

Plymouth Marjon University

Derriford Road, Plymouth, Devon PL6 8BH

Inspection dates

26 to 29 June 2023

Inspection judgements

	Early years ITT	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	Good	Good
The quality of education and training	Outstanding	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding	Good	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	N/A	Good	Good

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

The importance of civic duty runs through the ITE programme. Leaders' intent to train high-quality teachers to make a difference to pupils both locally and beyond is enacted through the curriculum. Trainees develop strong understanding of the needs of vulnerable pupils and adapt their teaching accordingly. Consequently, trainees develop into knowledgeable and effective early career teachers (ECTs).

Trainees in the early years phase develop exceptionally strong knowledge of child development. As a result of the highly ambitious curriculum, trainees are prepared to be 'agents of change'. Trainees are inspired to continue deepening their knowledge about early years education.

Through the well-planned curriculum, primary trainees develop strong knowledge of how to teach pupils to read fluently and with understanding. Secondary trainees develop in-depth knowledge of how to teach their subjects. For example, secondary trainees of physical education (PE) are well prepared to teach across the PE curriculum.

The partnership provides very strong pastoral support. Through resources such as the chaplaincy and counselling, trainees receive a high level of support. One trainee's view echoed that of many when they said, 'Lecturers are very caring... they are incredibly supportive and go above and beyond.'

Information about this ITE provider

- The provider has 387 trainees, comprising 247 primary-phase, 136 secondary phase and four early years trainees. Trainees study for a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE), Bachelor of Education (BEd (Hons)) degree and postgraduate diploma in education (early years) respectively. Trainees study through the Marjon Teacher Education Partnership PGCE, BEd (Hons) and School Direct (non-salaried) PGCE. Trainees studying the postgraduate diploma in education (early years) follow the employment-based route. Trainees study the postgraduate Primary Teaching Apprenticeship.
- There are 41 primary-phase trainees on the Marjon Teacher Education Partnership PGCE route studying primary courses and with a specialism in early years. There are 170 trainees studying BEd (Hons) primary (with a range of subject specialism) and early years. There are 36 trainees on school direct (non-salaried) primary courses.
- There are 69 trainees studying BEd (Hons) secondary with specialism in PE. There are 26 trainees studying PGCE secondary with enhancement. Trainees specialise in art and design, biology, chemistry, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages (MFL) or PE. There are 41 trainees on the school-direct secondary route. These trainees specialise in art and design, biology, chemistry, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages (MFL), PE, drama, psychology, computing, design and technology or physics.
- The provider works with 197 partnership schools in the South West region, comprising Cornwall, Devon, Torbay, Plymouth, Bristol, Somerset and Dorset. The provider also works in partnership with schools in the London boroughs of Newham, Stratford, Hackney and Islington. 67 secondary schools and 130 primary schools work in partnership with the provider. The provider is also the academic partner for the Teaching London school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programme.
- The provider has partnerships with four early years settings for the postgraduate diploma in education (early years) route.
- The schools in the partnership have been judged as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate by Ofsted. At the time of the inspection, four partner schools were graded inadequate by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- When Plymouth Marjon University initial teacher education (ITE) provision was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2014, it was judged as good in the primary and the secondary age-phases.
- The inspection team consisted of nine His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with the Dean of School, the Professor of Education, the primary, secondary and early years phase programme directors and the partnerships leads. Meetings were also held with a range of subject leads from primary and secondary phase courses. In addition, leaders met with university tutors, ITE coordinators and school-based mentors.

- An inspector talked with the deputy vice-chancellor and representatives of the partnership board. Meetings took place with officers responsible for quality assurance, governance, SEND, EAL, equality and diversity and mentoring.
- Inspectors spoke to four early years trainees, 21 primary phase trainees, 21 secondary phase trainees and 20 ECTs. Some of these discussions took place remotely. In the early years phase, focused reviews were conducted in communication and language, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive art and design. In the primary phase, focused reviews were conducted in early reading, mathematics, science, history, art, computing and religious education. In the secondary phase, focused reviews were conducted in PE, science, history, art and design, mathematics, geography and English.
- Inspectors visited four early years settings, nine primary phase placement settings and 12 secondary phase placement settings.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation from ITE leaders and staff, including subject, phase and route curriculum plans, trainee assignments, trainees' portfolios, mentoring records, policies, safeguarding arrangements, trainee placement information and partnership board minutes.
- Inspectors also reviewed information relating to the Department for Education (DfE) initial teacher training criteria and supporting evidence.

