

# University of Worcester

Henwick Road, Worcester WR2 6AJ

## Inspection dates

28 to 31 March 2023

## Inspection judgements

	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase	Further education age-phase
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
The quality of education and training	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good	Good	Good

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

Trainees benefit from an exceptional learning experience at the University of Worcester. This experience instils in them a deep-rooted commitment to making a difference to the lives of the children and young adults in the communities they serve. Leaders pay serious attention to transforming trainees into passionate teachers who are determined to raise the aspirations of the pupils, students and learners they teach.

Trainees in all phases are well supported to build their subject knowledge throughout the course. For example, in the primary phase, leaders place great importance on ensuring that all trainees learn about the latest approaches to teaching pupils to read. Leaders provide trainees with regular and meaningful opportunities to put this theory into practice.

The curriculum in all phases gives trainees a thorough grounding in how to cater for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language. Similarly, trainees learn about their safeguarding responsibilities early in the courses. As part of this, trainees develop a comprehensive understanding of how to spot potential safeguarding concerns. Consequently, trainees gain a secure understanding of how to support the most vulnerable pupils they teach.

All trainees are well prepared to manage pupils' behaviour. In the primary and secondary phases, this aspect of the course is exceptional. Leaders have taken all necessary steps to

ensure that trainees can confidently manage pupils' behaviour from the outset of their first teaching placements.

University staff provide trainees with high-quality support with issues such as managing workload and maintaining good mental health. Relationships between staff and trainees are trusting, positive and based on mutual respect. Everyone working with trainees takes the time to get to know them exceptionally well. These strong relationships mean that trainees experience high-quality academic and pastoral support that is well matched to their circumstances. Trainees greatly value the excellent support they receive from all staff. Trainees are confident in raising any questions about their training because they know leaders will take their worries seriously and respond promptly.

Partnership working between the provider, schools and other settings is a particular strength. Leaders ensure that all partners understand their role in supporting trainees on placements. Nothing is left to chance. In addition, trainees benefit from the strong links leaders have established with partner providers. This means trainees can access many enhancement activities, such as teaching on the University 'Summer School'.

Leaders deliberately design programmes that interweave the critical knowledge that trainees need. In the primary and secondary phases, trainees get regular and high-quality opportunities to practice this knowledge in various settings. In addition, course leaders keep a close eye on trainees' progress. They act swiftly and effectively to ensure that trainees get the help they need to excel. All of this means that by the time trainees leave the course, they are highly competent early career teachers (ECTs) that partner schools and colleges regard highly.

## **Information about this ITE provider**

- The partnership has 777 trainees spread over three phases: primary, secondary and further education and skills (FES).
- The provider currently has 588 primary trainees, 152 secondary trainees and 37 trainees in the FES phase.
- The primary phase has trainees on one of three training routes. These are undergraduate, postgraduate (non-school direct) and school direct (fee paid).
- The secondary phase has trainees on one of two routes. These are postgraduate (non-school direct) and school direct (fee paid). The provider offers a wide range of subject specialisms in the secondary phase to support local and regional needs.
- The FES phase has trainees on one of two training routes. Trainees follow either the Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training route or the postgraduate route. In this phase, the partnership contains 10 settings.
- In the primary phase, the partnership contains 382 schools. In the secondary phase, it contains 89 schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by nine of His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with leaders, including the head and deputy of the Institute of Education and the provost. Inspectors also met with the head of primary, the post graduate certificate in education (PGCE) primary course leader, head of secondary and post-compulsory education, head of strategic secondary and FE partnerships, the PGCE Secondary course leader and the PGCE FES course leader. In addition, meetings were held with the partnership steering committees.
- Inspectors held meeting with trainees, school mentors, subject tutors, visiting tutors and early career teachers.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of information, which included documentation relating to the ITE curriculums across all phases, documentation in relation to safeguarding arrangements, training materials from across all phases, assessment materials and course handbooks. 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to the trainee survey and the staff survey.
- In the primary phase, inspectors spoke with 60 trainees and 18 ECTs either in person or remotely. Inspectors visited or communicated with 11 placement schools.
- In the secondary phase, inspectors spoke with a total of 44 trainees and 16 ECTs remotely. Inspectors visited or communicated with 39 placement schools.
- In the FES phase, inspectors spoke with 18 trainees and seven former trainees either in person or remotely. Inspectors visited or communicated with four placement colleges.
- In the primary phase, focused reviews were conducted in early reading, English, mathematics, physical education (PE), personal, social health and economic education (PSHE), history, design and technology, geography and languages. In the secondary phase, focused reviews were conducted in English, mathematics, PE, history, biology, business, and design and technology (food). In the FES phase, focused reviews were conducted in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), animal care, PE and business.

