

University of Southampton

Building 34, Highfield Campus, University of Southampton, Southampton, Hampshire SO17 1BJ

Inspection dates

2 to 5 May 2023

Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education and training

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

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

Trainees thrive on this programme because of the exceptional partnership between the provider and schools. They benefit from a seamless curriculum which coherently links learning in university sessions and through classroom experience. Trainees value how the programme is personalised for individuals and enriched by opportunities, including teaching in Kenya and Kuwait.

Expert tutors help trainees to acquire strong subject knowledge. Leaders' focus on 'What does this trainee need now?' means that trainees are supported to systematically build detailed skills and knowledge over time. They are very well prepared to recognise their safeguarding responsibilities and to confidently promote high standards of behaviour.

Trainees develop a secure understanding of meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. They learn how to adapt their teaching effectively and how to support individual pupils who have fallen behind to help them to keep up. Initially, trainees learn about these aspects of teaching through a phase focus before refining their understanding through the lens of individual subjects.

Trainees are taught to be very reflective and engage critically with pertinent research which informs their teaching practice. Highly effective mentors skilfully guide trainees to reflect on their development. Leaders listen carefully to trainees' views and provide tailored pastoral and professional support. Trainees are supported to foster efficiency to successfully manage their workload during the course and in their future careers.

Information about this ITE provider

- The University of Southampton offers several routes to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) in either primary or secondary education. Most trainees follow the university's Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) route, training to teach either pupils aged four to 11 years or 11 to 16 years. A smaller proportion opt for the School Direct (SD) route, and over half of these receive some training from the Bitterne Park Teacher Training Alliance. All SD trainees study for a PGCE. The university also offers the assessment-only route into teaching.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 105 secondary and 39 primary trainees. Thirty of the secondary trainees were following the SD route. There were also nine assessment-only trainees.
- The provider works with 65 primary schools and 98 secondary schools across seven local authorities. Almost all partner schools were judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted at their most recent inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted by two of His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted inspectors.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the director of initial teacher education, the directors of the primary and secondary programmes and subject tutors. The lead inspector also met with several members from the primary and secondary steering groups.
- Inspectors spoke with 33 trainees, 28 mentors, 15 early career teachers and 20 senior leaders or headteachers either remotely or in person. They visited eight schools in person. Inspectors took account of the views expressed in 69 inspection surveys returned by trainees and 86 returned by staff, including school-based staff who are involved in the programme.
- Inspectors carried out focused reviews in both phases to help them understand how well trainees are prepared to teach. In the primary phase, they focused on early reading, modern foreign languages and art and design. In the secondary phase, the focus subjects were mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and geography.

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

Leaders are highly effective and relentless in their efforts to continually improve the programme. They listen to feedback and take swift action to strengthen the quality of the provision for the benefit of trainees and schools. One headteacher reflected on the 'total professional trust' between the provider and schools to describe the positive and mutually beneficial relationship between schools and the provider. As a result, everyone works in a

genuine partnership to develop trainees who are highly reflective, research-informed and consequently very well prepared to join the profession as early career teachers.

Leaders have created an ambitious and effectively sequenced curriculum which is fully underpinned by the core content framework. Expert tutors support trainees to develop a rich understanding of subject and pedagogical content, alongside classroom practice. The curriculum is precisely interwoven between training at the centre and school placements to give trainees deliberate opportunities to practise skills of planning, teaching and assessing pupils' learning. Mentors are very well acquainted with the content of the programme and expertly guide trainees to reflect on and apply this learning in different contexts. They help trainees to maintain a sharp focus on the high proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language in the local community. In the primary phase, this is deeply enhanced at the start of the course through the 'learning about teaching in school' weeks. Trainees observe expert teachers model excellent classroom practice, with a focus on inclusion and behaviour management.

Primary trainees benefit from first-rate training in how to teach early reading, including the use of systematic synthetic phonics. Tutors emphasise the importance of all pupils, including struggling readers, developing fluency through routine practice using decodable books. Trainees strengthen their understanding by completing carefully considered school-based tasks such as projects with individual pupils to improve their reading.

Leaders' approach to the formative assessment of trainees is a particular strength of the programme. They provide strong guidance to schools so that the assessment of trainees is closely linked to the curriculum that has been taught at each stage and target setting is precise. Mentors and tutors provide trainees with the right support at the right time to develop their subject knowledge and classroom practice. This process leads to a rigorous assessment at the end of the programme to support a recommendation for the award of QTS.

The quality of mentoring is exceptional. Leaders make sure that the ambitious mentor training is securely understood and consistently enacted. Mentors work with trainees to identify what precise support or developmental activity they need each week to gradually build their detailed knowledge and skills. Leaders closely review the trainees' development and mentoring support. Trainees appreciate the bespoke support they receive to help them to be successful. As one trainee reflected, 'The culture of teacher training is of kindness and care, as well as pushing us to be the best teachers we can be.'

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

Unique reference number	70067
Inspection number	10277963

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	Higher education institution
Phases provided	Primary and secondary combined
Date of previous inspection	20 to 23 January 2014

Inspection team

Laurie Anderson, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Holden	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Culling	His Majesty's Inspector
Liz McIntosh	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
Bitterne CE Primary School	116339	Primary
Highfield CE Primary School	116395	Primary
Ludlow Junior School	139027	Primary
Redbridge Primary School	116123	Primary
Bitterne Park School	116458	Secondary
St George Catholic College	116507	Secondary
The Hamble School	116413	Secondary
The Toynbee School	116411	Secondary

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