

Teach First

6 Mitre Passage, London, London SE10 0ER

Inspection dates

24 to 27 April 2023

Inspection judgements

	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	Outstanding
The quality of education and training	Outstanding	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

Trainees choose Teach First because they aspire to be skilled and responsive teachers who can make a difference to the education and lives of all children, particularly those who are disadvantaged. They buy into the academically rigorous and demanding programme knowing that they will be well supported by leaders and staff. The vast majority of trainees speak highly of the professional and pastoral support they receive, with many continuing as 'future ambassadors' of Teach First.

Trainees benefit from highly ambitious initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in the primary and secondary age-phases. Right from the start, their training is characterised by sharply focused and skilfully delivered centre-based training. Trainees are introduced to the wide body of pertinent knowledge and subject expertise that they need in order to be a teacher.

Trainees are well supported to gain a deep understanding of how pupils learn. They are expertly introduced to teaching practices that promote this. Trainees are skilfully taught how to understand pupils' specific needs, such as those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, and to adapt their teaching accordingly.

A range of recognised behavioural management practices are taught, so that trainees can adapt the various approaches that they may encounter across different settings, age-phases and/or subjects in a confident and competent way.

Specialist input to prepare trainees for their role in promoting and ensuring pupils' safety and welfare is timely and effective. Trainees understand their safeguarding responsibilities and gain a comprehensive insight into the signs and impact of different risks to pupils' safety.

Information about this ITE provider

- Teach First is a high potential initial teacher training (HPITT) provider.
- It has been providing teacher training in the secondary age-phase since 2003 and in the primary age-phase since 2008.
- All trainees in the primary and secondary age-phases follow the employment-based route.
- Trainees follow a two-year ITE programme that leads to qualified teacher status (QTS) in the first year. The HPITT works in partnership with Bath Spa University and Sheffield Hallam University to support all trainees to complete a postgraduate diploma in education over the course of the two-year programme.
- In the 2022/23 academic year, 2,533 trainees were enrolled on the HPITT's programmes. Of these, 1,260 trainees were in the first year of the programme, including 259 primary and 1,001 secondary age-phase trainees. There were 1,273 trainees in the second year of the programme, including 274 primary and 999 secondary age-phase trainees.
- Trainees who follow the primary age-phase programmes are trained to teach the three to seven years or the five to 11 years age range. Trainees on secondary age-phase programmes are trained to teach the 11 to 16 years or the 14 to 19 years age range.
- Secondary age-phase trainees choose from the following subject specialisms: business studies; computing; design and technology; English; geography; history; mathematics; modern foreign languages; music; religious studies; or science.
- The partnership includes 187 primary schools and 498 secondary schools across all regions of England.
- The partnership includes schools that are currently judged as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by 14 of His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the programme director for teacher development, the head of initial teacher training, other senior leaders, subject leaders and development leads. They also met with representatives of strategic and operational groups across the primary and secondary age-phases. Inspectors met with representatives of national and regional school forums. Inspectors also spoke with mentors, headteachers and other senior leaders in partner schools. Inspectors met with representatives from Bath Spa University and Sheffield Hallam University.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of information, which included: documentation relating to the ITE curriculums across both phases; documentation relating to safeguarding arrangements; audits of the provider's compliance with the Department for

Education (DfE) ITT criteria and supporting information; training materials from across both 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.
- The inspection was carried out through in-person meetings, virtual meetings and on-site visits to partner schools and colleges.
- In the primary age-phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in art and design, computing, early reading, geography, mathematics and science.
- In the secondary age-phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in computing, design and technology, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, science and religious studies.
- During the visit, primary age-phase and secondary age-phase inspectors visited 15 schools.
- In the primary age-phase, inspectors spoke with 54 mentors, 56 trainees and 11 early career teachers, either in person or remotely.
- In the secondary age-phase, inspectors spoke with a total of 81 mentors, 87 trainees and 30 early career teachers, either in person or remotely.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for trainees. This contained the views of trainees in the primary and secondary age-phases. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Primary phase report

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

Leaders have designed an extremely ambitious ITE curriculum that prepares trainees well for their future careers in primary-phase teaching. The curriculum draws on up-to-date, expert knowledge in all subject areas. Throughout the course, trainees are taught about high-quality teaching, pedagogies and cognitive science and how these are applied to both subject- and phase-specific knowledge. From the very start of the programme, trainees are taught how to reflect on what they learn and how this affects their practice.

The core content framework (CCF) is rigorously embedded throughout the primary-phase curriculum. Trainees are taught by phase and subject specialists who are experts in their field and informed by the most up-to-date research. The quality and depth of training are impressive and enable trainees to become quickly established in their employing schools.

