

22 June 2023

Gene Payne
Star Academies
Shadsworth Road
Blackburn
BB1 2HT

Dear Gene Payne

Lead provider monitoring visit (LPMV) of National Institute of Teaching (NIoT)

Following my visit with Sue Cox and Heather Simpson, His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) on 19 to 21 June 2023, I write on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) to confirm the LPMV findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection, and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you have taken to date.

This inspection was the first LPMV since you began delivering the national professional qualification (NPQ) programme. It was carried out under Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that, at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to ensure that the NPQ professional development is of a high standard.

The lead provider should take further action to:

- fully implement the strategies devised for formative assessment so that there is more clarity about what participants know and can do
- further embed the systems for quality assurance and self-evaluation so that leaders at all levels are clear about what is working well and any potential areas for further development.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Amanda Downing
His Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first LPMV on 19 to 21 June 2023.

Context

The NIoT was founded by four school trusts: The Harris Federation, Oasis Community Learning, Outwood Grange Academies Trust and Star Academies Trust. Each of the four founding trusts anchors one of the NIoT's four regional hubs across the country. These regions are South and West; the East, South and London; the North and West; and the North and East.

The NIoT provides direct delivery from their regional campuses and through a network of associate colleges, which are spread across all regions of England and in Jersey. Associate colleges are school trusts and teaching school hubs that comprise a number of schools. The lead provider and associate colleges deliver all eight of the current NPQ programmes. There are currently 1,135 participants enrolled on NPQ programmes delivered by the NIoT.

Report

- NIoT leaders have an ambitious vision for their role in education. They do not simply want to work in partnership with schools. Instead, they aim to be 'rooted in schools' and to be an integral part of them. This is to secure improved outcomes for all pupils. This school-led vision is shared and understood by all NIoT stakeholders and it underpins the design and delivery of all the NPQ programmes.
- Leaders plan the curriculum for each NPQ programme meticulously. They give careful thought to the curriculum design, the sequencing and the modes of delivery. Leaders design modules that are based on current and relevant research. Participants build their knowledge and skills progressively, with regular opportunities to engage in deliberate practice and apply their learning. Expert, serving school leaders bring the accessible self-study materials to life. NPQ participants overwhelmingly praise the face-to-face seminars and live video sessions that they receive and they describe the facilitators as inspirational.
- NIoT leaders utilise strong existing relationships with associate colleges. They do this to ensure that day-to-day delivery systems are robust and nationally coherent. Leaders pay close attention to detail. There are dynamic systems to gather meaningful information about programme delivery. For example, leaders collect and analyse data about participants' engagement with online materials. They also gather and value the views of participants. Feedback systems are agile and responsive. Minor issues are addressed and improved quickly.
- NIoT leaders 'hand pick' their facilitators and have high expectations of them. In return, facilitators receive highly effective training, as well as

nuanced support and feedback, through quality assurance activities. Facilitators are mindful of remaining compliant with the set programme, but enhance the training materials, so that participants can benefit from their 'real-life' examples and expertise.

- Participants collaborate and network actively through the online platform as part of a wider educational community to extend and check their learning. Leaders have designed well-thought-out systems for the formative assessment of trainees. However, they are still in the early stages of implementing these systems. Leaders acknowledge that formalising and embedding their approach to formative assessment is an important next step in their programme development.
- Leaders already implement a range of strategic approaches to maintain their oversight of the quality and effectiveness of the programmes as they evolve and grow. For example, leaders collect and analyse regular feedback from all participants. They also conduct pre- and post-briefing sessions with facilitators to offer support, make further adaptations and evaluate the impact of the training sessions on participants. Given the early stage of programme development, leaders are still in the process of synthesising and embedding some quality assurance mechanisms. They recognise the need to do more to ensure that there is a shared understanding, across the organisation, of what is working well and what the areas for development are.
- NIoT directors use their extensive educational expertise to select experienced executive leaders who share their vision for high-quality school-led NPQ programmes. Together, they apply clear regional structures that link well with national responsibilities. This ensures clear lines of accountability and investment on a national scale. At all levels, trustees, leaders and facilitators consciously model effective leadership. Leaders are acutely aware of their statutory responsibilities and the need to consider the welfare of participants. They ensure that participant workload is considered as part of all strategic decisions and that policies and processes related to equality and safeguarding are comprehensive.
- In order to fully realise their vision, leaders ensure that all stakeholders commit to moving beyond compliance and to be considered exemplary. This directly links to leaders' mission for NPQ programmes to address wider educational issues in schools. Directors and leaders take careful and deliberate decisions to ensure that their actions lay strong foundations for future development and growth. For example, leaders are outward facing and seek external advice and expert opinion to improve and enhance their programmes.

Evidence

The inspectors scrutinised documents and met with lead provider representatives and senior leaders, delivery partner senior leaders, delivery partner staff, NPQ participants and facilitators to discuss the NPQ programmes that the NIoT delivers. Inspectors also watched recorded training sessions. The lead inspector met with representatives from the board of directors and the executive team. This included the deputy chair of the board of directors and the chief executive officer of the NIoT executive team. Inspectors considered the views expressed by associate college leaders, facilitators and participants in the responses to the Ofsted inspection surveys.