# Primary phase report

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

The university is an exciting and inspiring place for trainee primary teachers to study. Leaders' vision is clear, ambitious and underpinned by very high expectations. These expectations are realised through the effectiveness of the course programmes of study. Trainees are capable and confident practitioners by the time they complete their courses.

Leaders invest time and resources in developing staff's expertise. They identify and develop future staff leaders, training and coaching them to improve practice. This work has a significant positive impact on the quality of provision. Subject leaders are experts in their fields. They have designed a programme of study that successfully deepens trainees' knowledge of the national curriculum and, at the same time, develops trainees' ability to teach. As a result, trainees build a secure understanding of each subject in the primary curriculum and know how to teach these subjects well.

Leaders place a sharp focus on preparing trainees to teach pupils how to read. Indeed, trainees learn how to teach reading from early in the initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum. Leaders ensure that course content reflects relevant research. For example, trainees learn why phonics is the most effective approach for teaching pupils to read. Tutors and school-placed mentors work in harmony to deepen trainees' knowledge of how to teach reading. This integrated approach works well. All of this means that regardless of the age range that they will be teaching, all trainees are exceptionally well prepared to teach reading.

Leaders ensure that the Department of Education (DfE) core content framework (CCF) is fully covered through the primary ITE curriculum. Furthermore, they involve trainees in discussing and debating the research that underpins the CCF. Such sessions deepen trainees' understanding of education theory and practice. For instance, trainees understand the features of adaptive teaching and know how to successfully implement them in the lessons they plan and teach. Trainees typically explain their planning choices by making explicit reference to the CCF.

The ITE primary partnership is a learning community that places children at the heart of everyone's endeavours. Communication across the partnership is a strong and distinct positive feature. Headteachers and mentors feel fully involved and highly invested in the provider's vision. Interactions between the university and partner schools are very well established and purposeful. The partnership mutually benefits schools, staff, trainees and, ultimately, pupils.

The 'mentor curriculum' sits at the heart of leaders' work to ensure high-quality training. Trainees' mentors have clear roles and responsibilities. They understand these roles and successfully align trainees' in-school practice and experiences with centre-based training. Leaders make regular checks to ensure that mentors communicate messages that are

consistent with course intentions. Trainees typically have extremely positive viewpoints about the quality of mentoring and the difference that it makes to their practice.

Leaders use a well-considered approach to check trainees' subject knowledge and progress through the ITE curriculum. This approach draws together a range of information that is useful to trainees, mentors and tutors. This information allows trainees to identify their own strengths and areas for development. Course leaders provide extra help and support for trainees when necessary. This formative approach focuses everyone's attention on the right things. As a result, trainees are fully equipped to begin their teaching careers by the time they complete their programmes of study.

### **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 across the secondary phase have established a truly high-quality provision. From subject tutors to subject mentors, everyone has an unequivocal understanding of their role in helping to develop trainees. By the end of their experience at Worcester University, trainees are exceptionally well prepared to enter the teaching profession.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is carefully and deliberately constructed around subject and phase. Expert subject tutors have constructed a highly ambitious curriculum which is rich and suitably broad in its content. Subject tutors are highly adept at ensuring that trainees develop their knowledge over time.

Leaders have designed a highly effective professional studies programme which aligns precisely with the CCF. In phase one, leaders carefully and deliberately introduce trainees to the most pertinent aspects of professional behaviours, how pupils learn, and behaviour management. This knowledge is then exemplified and further developed through subject sessions so that trainees understand key curriculum threads securely before beginning their school placements. This gives trainees an exceptionally strong foundation on which to start their teaching experience.

Trainees understand the importance research plays in their development. At various points, they are judiciously introduced to the key debates and theories in both their subject and teacher pedagogy. Leaders' continual reference to 'questioning the given' helps to ensure that trainees become highly reflective practitioners and recognise the intrinsic value research plays in helping pupils learn.

Leaders have established exceptionally strong relationships with their school partners. They actively engage with school mentors to ensure that they fully understand how they contribute to the ITE curriculum's success. The 'purposeful integration training' newsletter ensures that mentors are kept up to date with the learning and supplementary reading trainees have completed at university. This approach ensures a high level of consistency for trainees in school placements. Leaders' focus on developing high-quality mentoring means that trainees receive exceptional support when in school.

