

University of Sunderland

Wearside View, Sir Tom Cowie Campus at St Peter's, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR6 0AN

Inspection dates

16 May to 19 May 2022

Inspection judgements

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

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

Trainees in primary and secondary age-phases benefit from a curriculum that has a clear association with the Department for Education's (DfE's) Core Content Framework (CCF). Leaders have produced statements that are linked to each of the foundation concepts, which enables tutors to provide trainees with useful targets and milestones. Therefore, most trainees can see how to develop their teaching skills. Trainees in further education and skills (FES) benefit from the university's foundation concepts framework. However, overall, the curriculum is not implemented consistently enough and there is too much variability in the quality of education that trainees on different programmes receive. As a result, too many trainees do not understand subject-specific pedagogy well enough to be confident in teaching their subject.

Trainees benefit from valuable support from personal academic tutors and from helpful well-being training. Trainees appreciate the useful and practical support that they can access when they experience difficulties. For example, leaders provide assistance with living and travel costs. However, despite actions taken by leaders to reduce the administrative burden on trainees, some trainees still struggle to manage their workload. These trainees find that assignments are due to be submitted at critical points in their placement.

Trainees have multiple opportunities to share their views with leaders and managers at the university. Trainees speak highly of the wide range of support they receive from their centre-based tutors and placement-based mentors. However, trainees are less positive about the communication they receive from the university, particularly in relation to

placements. For a small number of trainees, this has a negative impact on their confidence when they start a new placement.

Most trainees are prepared well to manage pupils' behaviour. Most tutors teach this well and provide trainees with a range of useful strategies that trainees can compare with what they see in practice while they are out on placement. As a result, trainees build up their own 'bank' of behaviour management techniques that they can use to manage low-level disruption and when difficult situations arise in their classroom. However, this is not always the case for trainees completing placements in a specialist setting. This impacts negatively on their ability to try out different approaches and strategies.

Information about this ITE provider

- The University of Sunderland has 959 trainees across the primary, secondary and FES phases. There are 597 trainees in the primary phase, 217 trainees in the secondary phase and 145 trainees in the FES phase.
- The majority of primary-phase trainees follow a three-year undergraduate route. There are 445 trainees on the BA (Honours) Primary Education with qualified teacher status (QTS). There are three different postgraduate programmes. Eighty-five trainees are studying on a full-time basis and 33 trainees are studying on a part-time basis. There are 32 trainees on a School Direct programme and two apprentices preparing to teach in the primary phase.
- There are 47 secondary-phase trainees studying the Bachelor of Science with QTS route. There are a further 145 trainees on the university-centred Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Twenty-four trainees are following a School Direct route and there is one apprentice preparing to teach in the secondary phase.
- There are currently 56 trainees on the full-time PGCE in the pre-service FES phase. This is delivered on campus and at the Durham Sixth Form Centre. The part-time in-service programmes are taught at Bishop Auckland College, East Durham College and South Tyneside College. There are 77 trainees on these in-service programmes studying either the Certificate in Education or Professional Graduate Certificate in Education. There are 12 apprentices studying the level 5 learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard.
- The university works in partnership with approximately 323 schools, 13 colleges (including sixth-form colleges) and 11 other training providers, including independent learning providers, charities, universities and local authorities. The current inspection grades for these settings range from requires improvement to outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by 11 of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), two Senior HMI and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with a range of programme leaders and staff from the university and the wider partnership. Inspectors met with the vice-chancellor, the dean of the faculty of education and society, the head of the school of education, the head of the school of social sciences, the curriculum and Ofsted lead, the academic partnership engagement lead, the faculty operations manager, the professional development and teacher development and mentor lead, the events and applicant experience coordinator, the professional development team leader, the head of admissions and three partnership committee chairs. Inspectors also met with the university team leaders for post-compulsory education and training, international teacher training, secondary initial teacher training (ITE) and primary initial teacher training.
- Inspectors sampled a wide range of documentation relating to the ITE training programmes. This included: subject and phase curriculum plans; trainees' assignments and evidence of target-setting and mentoring.

