

Thamesmead SCITT

Manygate Lane, Shepperton TW17 9EE

Inspection dates

11 July to 14 July 2022

Inspection judgements

Secondary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education and training

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

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

Trainee teachers at Thamesmead SCITT feel like 'people not numbers'. They appreciate the personal touch that leaders provide and speak fondly of the support they receive during their training. Leaders know the trainees as individuals and tailor the programme to fit their needs and interests. The opportunity to visit special and primary schools helps trainees to understand the wider scope of education outside of secondary schools.

Trainees benefit from a curriculum which develops their expertise in their chosen subject. Trainees learn the unique characteristics of their subject and how best to teach its content. As trainees' knowledge grows in taught sessions, they hone their skills at their placement schools. Trainees' school placements are carefully selected, helping them to understand the different approaches and techniques used by experienced teachers. However, trainees are not routinely taught or introduced to the research that underpins their learning.

Trainees receive feedback from their mentors and do their best to act on it. However, the targets trainees are set are often generic or unrelated to the curriculum they have learned. This means that trainees are not always directed towards specific actions that will help them to improve.

Information about this ITE provider

- Twenty three trainees started training in September 2021. At the time of the inspection, 20 were still on the course. All courses train teachers in the 11 to 16 age

range, except media studies which trains teachers in the 14 to 18 age range.

- Broadly, half of the trainees complete core training, with the majority also opting to study for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. The other half complete the School Direct (tuition fee) route. One trainee is currently following the School Direct (salaried) route. A small number of unqualified teachers gain qualified teacher status every year through the Assessment Only route.
- The partnership consists of 12 schools, all of which were graded good or better at their previous Ofsted inspection. The partnership is based at Thamesmead School.
- Each partnership school provides a senior representative who sits on the partnership board. Overall responsibility for the partnership sits with the headteacher of Thamesmead School, who acts as the accounting officer. The Thamesmead School governing body monitors the financial and strategic performance of the partnership.
- The partnership employs one part-time director to run the school-centred initial teacher training.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The inspectors met with the accounting officer and the two directors from the SCITT. They met with 10 representatives from the partnership board.
- Inspectors met with 16 trainees and five former trainees, either in school or in online meetings.
- The inspection team conducted focused reviews in science, mathematics, music and media studies. They met with the subject leaders, scrutinised course documents and visited five schools to talk with trainees, mentors and senior leaders. They looked at evidence of trainees' learning and, where possible, observed them teaching the subject being reviewed. They then considered a wider range of evidence to explore the quality of education and training.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 17 trainees and 35 staff who responded to the Ofsted online inspection surveys.

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

Leaders designed the curriculum with the DfE core content framework in mind. The curriculum is sequenced carefully to develop trainees' understanding of their subject over time and revisits and builds on their knowledge well. This helps trainees to develop a clear understanding of nuanced and complex content as they progress through the course. For example, trainees learn how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make strong progress in their subjects. However, trainees are not taught the key theories that underpin their work. Many struggle to recall any significant or pertinent research that has shaped their views, philosophy or practice.

The curriculum helps trainees to understand the realities of teaching. Trainees learn to build positive relationships with pupils and expect a lot of them in class. They understand how to keep pupils safe and improve pupils' mental and physical health, and they enjoy getting involved in the wider life of the school. Trainees feel excited about their future careers because they have a clear idea of the different roles and responsibilities they can aim for.

Leaders have not developed an assessment system which precisely identifies how well trainees have learned and understood the curriculum. Current systems rely on assessment against the teacher standards and do not provide leaders with detailed insight into how well trainees are doing. This means any misconceptions trainees have are not picked up as quickly and efficiently as they should be.

Trainees' placement schools are carefully selected to give them access to expert teachers in their chosen subject. Trainees work with and observe these colleagues regularly, helping them to see first-hand how to apply their learning. Trainees use the subject audits well to identify and address gaps in their own subject knowledge.

Mentors are keen to do their best for trainees and spend significant time supporting and directing them. Mentors attend central training which helps them to understand their role in trainees' development. However, leaders do not provide mentors with sufficient training on the centre-based curriculum to guide their work. Leaders have not identified that, too often, trainees receive feedback which is too general or only loosely linked to the course curriculum.

Systems for quality assurance are not as searching as they need to be. Too often, weak target setting and mentoring are overlooked and left unchallenged. This is because leaders have not set out what specific processes need to be checked during quality assurance visits.

The partnership board maintains a close watch on the development of the curriculum and provides feedback and challenge to leaders to make improvements where necessary. However, the weaknesses in assessment and quality assurance processes mean that the board receives incomplete information about how well trainees are progressing. It relies too heavily on leaders to identify weaknesses in the course and to set strategic priorities for the future.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not developed an assessment system that identifies what aspects of the curriculum trainees have understood and remembered. This means that any gaps in trainees' learning are picked up too late or not at all. Leaders should ensure that assessment systems pick up on any deficits in trainees' knowledge or misconceptions and that all mentors, subject leaders and professional tutors understand their role in this process.

- The systems for quality assurance do not focus sufficiently on the feedback that mentors provide for trainees. Often, generic and vague targets go unchallenged meaning trainees are not focused on the key actions that will aid their development. Leaders must ensure the procedures for quality assurance are understood by all staff and focused on how well mentors are supporting trainees to learn the curriculum.
- Trainees are not introduced to or taught enough about the pertinent research that underpins the curriculum. This means trainees are not as well prepared as they need to be when evaluating new or different schemes and initiatives. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum provides specific opportunities for trainees to learn, discuss and explore the key research that reinforces the course curriculum.

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	70239
Inspection number	10239852

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	School-centred initial teacher training
Phases provided	Secondary
Date of previous inspection	27 to 30 January 2014

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shaun Jarvis	Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
Bishop David Brown School	142284	Secondary
Chertsey High School	144741	Secondary
Logic Studio School	142781	Secondary
The Bishop Wand Church of England School	138491	Secondary
Three Rivers Academy	144503	Secondary

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