There is strong leadership and oversight of the early reading curriculum, and trainees across all key stages learn in depth about the knowledge and skills that they need in order to teach pupils to read. This includes gaining confidence in using systematic synthetic phonics, regardless of the phonics programmes that their schools may use. Trainees benefit from opportunities to collaborate with others through 'stretch huddles', which help them to extend their knowledge of phonics.

Teach First carefully selects partner schools that share their vision to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders ensure that school leaders know what trainees are learning in the ITE curriculum and that this curriculum is fully integrated with the school's own practice. Trainees are taught to reflect on what they see happening in their schools in relation to their own learning.

Leaders have clear and well-designed systems for assessing trainees' development and competence to teach. Mentors, for example, provide small-step feedback that allows trainees to identify what they know and remember and to develop their practice effectively. University programme partners use similarly skilful approaches to provide trainees with insightful feedback on their academic assignments.

Systems to ensure that all trainees receive high-quality mentoring across all regions are robust. Development leads and mentors work in close partnership to ensure that the ITE curriculum informs trainees' school-based experiences. Development leads play a crucial role in accurately identifying any mentors and trainees who may need support. This helps leaders to identify any patterns within or across regions and to adjust the programme for the future. In this way, leaders ensure that they respond rapidly to concerns where these occasionally arise.

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?

Teach First provides an appropriately challenging and ambitious teacher training programme for trainees in the secondary age-phase. Trainees' education and training are underpinned by a focus on high ambition for all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

Leaders ensure that the core and subject-specific curriculums are carefully designed and sequenced. The CCF is threaded throughout the provision. The curriculum is planned and taught by experts in their field. Trainees are skilfully introduced to, and revisit, key concepts and pedagogical principles throughout the secondary-phase programme. This supports trainees' understanding of essential topics, such as how pupils learn and behaviour management.

The curriculum prioritises the rapid development of trainees' subject knowledge. Leaders quickly identify and support any gaps in trainees' subject knowledge. Trainees learn about a wide range of effective strategies for teaching their subject. Leaders involve key stakeholders in the subject and research communities to advise on the curriculum, build professional networks and contribute to training. This means that trainees understand the uniqueness of their subject specialisms.

Training at the partner schools and at the centre is coherently aligned and purposefully integrated. Trainees are skilfully prepared to teach their subject and apply their learning to the specific context that they are in. Through carefully informed coaching, trainees become highly reflective practitioners.

Mentors and development leads work cohesively to give trainees the experiences and support that they need. Development leads carefully oversee, monitor and support the needs of mentors and trainees. They direct mentors to highly beneficial training and check on mentor quality. They keep a watchful eye on all aspects of trainees' well-being and progress throughout the ITE programmes. Where necessary, they provide or arrange support that is carefully matched to trainees' professional or personal needs. One trainee captured the views of many in describing 'a complete continuity of voice' between programme leaders and school staff.

The assessment of trainees is exceptional. Trainees benefit from feedback and targets that are highly individualised. These are broken down into tangible steps. A coherent approach to formative assessment ensures that trainees understand their cumulative progress towards gaining QTS. As a result, trainees make excellent progress in what they know, remember and apply of the ITE curriculum during their training.

Leaders ensure that partner schools share their vision of reducing educational disadvantage and are well placed to provide the experiences that trainees need. Leaders conscientiously match individual trainees to contrasting schools for their second placement. This enriches trainees' ability to reflect on their learning in different settings.

Leaders ensure that trainees' views inform programme priorities and development. They diligently use the views of trainees to make clear and demonstrable improvements to trainees' experiences and the structure and content of secondary-phase programmes.

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	70270
Inspection number	10279265

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	High potential initial teacher training provider
Phases provided	Primary Secondary
Date of previous inspection	5 May 2015 and 16 November 2015

Inspection team

Michael Pennington, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Smith, Phase lead inspector (primary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Strong, Phase lead inspector (secondary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Eleanor Belfield	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Davies	His Majesty's Inspector
Madeleine Gerrard	His Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Keay	His Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Kirtley	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Light	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Pearce	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Rawlings-High	His Majesty's Inspector
Hannah Stoten	His Majesty's Inspector
Adam Vincent	His Majesty's Inspector
Louise Walker	His Majesty's Inspector
Marc White	His Majesty's Inspector
Bianka Zemke	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Employment schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)
South Harringay Infant School	102111	Primary
Eldon Primary School	101988	Primary
Deptford Park Primary School	100678	Primary
Richmond Academy	139651	Primary
Whitehouse Community Primary School	148750	Primary
Altarnun Primary School	140839	Primary
St Paul's Way Trust School	143379	Secondary
City of London Academy (Southwark)	134222	Secondary
Sir Herbert Leon Academy	138439	Secondary
Dixons Cottingley Academy	146198	Secondary
Grace Academy	129342	Secondary
Cheney School	139146	Secondary
Grace College	147178	Secondary
Thomas Bennett Community College	138620	Secondary
The Bulwell Academy	145952	Secondary

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