

Chiltern Training Group

Challney High School for Boys, Stoneygate Road, Luton LU4 9TJ

Inspection dates

9 to 12 May 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	N/A	Outstanding

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

Trainees thrive at this partnership. Their experiences across school placements and between the three 'hubs' are remarkably consistent and of exceptional quality. Trainees' well-being is carefully nurtured. Leaders' swift responses to trainees' messages ensure trainees and mentors get the support they need.

Considered communication protocols ensure that provision is tightly aligned with the trainee curriculum. All those involved know when and how it should be delivered. Multiple layers of quality assurance make it almost impossible for a trainee to miss out.

Trainees become highly reflective, critical practitioners with a broad knowledge of pedagogies and curriculum. Trainees in the primary phase learn how to teach systematic synthetic phonics well. All trainees learn early in the course how to manage pupils' behaviour, revisiting this consistently through the training. They develop similarly detailed knowledge of how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language. They consider and discuss weighty issues in an informed and thoughtful way. For instance, trainees reflect deeply on how the diversity of personal characteristics might impact everyone involved in education. They learn how to pre-empt and navigate this. They are thoroughly prepared for managing the nuances of a career in teaching, from changing pedagogical approaches to the different interactions they will have.

Information about this ITE provider

- There are 63 trainees in the primary phase and 69 in the secondary phase. The primary phase has opened since the previous inspection.
- Chiltern Training Group provides assessment-only and School Direct training routes.
- Most of the schools in which trainees are placed are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team consisted of seven of His Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer and the deputy chief executive officer (education) of Chiltern Learning Trust, the director of teaching school, the director and deputy director of initial teacher training (ITT) and the primary and secondary ITT leaders. They also met with the link governor for the SCITT and leaders from a range of school partners across the three hubs.
- Inspectors spoke with 81 trainees.
- Inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading, religious education, history and mathematics in the primary phase. In the secondary phase, they carried out focused reviews in languages, mathematics, English and geography.
- Inspectors visited 19 schools.

Primary phase report

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

Leaders' skilful design of an ambitious and rigorous training curriculum is underpinned by a strong moral purpose to provide the best quality teachers to serve the communities trainees will work in. The integration of the core content framework is very well designed and exposes trainees to well considered and credible reading and research. Leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that all partners across the three locations that provide the ITE programme understand, share and embody this moral purpose and ambition.

Trainees develop a deep understanding of the full primary and early years curriculum. Trainees benefit significantly from high-quality, face-to-face training within each of the three hubs. This introduces trainees to carefully considered subject content and pedagogical approaches. Precisely planned in-school tasks and core reading ensure trainees apply this learning in their teaching.

Leaders prioritise training in how to teach systematic synthetic phonics and early reading. Trainees build up the knowledge and expertise they need to support pupils at the early stages of reading. Opportunities for phonics and early years experience days ensure that all trainees, regardless of the year group their main placement is in, know and understand how to teach early reading and phonics well.

Leaders make intelligent and impactful use of assessment information to assure and improve the experiences of trainees. The carefully designed assessment system provides a range of relevant information about trainees' progress. This is analysed to provide trainees and mentors with clear expectations for mentor meetings and in-school tasks. This includes early identification of any barriers or concerns that trainees might face. Trainees and mentors appreciate this clear direction and support from leaders.

Leaders meticulously plan school placements that are diverse and provide trainees with rich and varied experiences. These placements support trainees to be thoroughly prepared to support pupils with SEND or those who speak English as an additional language. Expert mentors and lead mentors support trainees really well while they are on placement. Leaders' exceptionally robust quality assurance processes identify where they need to provide additional training and support for mentors. Bespoke and tailored training meet the needs of mentors so that they know how best to support their trainees.

Leaders work extremely well with schools within the partnership. School leaders are appreciative of the clarity of communication they receive. They also appreciate how leaders listen to their views and thoughts. Leaders seek external quality assurance of the provision, alongside listening to the views and experiences of trainees, mentors, lead mentors, facilitators and school leaders. This information is collated and rigorously reviewed to inform and refine future curriculum planning.

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?

At the heart of leaders' work is their drive to ensure pupils in the area benefit from first-rate teaching. Their laser-sharp focus on quality and consistency is backed up by watertight structures and systems. As a consequence, whichever training hub or partner school a trainee attends, the trainee has an exceptional experience of teacher education.

Leaders are clear about precisely what trainees will learn and when. They make sure that key topics are covered at the most appropriate times, such as the early focus on behaviour management. They ensure full coverage of the core content framework, and the curriculum is underpinned by pertinent research, theory and literature. Leaders introduce the concepts which underpin strong teaching practice in professional studies sessions. Expert lead mentors build on these, helping trainees see how they apply to the teaching of their subject.

Leaders have clear expectations for mentors. They provide comprehensive training. Leaders' multiple levels of quality assurance ensure that mentors provide the guidance and support required by the course. Consequently, consistently high-quality mentoring is a feature of this provision, ensuring trainees practise the theory they have learned about. Trainees revisit, try out, deliberate on and embed what they learn over time because all aspects of the programme are deliberately linked.

Leaders fully involve partner schools. Partner schools helped to construct, and now review the impact of, the training programme. Leaders draw on the expertise of strong teachers in the partnership to teach elements of the programme.

Great care is taken to ensure that all trainees experience contrasting school placement contexts. Leaders' deliberate choices of placement enable trainees to modify and enrich their developing pedagogical content knowledge through the teaching of a wide demographic.

Leaders' comprehensive 'teacher development record' (TDR) is used by mentors, lead mentors and trainees to keep an ongoing record of trainees' strengths and areas to develop. It knits together the different elements of training, using targets based on the curriculum and encompassing subject knowledge and professional studies. Trainees are motivated by the feedback, support and guidance which stem from the TDR. Leaders' systems ensure that mentors' assessments are accurate and substantiated. This approach to formative assessment is highly effective. Trainees understand how they are assessed and how this charts their path to being independent practitioners.

Trainees demonstrate knowledge, practice and professionalism which far exceeds the norm. They have the skills and insight which puts them in very good stead for swift advancement in their careers.

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	70014
Inspection number	10258955

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	Primary Secondary
Date of previous inspection	3 to 6 February 2014

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Williams, Phase lead inspector (primary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Adam Cooke, Phase lead inspector (secondary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Bessie Owen	His Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Crozier	His Majesty's Inspector
Kristian Hewitt	His Majesty's Inspector
Liz Smith	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	145324	Primary
Lark Rise Academy	136345	Primary
Harlington Lower School	138938	Primary
Whitefield Primary Academy	146751	Primary
Springfield Primary School	145219	Primary
Clifton All Saints Academy	140228	Primary
St Matthew's Primary School	109552	Primary
Maidenhall Primary School	109546	Primary
Stopsley Community Primary School	109553	Primary
Hillborough Junior School	109578	Primary
Denbigh High School	136319	Secondary
Chiltern Academy	145872	Secondary
Biddenham International School and Sports College	109690	Secondary
The Chalk Hills Academy	135337	Secondary
Challney High School for Boys	136651	Secondary
St Thomas More Catholic School	139517	Secondary
Kempston Academy	142387	Secondary
Samuel Whitbread Academy	137948	Secondary
Houstone School	149107	Secondary

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