- Inspectors also reviewed a wide range of information relating to the leadership and management of the partnership. These documents included leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning documents. Information relating to the DfE's 'ITE criteria and supporting advice' was also considered.
- In the primary phase, inspectors completed focused reviews in computing, early reading, geography, history, mathematics, music, physical education, religious education and science.
- In the secondary phase, inspectors completed focused reviews in art and design, chemistry, design and technology, English, geography, history, mathematics, physical education and religious education.
- In the FES phase, inspectors completed focused reviews in animal care, engineering, English, performing arts, personal development, special educational needs and sport with public services.
- Inspectors spoke to 151 trainees from 65 different settings. Inspectors also spoke to 31 early career teachers in the primary and secondary phases.

Primary phase report

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

Tutors ensure that most trainees understand well how to teach pupils to read using a systematic synthetic phonics programme. Trainees receive practical guidance about how to form pure sounds and to segment words into their component parts. However, not all trainees develop a strong enough understanding of how to support pupils to build fluency in reading once they are able to decode words on sight.

Tutors provide trainees with useful subject and pedagogical knowledge for teaching English and mathematics. However, tutors do not teach some foundation subjects, such as music, computing and geography, with enough focus on the subject. For these subjects, trainees learn about teaching activities rather than pedagogical knowledge. Consequently, trainees have gaps in their understanding of how to teach the subject. Leaders have plans to address this with additional classes at the end of the academic year.

Leaders do not ensure that all trainees have an appropriate range of suitable opportunities to practise and apply what they have learned about. Leaders make sure that school-based mentors understand the expectations of placements. However, leaders have not made sure that mentors know enough about the curriculum. In a few cases, trainees complete their training without having experienced teaching some subjects, such as science. As a result, too many trainees do not feel adequately prepared to teach all of the primary-phase subjects.

Tutors help primary-phase trainees to develop well their knowledge and skills in teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They introduce trainees to relevant research and strategies to support their pupils. Primary-phase trainees also experience a useful placement in a specialist setting to help them to understand more about meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. Therefore, trainees build their confidence and competence in adaptive teaching.

Staff use their expertise well to support trainees to engage in relevant research. They introduce trainees to contemporary research and use the suggested reading from the CCF as a starting point for their teaching. Trainees critically evaluate this research and consider carefully how to apply it to their own teaching. As a result, trainees are well informed about a range of relevant approaches for teaching children aged three to 11.

Tutors and mentors use formative assessment well to identify the progress that trainees make towards the criteria set out as part of the university foundation concepts framework. This helps trainees to see how well they are developing their teaching practice and the areas they need to improve. Trainees benefit from effective support if they fall behind.

Leaders have developed extensive systems for the quality assurance of the curriculum. However, these systems do not provide assurance that the intended curriculum is taught consistently. As a result, there is too much variability in what trainees are taught in the primary curriculum.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not provide trainees with the scope or richness of knowledge that they need to teach all foundation subjects with confidence. As a result, some trainees end their training pathway with underdeveloped subject knowledge. Leaders should review the content of their curriculum to ensure that it gives all trainees the subject and pedagogical knowledge that they need to teach foundation subjects with confidence and accuracy.
- Leaders have not integrated the learning that trainees undertake in taught sessions with school-based placements well enough. As a result, trainees do not have sufficient opportunity to practise or apply what they learn in taught sessions while on placement. Leaders should strengthen the integration between the taught curriculum and placement in schools.
- The taught curriculum content is not well understood by school-based mentors. They are not aware of the theory and pedagogies that trainees are taught. This means that mentors are not well enough placed to support trainees' understanding of how to apply their learning in school-based placements. Leaders should ensure that information about the curriculum is shared and understood by school-based mentors.
- Leaders do not evaluate the implementation of the curriculum well enough to ensure that all staff teach what was intended. As a result, there is too much variability between subjects. Leaders should strengthen their approach to evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and how it is taught.

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 and tutors implement a curriculum that addresses all aspects of the CCF. Trainees learn well how to build sequences of lessons, how pupils retain knowledge over time and how to use different types of assessment. However, there is too much variability in the quality of subject-specific teaching. For example, the subject-specific content is defined better for chemistry than it is for English.

Trainees benefit from a curriculum that is mostly informed by up-to-date research on effective classroom practice. For example, tutors teach trainees about cognition and metacognition. However, too many trainees rely on contested concepts and apply an overly narrow set of strategies when planning their lessons.