Leaders' systems and processes for monitoring trainees' progress is a strength of the programme. Trainees use the 'pink progression booklet' as a matter of routine to track their progress closely. The targets mentors set following lesson observations are precise and focused on the most important aspects that will help the trainee improve. Where trainees do require support, leaders act swiftly and decisively. This swift support helps to ensure that, by the time trainees complete the course, they are extremely well-prepared for their first teaching post.

Leaders have established highly effective systems to quality assure the provision, both in the university and in placements. For example, leaders make visits to subject sessions to

check that tutors are integrating key curriculum threads. This all contributes to a highly consistent and highly effective experience for trainees.

Trainees benefit from a wide range of pastoral support. Subject tutors take the time to get to know trainees individually and are on hand to provide advice and guidance throughout the course. Leaders are extremely mindful of trainees' workload and well-being. They teach trainees how to manage their time effectively and are acutely aware of particular 'pinch points' in the curriculum.

### **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 work seamlessly with delivery partners to ensure that tutors deliver an ambitious curriculum. They effectively support trainees academically and with their well-being, ensuring that they are well prepared to teach.

Leaders ensure that trainees gain teaching expertise during their course and that they have the skills they need to meet the required professional standards. Nearly all trainees who are not already in a teaching role have secured their next steps either into teaching or further study when they complete their course.

In a few cases, leaders have not fully ensured that trainees are on an appropriate specialist pathway to match their career aspirations. They do not link trainees' teaching practice placements to their training needs. As a result, a few trainees are not fully prepared for the setting in which they aspire to work.

Subject-specific tutors are knowledgeable. They support trainees to develop their understanding of specific strategies to use while teaching their subject. Furthermore, tutors effectively teach and model current research in their teaching. They ensure that trainees have regular and meaningful opportunities to engage in educational debates. As part of this work, trainees learn about some theories that are considered less effective, which helps them to become reflective practitioners.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is carefully matched to the subjects trainees teach. As part of the curriculum, trainees learn to apply the educational theories that they have been introduced to. For example, trainees develop the ability to plan and sequence learning so that learners gain and retain knowledge within their specific subjects. This means that most trainees are well prepared to teach their subjects. However, the curriculum does not fully prepare trainees with the teaching strategies they need to manage challenging classroom behaviours early enough in the course. As result, trainees rely too heavily on the placement mentor to develop these strategies when issues arise on placements.

Tutors use a range of formative assessment to check trainees are making the expected progress. Where trainees fall behind, tutors swiftly put in place support and detailed action plans to ensure trainees catch up.

Mentors develop strong supportive relationships with their trainees. This support includes ongoing 'staff room support' and significant additional professional discussions. Leaders have ensured that mentors have a clear understanding of the centre-based curriculum and meet regularly with mentors and trainees to ensure that they benefit from high-quality mentoring and have meaningful opportunities to put theory into practice.



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

### **[Information for the provider and appropriate authority]**

- The curriculum does not fully prepare all trainees with the strategies they need to manage challenging behaviours in the classroom early enough in the course. Leaders should ensure that all elements of the training curriculum are sequenced sufficiently well to enable trainees to skilfully manage learners' classroom behaviours from the start of their placements.
- In a few cases, leaders have not fully ensured that trainees are on an appropriate specialist pathway and teaching practice placement. Leaders should ensure that all trainees are on an appropriate specialist pathway and placement, which meets their teaching career aspirations and their training needs. This will ensure that trainees are fully prepared for the FES settings in which they will work.

## ITE provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70085
<b>Inspection number</b>	10247698

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>	Higher education institution
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary Secondary FES
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 to 13 March 2014

## Inspection team

Christopher Stevens, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Leonard, Phase lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Howes, Phase lead inspector Secondary	His Majesty's Inspector
Sharon Dowling, Phase lead inspector Further Education	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Parton	His Majesty's Inspector
Bianka Zemke	His Majesty's Inspector
Rob Hackfath	His Majesty's Inspector
Ed Leighton	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Gater	His Majesty's Inspector
Wayne Simner	His Majesty's Inspector
Kirsty Foulkes	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Spilsbury	Ofsted Inspector

## **Annex: Placement, schools and colleges**

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>ITE phases</b>
Madresfield C of E Primary School	144259	Primary
Northleigh C of E Primary School	147284	Primary
Cradley C of E Primary School	103846	Primary
Kempsey Primary School	144256	Primary
Heart of Worcestershire College	130713	FES
Halesowen College	130476	FES
Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College	130710	FES

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