

George Spencer Academy SCITT

George Spencer Academy, Arthur Mee Road, Stapleford, Nottingham NG9 7EW

Inspection dates

12 to 15 June 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 are effusive in their praise for the course and the support they receive. One trainee, typical of all, said: 'It is an amazing programme in the way it is sequenced, the knowledge learned and, especially, how it replicates the life of a teacher. The support is amazing too.'

Staff know trainees exceptionally well. They go above and beyond to ensure their success. Trainees say they benefit from an excellent curriculum, underpinned by an ethos of high expectations and care. Relationships are remarkably positive, augmented by highly personalised communication. Trainees' views are considered frequently, and taken seriously, to ensure that their learning is maximised.

The curriculum is exceptionally well organised and delivered by experts. Trainers and trainees have complete clarity about what is taught and when. Primary trainees gain a rich understanding of early reading and phonics, as well as the teaching of foundation subjects. Additional placement experiences ensure that all trainees have a strong understanding of inclusion, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Trainees are well prepared for the realities of teaching. Local school leaders recognise this. They say that trainees enter the profession with strong knowledge and skills about, for example, behaviour management, pedagogy and pupil assessment.

Information about this ITE provider

- The George Spencer Academy SCITT first opened in 2008. The SCITT forms part of the Spencer Alliance for Leadership and Teaching, a branch of the Spencer

Academies Trust.

- The SCITT covers primary and secondary phases of education.
- The partnership offers School Direct routes towards qualified teacher status. Trainees may also take a level 6 apprenticeship. Most trainees opt to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). This is accredited by the University of Derby.
- The partnership currently has 34 trainees, including four apprentices and three future teaching scholars. There are 13 trainees in the primary phase and 21 trainees in the secondary phase.
- The partnership works with 33 schools across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Eighteen of these schools are part of the George Spencer Academies Trust. The partnership additionally includes two special schools.
- The schools currently active in the partnership vary in size, local contexts and a range of Ofsted grades at their most recent inspection, from inadequate to outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by two of His Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted Inspector.
- Inspectors spoke to 28 current trainees and 11 former trainees.
- Inspectors met with the director of initial teacher training and other members of the leadership team, including the director of the Spencer Alliance for Leadership and Teaching. The lead inspector met with five members of the SCITT's strategic partnership board. He also spoke with four other leaders of local partnership schools.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for trainees and staff. He also considered the survey responses conducted by the SCITT.
- Inspectors carried out focused reviews of history, mathematics and physical education in the secondary phase and reading, geography and history in the primary phase.
- Inspectors made visits to nine schools to meet with trainees, mentors, school-based tutors and headteachers. These visits included short observations of trainees' teaching.

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

Local school leaders and staff are proud to be associated with the SCITT. They praise the high calibre of trainees enlisted in the programme, reflecting leaders' rigorous recruitment processes and placement considerations. Leaders have fostered a culture that embodies commitment to excellence by working in a mutually collaborative way with partner schools,

trainers and trainees. All strongly value leaders' proactive and responsive approach in regularly gathering their views and acting on them. Partnership leaders further perceive that leaders' cohesive integration of the curriculum 'nourishes' the professional development of their own staff. As one headteacher said, 'Our school is a better school because of our involvement with the SCITT.'

Trainees get an excellent deal and attain well. The curriculum is highly ambitious and well sequenced, organised into five 'core areas'. Leaders ensure that trainees progressively build upon their knowledge and skills term by term. Leaders view the programme as part of a three-year training journey. Important concepts linked to classroom pedagogy and behaviour management, for example, are regularly revisited. The content exceeds the minimum requirements set out in the Department for Education's core content framework. Trainees gain valuable experiences, when visiting specialist settings, of inclusive school cultures, equality and diversity and careers education for pupils. Trainers display an unwavering commitment to producing effective teachers during generic and subject development sessions, including trainees' delivery of systematic synthetic phonics and use of formative assessment strategies.

Most trainees opt to complete the PGCE qualification. This aspect of the course is similarly ambitious and seamlessly woven into the fabric of the overall training programme.

Trainees benefit from consistently high-quality mentoring. They value the dual approach of class/subject mentors and school-based tutors to ensure as full an understanding of effective teaching as possible. Mentors receive high-quality training, designed to reinforce leaders' philosophy of evolving trainees' reflective practice. Trainees say that they like this approach. They have ample opportunity to learn from experienced colleagues. Leaders have ensured that trainees' workload is considered alongside termly increases in teaching hours.

Leaders' multi-layered assessment system means that they have clarity about each trainee's strengths and next steps, including their development of subject knowledge. Progress tutors make regular checks to ensure trainees and trainers are meeting leaders' high expectations. Leaders respond swiftly when their high expectations are not realised or when individual circumstances require additional support, to positive effect.

Trainees are exceptionally well supported towards their first appointments. Almost all current trainees have been successful in securing employment, many in local trust and non-trust schools. Many former trainees have become trainers and mentors on the programme themselves.

Does the ITE provider's primary and secondary combined phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Do apprenticeships in the ITE provider's primary and secondary combined phase satisfy the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision?

- The provider meets the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision in the primary and secondary combined phase.

Apprentices get an excellent deal. Leaders are ambitious and committed to the success of all apprentices. Expectations are high. Apprentices typically follow the same high-quality curriculum as other trainees. Leaders ensure that each apprentice's initial knowledge and skills are considered as they commence the programme. Apprentices receive ample time to complete learning away from the workplace. They all say they strongly value the support they receive in nurturing their success. Leaders are experienced assessors. They conduct regular reviews to identify each apprentice's strengths and next steps. Collectively, these approaches ensure that all apprentices are well prepared to become effective teachers.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70201
Inspection number	10267351

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 and secondary combined
Date of previous inspection	24 to 27 June 2013

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Elizabeth Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Tordoff	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
Ashfield School	137981	Secondary
Bramcote Primary School	122536	Primary
Chetwynd Spencer Academy	138070	Primary
Fairfield Spencer Academy	140071	Primary
George Spencer Academy	136291	Secondary
Heanor Gate Spencer Academy	137606	Secondary
John Port Spencer Academy	145500	Secondary
Portland Spencer Academy	140550	Primary
Redhill Primary	137897	Primary

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