Leaders support tutors effectively in order to build their expertise through research. Many staff actively pursue research opportunities and model this with their trainees. Tutors also use their experience well to support trainees to learn how to conduct research, evaluate the validity of their findings and apply this to their teaching. Tutors set useful assignments that help trainees to understand the links between research and professional practice.

Leaders provide mentors with a wide range of training opportunities. They invite mentors to university-based training sessions and conferences, and make sure that mentors are aware of their responsibilities for supporting and assessing trainees. However, too many mentors are not well enough informed about the centre-based curriculum that trainees receive. This is not the case on School Direct programmes, where university and school staff have a much better joint understanding of the curriculum.

Leaders do not assure the quality of mentoring that trainees receive effectively enough. They check that mentors are compliant with procedures, such as the completion of weekly meetings, and moderate feedback after joint observations. However, the quality assurance systems that leaders implement do not capture the extent to which school mentors support trainees to purposefully apply and practise what they learn at the university.

Tutors enable most trainees to explore well how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Many PGCE trainees gain placement experience in a special or alternative provision setting. This widens their experience and expertise in meeting individual needs. However, a few secondary-phase trainees do not benefit from the same opportunities and are not prepared to teach in these settings sufficiently well.

Tutors use formative assessment effectively. They track the progress of the trainees against the university foundation concepts framework and identify quickly when there are concerns about trainees' progress. As a result, tutors prepare trainees well for their final assessments and intervene to provide meaningful support if a trainee falls behind. However, the timing of summative assessment sometimes creates additional workload pressures for secondary-phase trainees at busy points in the school calendar.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not ensure that school mentors have a clear enough understanding of the university-based training. Information about how trainees are taught to teach their subject is not shared in enough depth. This limits the ability of mentors to reinforce training. Leaders should take further action to make mentors aware of specific aspects of university training, including subject training. This will enable mentors to complement university training more effectively.
- Leaders do not check how well school mentors align training in placement schools with the centre-based training. This limits opportunities for training to be effectively reinforced between the university and its placement schools. University leaders should strengthen quality assurance processes to make sure that training is more effectively aligned.
- Although the university has expertise in SEND training, some trainees are not sufficiently prepared to meet the needs of pupils with SEND in some of their placement settings. Leaders should review the timing and depth of training in this area so that trainees can better meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Leaders have taken some action in response to trainees' concerns over workload. Nevertheless, many trainees continue to have concerns over workload. This is particularly in relation to deadlines for the submission of major assignments and expectations for lesson planning. Leaders should take further action to help trainees to manage their workload.
- While trainees learn about pertinent educational theories, too many trainees rely on outdated concepts when they plan their teaching. Leaders should extend their evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that trainees are made aware that some theories are now contested.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Further education and skills phase report

What works well in the further education and skills phase and what needs to be done better?

Leaders implement a suitably ambitious curriculum to train teachers in the FES phase, including in the partner colleges. This is designed around the CCF-based university foundation concepts framework, which leaders identify as important in FES as well as in schools. However, as a result of the variability in the quality of mentoring and engagement with contemporary research, some trainees struggle to relate the foundation concepts to the planning of their own teaching. Too many in-service trainees do not understand the limitations of contested theories, and they plan lessons that lack ambition for their learners.

Tutors sequence modules sensibly, starting with behaviour and classroom management. Strong trainees confidently describe how they would plan to develop and maintain effective behaviour management in the classroom. Most tutors provide a particular focus on this and direct trainees to relevant research outlining appropriate behaviour management techniques. Most trainees respond well to unexpected incidents in the classroom.

Leaders have designed a specialist pathway for pre-service trainees who want to teach learners with SEND. This prepares the small number of trainees who follow this programme well to adapt their teaching to meet learners' needs. However, too many non-specialist trainees do not have enough opportunities to build their skills in teaching learners with SEND. Consequently, they do not have the necessary knowledge, skills or understanding of how to teach learners with SEND or how to identify additional needs in their learners.

Most pre-service trainees benefit from observing a range of expert teachers while on placement. These observations enable trainees to see skilful demonstration of the professional standards. In-service trainees observe their mentor teaching, but too few have opportunities to watch other expert teachers modelling effective practice.

