary and secondary age-phases get a secure introduction to phase- and subject-specific reading, research and debate. They are well guided about how to use this research to inform their teaching practice. This helps trainees to develop important reflective behaviours that set them up well to make a positive contribution to the profession.

Trainee teachers in both the primary and secondary age-phases benefit from well-designed placements in appropriate schools. They get suitably diverse and contrasting school-based experiences that complement their centre-based training. Through these school-based experiences, trainee teachers in the primary and secondary age-phases further their understanding of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need for the award of QTS.

Leaders ensure that mentors are well supported and guided to understand the important themes and the broad content of the Altius curriculum. Mentors provide trainee teachers with appropriate opportunities to practise and evaluate what they have learned through their teaching practice.

Mentors ensure that trainee teachers get feedback that is focused on the important broad strands of the ITE curriculum. They support trainees with effective general and subject-specific guidance about what they should do to improve their practice. However, some mentors do not have a sufficiently deep understanding of the essential knowledge that underpins the broad themes of the Altius ITE curriculum. Consequently, the feedback that these mentors provide does not consistently and precisely help trainees to understand where they have gaps in their knowledge.

Staff and mentors across both the primary and secondary age-phases use leaders' formative assessment systems well to evaluate the progress that trainee teachers are making towards the ITE curriculum. They make appropriate use of the teachers' standards to support recommendations for the award of QTS at the conclusion of the ITE programmes.

Leaders' checks on the quality of the delivery of the primary and secondary ITE curriculums give them useful insights into many of the strengths and areas for ongoing improvement across these programmes. In particular, leaders have a sharp understanding of trainee teachers' experiences. They use this information well to review, refine and improve aspects of the centre- and school-based training. However, leaders' checks on the quality of mentors' feedback are not rigorous enough. These checks do not evaluate in sufficient depth how well mentors, through their ongoing feedback, support and challenge trainee teachers to know and remember the essential content of the ITE curriculum. This means that leaders do not have all the detail that they could in relation to the quality of mentors' feedback to ensure that the partnership can realise in full its highly ambitious vision for excellence.

Trainees are very well supported by leaders, staff and mentors throughout the partnership. Trainee teachers feel that they get the professional and personal support that they need to successfully manage the demands and challenges that they encounter throughout their training. They said that communication between all partners is a strength.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Some mentors do not have a consistently deep and secure understanding of the

essential knowledge that underpins the ITE curriculum. This means that, on occasions, the feedback that trainee teachers receive from mentors does not help them to address specific gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that all mentors have the information that they need about the content of the ITE curriculum. This is so that mentors can provide trainees with consistently strong and effective guidance about any gaps in their knowledge or practice.

- Leaders' processes for quality assuring the ITE curriculum do not provide all partners with a consistently deep understanding of the impact of mentors' ongoing feedback on trainee teachers' learning and development. As a result, some partners and members of the leadership and strategic boards do not know exactly what the partnership needs to do to improve this important aspect of the partnership's work. Leaders should ensure that all partners have the depth of information that they need about the quality and impact of mentors' feedback to ensure that training is of the very highest standard.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE provider details

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| Unique reference number | 70318 |
| Inspection number | 10217260 |

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.

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Type of ITE provider | School-centred initial teacher training |
| Phases provided | Primary and secondary combined |
| Date of previous inspection | 17 May and 11 October 2017 |

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Michael Pennington, Lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Amanda Downing | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Tim Vaughan | Her Majesty's Inspector |

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

| Name | URN | ITE phases |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Cheadle Hulme Primary School | 145870 | Primary |
| Gorsey Bank Primary School | 143011 | Primary |
| Laurus Cheadle Hulme | 145893 | Secondary |
| Laurus Ryecroft | 145894 | Secondary |
| Cheadle Hulme High School | 137843 | Secondary |

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