

# West Midlands Consortium

Thomas Telford School, Old Park, Telford, Shropshire TF3 4NW

## Inspection dates

12 to 16 June 2023

## Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

### Overall effectiveness

**Good**

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The quality of education and training	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

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

Trainees are proud to be associated with West Midlands Consortium (WMC) and are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of their training. One trainee summed up the views of many when they said, 'This course is demanding, but staff do all they can to help you succeed. I would not hesitate to recommend WMC.'

WMC's ambitious and well-crafted training programmes reflect leaders' high expectations of trainees. Leaders instil in trainees the importance of high professional standards and, above all else, 'putting pupils first'. These qualities are highly regarded by partner schools.

Leaders and staff know trainees exceptionally well. Trainees receive exceptional pastoral care from their course leaders and mentors. Trainees greatly appreciate this. They feel valued, listened to and part of the 'WMC family'.

Trainees receive high-quality training that prepares them well for the realities of teaching. From the outset of the programme, they are taught how to manage pupils' behaviour positively. Trainees also receive effective training on supporting pupils whatever their needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Primary-phase trainees are well prepared to teach pupils at the earliest stages of reading. In the secondary phase, trainees are very well supported to develop their subject knowledge. This is also the case for most subjects in the primary phase.

Partnership working is a strength. Leaders ensure that partner schools are fully involved in all aspects of the partnership's work, including designing and continuously improving the initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum.

## **Information about this ITE provider**

- WMC is a well-established, school-based initial teacher training (SCITT) provider. It has been providing teacher training since 1995. The SCITT is based at Thomas Telford School.
- There are 45 trainees in this academic year. There are 22 trainees in the primary phase and 23 trainees in the secondary phase.
- Most trainees opt to study for a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE). This is accredited by the University of Staffordshire. The provider also offers School Direct fee-paying and salaried routes and the assessment-only route towards qualified teacher status.
- There are 61 schools in the partnership located across seven local authority areas.
- The schools in the partnership have been judged as outstanding, good or requires improvement by Ofsted.

## **Information about this inspection**

- The inspection team consisted of one of His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke to the SCITT leaders, including the director of teacher training and the lead for secondary PGCE physical education (PE). The lead inspector also met with representatives of the provider's management committee.
- Inspectors reviewed a broad range of information relating to the ITE curriculum. This included training materials, documents relating to the assessment of trainees, course handbooks and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors completed focused reviews in early reading, mathematics, history, PE and science.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation concerning the leadership and management of the SCITT. This included information about governance, safeguarding arrangements and the recruitment of trainees.
- Inspectors spoke with 30 trainees and 13 early career teachers. Inspectors also held discussions with a sample of headteachers and mentors.
- Inspectors visited 10 placement schools in total.

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

Working with partner schools, leaders have constructed an ambitious, coherent curriculum that develops logically. This curriculum is underpinned by credible and up-to-date research. In addition, leaders have ensured that they fully comply with the Department for Education (DfE) core content framework.

Centre-based training is of a high quality. Leaders skilfully deploy expertise from across the partnership to plan and deliver this training. As part of this training, leaders ensure that trainees, including those in the secondary phase, develop their knowledge of

systematic synthetic phonics. Leaders give this training a high priority. Trainees are well equipped and confident to teach reading by the time they complete the course.

Leaders design the ITE curriculum to allow trainees to revisit their centre-based learning during placements. To support this, they give mentors helpful information and training about the specific content trainees learn in their education and professional issues sessions. This is working well. Overall, the mentoring skilfully reinforces learning and supports trainees to build on the content trainees have learned at the SCITT centre.

As part of the primary-phase programme, leaders give trainees pertinent information about the key education traditions and practices used in the foundation subjects. In addition, to help trainees put this knowledge into practice, leaders plan for trainees to complete school-based activities known as 'gap tasks'. Expert colleagues have purposefully designed these tasks so that trainees gain the necessary experience in planning and teaching the foundation subjects. However, leaders do not always check and ensure that partner schools consistently allow trainees to complete these activities. Some trainees do not have the opportunity to plan and teach all of the foundation subjects during their placements. This means that they are less well prepared to teach a small number of subjects.

In the secondary-phase programme, the curriculum prepares all trainees thoroughly in how to teach their subject. They ensure that trainees understand recent research relating to specific subjects and can put this into practice. For example, PE trainees get plenty of meaningful opportunities to develop their expertise in teaching a wide range of sports.

The systems for checking trainees' progress are effective. Leaders have identified the knowledge that trainees need to know and remember at each stage of the course. This helps trainees to understand their strengths and those areas where more work is needed. It also supports mentors and trainees to agree clear and helpful targets.

Leaders know the partnership's strengths and areas for development well. They routinely evaluate a wide range of evidence, including the views of partners and trainees. Leaders check most aspects of the programme effectively. This includes checking on the quality of mentoring in schools.

## **What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the primary and secondary combined phase?**

### **(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)**

- In the primary phase, some trainees do not get sufficient opportunities to build their knowledge of how to plan and teach the foundation subjects. This means that some trainees are not fully prepared to teach some subjects. Leaders should ensure that all trainees have adequate opportunities to practise teaching and planning all subjects in the national curriculum.
- Leaders do not systematically check whether trainees are completing all their school-based activities. This limits leaders' ability to identify swiftly gaps in trainees' experiences. Leaders should ensure that they systematically check whether aspects of the curriculum delivered by partner schools are taking place as they intend.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

## **ITE provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70083
<b>Inspection number</b>	10247699

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.

<b>Type of ITE provider</b>	School-centred initial teacher training
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary and secondary combined
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 January and 23 January 2014

## **Inspection team**

Christopher Stevens, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Gill	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Wallis	Ofsted Inspector

## Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

<b>Name</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>ITE phases</b>
Barrow 1618 Church of England Free School	138268	Primary
Gnosall St Lawrence Church of England Primary Academy	141779	Primary
Hadley Learning Community – Primary Phase	144942	Primary
Madeley Academy	135149	Secondary
Moreton School	144278	Secondary
Redhill Primary Academy	146026	Primary
St George’s Church of England Primary School	123527	Primary
St Mary and St Chad Church of England First School	147279	Primary
The Wordsley School	103858	Secondary
Thomas Telford School	123627	Secondary

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