Staff on the enhanced mentoring programme use formative assessment well. These trainees have a strong awareness of how well they are developing their teaching practice and the areas they need to improve. However, too many trainees do not receive the same level of helpful guidance and therefore have less understanding of the effectiveness of their teaching.

Tutors do not ensure that trainees have a secure understanding of assessment. A few trainees are not confident in using assessment to meet the needs of their learners. However, trainees on the enhanced mentoring programme have a sound understanding of how to use assessment to assess their learners' knowledge, and to correct misconceptions.

Leaders do not check that the quality of mentoring is consistently strong across all programmes. Too many mentors of in-service trainees do not attend training delivered by university staff. Leaders have identified this in their improvement plan. However, it is too early to comment on the impact of these actions. Leaders at the university do not have a

clear enough view of where mentoring is weakest. As a result, too many mentors do not understand fully their role in supporting trainees with the subject-specific curriculum.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Most trainees do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and/or understanding of SEND issues. They are not fully aware of how to identify additional needs in their learners. Leaders, managers, tutors and mentors must ensure that trainees understand how to identify needs and to plan effectively in order to meet the needs of learners with SEND. They need to ensure that trainees understand the theoretical principles that underpin the teaching of learners with SEND and that they are able to identify barriers to learning and take actions to remove these.
- The quality of mentoring across the partnership varies too much. This means that some mentors do not support trainees with the subject-specific teaching that underpins the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that mentors fully understand their roles in supporting trainees. They must ensure that mentors attend training so that they are able to provide effective, subject-specific support and to plan training for trainees that develops their ability to teach their specialist subject.
- Some trainees are not supported well enough to apply the university foundation concepts framework or to recognise the limitations of some teaching approaches. As a result, these trainees continue to apply contested theories and plan lessons that lack ambition. Leaders must ensure that tutors and mentors engage with current pedagogical thinking and support trainees to critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in their teaching.
- Too many in-service trainees do not have a secure enough understanding of how to assess learners. Consequently, trainees do not use assessment methods well to identify gaps in knowledge and skills or to adapt the curriculum in order to fill these. Leaders must ensure that trainees have a secure understanding of when and how to assess learners in their subject.
- Most pre-service trainees benefit from observing a range of expert teachers while on placement; this is a particular strength on the enhanced mentoring pre-service course. However, in-service trainees do not benefit from the same experience of observing expert teachers. Leaders should ensure that in-service trainees benefit from opportunities to observe experienced teachers so that they can learn from expert colleagues.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70070
Inspection number	10220267

This inspection was carried out in accordance with the 'Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook'.

This framework and handbook set 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 Secondary Further education
Date of previous inspection	18 May to 20 May 2015

Inspection team

Andrea Shepherd, Overall lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Angus, Phase lead inspector (FES)	Her Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Kirtley, Phase lead inspector (secondary)	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Matthew Knox	Her Majesty's Inspector
Melissa Milner	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Pearce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chloe Rendall	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steve Shaw	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Vellensworth	Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools and colleges

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

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)
Albany Village Primary School	131036	Primary
Barmston Village Primary School	108835	Primary
Chester-Le-Street CofE (Controlled) Primary School	114213	Primary
George Washington Primary School	144220	Primary
Grindon Infant School	108766	Primary
Hadrian Park Primary School	132141	Primary
Jarrow Cross CofE Primary School	133680	Primary
Reid Street Primary School	136836	Primary
Rickleton Primary School	108818	Primary
St Benet's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School	108837	Primary
Stephenson Memorial Primary School	108597	Primary
Wheatley Hill Community Primary School	114147	Primary
Yarm Primary School	140599	Primary
Beacon of Light School	142882	Secondary and FES
Boldon School	108730	Secondary
Castle View Enterprise Academy	135818	Secondary
Gateshead College	130551	Secondary and FES
Harton Academy	144204	Secondary
High Tunstall College of Science	111748	Secondary
Jarrow School	133725	Secondary
Kenton School	138120	Secondary
Macmillan Academy	130908	Secondary
Mortimer Community College	108727	Secondary
Southmoor Academy	138103	Secondary
Studio West	140965	Secondary
Washington Academy	144937	Secondary
Bishop Auckland College	130657	FES
Durham Sixth Form Centre	114310	FES
East Durham College	131859	FES
Springboard	50199	FES
Tyne Coast College	130555	FES
Villa Real School	114345	FES

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