Early years phase report

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

Leaders from across the early years partnership co-produce an ambitious and clearly sequenced curriculum. Opportunities for trainees to repeat and revise important concepts are frequent and purposeful. Up-to-date and pertinent research is referenced to secure the development of trainees' knowledge and teaching expertise. The diverse range of settings in the partnership means trainees develop a rich and varied knowledge of settings and experiences to apply to their practice. Leaders ensure trainees know how to create a very high-quality early years curriculum and provision exceedingly well.

The ITE curriculum goes beyond the Early Years Teacher Standards requirements. For example, trainees are encouraged and supported to lead improvement in their settings such as reviewing safeguarding procedures following centre-based training. Leaders of early years settings actively seek graduates of this programme as they are known to be reflective, independent and capable practitioners.

Leaders ensure trainees appreciate a love of words and children's books. Trainees talk with confidence and knowledge about the stages of children's communication and language development. They understand what comes before phonics. Consequently, trainees know how children with SEND and those who speak EAL can be supported to reach their potential. Centre- and setting-based training ensures trainees possess a very strong knowledge of systematic synthetic phonics. Leaders carefully select high-quality texts that trainees study and practise reading aloud effectively. Trainees fully comprehend how to ensure children's early reading success. They skilfully embed secure communication and language foundations for children's future learning and achievement.

Trainees' profound knowledge of child development and the Early Years Foundation Stage prime and specific areas of learning mean they meet children's needs exceptionally well. They are taught how to observe and assess children from birth to five years of age effectively. Trainees use formative assessment to make appropriate and timely teaching adaptations very well. They become highly skilled facilitators to excite and capture children's interest in learning.

Mentors and university tutors help trainees reflect and make links between the taught curriculum, their research and setting experiences. Leaders regularly check the quality of setting-based support and feedback to ensure trainees receive clear, consistent and effective training and mentoring. This work is very successful and valued by trainees. Assignments and 'progress point' assessments clearly demonstrate how trainees extend their early years proficiency to become highly effective practitioners.

Staff know the trainees very well. They actively encourage and support trainees to promote their well-being and manage their workload. Staff are quick to respond to trainees' needs

effectively. Leaders maintain their vision of excellence across the partnership by regularly and thoroughly quality assuring the early years ITE curriculum and provision. Over the course of the programme, trainees become empowered and exceptionally well prepared to work with parents and colleagues in a wide range of early years settings.

Does the ITE provider early years phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Primary phase report

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

Leaders are ambitious for trainees and are determined that all succeed to become competent and confident primary phase practitioners. As a result, trainees are well prepared to start their teaching careers. Leaders have ensured the ITE curriculum supports trainees' ability to teach within the primary age-phase. The ITE curriculum aligns with the Core Content Framework (CCF) and goes beyond. Relevant and up-to-date research underpins all taught programmes.

Leaders prioritise preparing trainees to teach early reading. Through a clear and sequenced reading curriculum, trainees gain an effective understanding of the importance of children becoming fluent readers. Trainees also gain the skills and knowledge required to teach phonics effectively. Due to this high-quality input, the majority of trainees feel confident to teach early reading.

Leaders have designed subject-specific curriculums across the different routes into teaching. These provide trainees with the knowledge they need to plan and deliver sequences of learning. In the core areas of English, mathematics and science, trainees gain confidence in the essential knowledge of the subject. However, trainees do not develop the same depth of knowledge in some other areas in order to enable them to feel confident to teach the range of subjects across the curriculum. Trainees' understanding of how the curriculum builds from the early years is not fully secure. Trainees do not have a sufficient depth of knowledge of how subjects across the curriculum develop from the early years.

Leaders support trainees' understanding of the range of different contexts they may work in as their career progresses. They develop trainees' understanding of social disadvantage as well as the support required for pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. Leaders provide trainees with a range of placements to consolidate their centre-based learning.

Leaders ensure that effective systems of checking the progress of trainees are embedded. They are quick to intervene when a trainee requires further support. Trainees feel well supported and cared for by staff. Leaders know their trainees well and pride themselves in the care, guidance and support trainees receive.

Leaders ensure that primary trainees understand safeguarding well. They have considered the necessary national and local safeguarding challenges they want trainees to understand. Trainees develop a confident understanding of managing the behaviour of pupils and how to apply this knowledge into their own practice.

Positive partnerships with schools enable trainees to put their centre-based learning into practice. Schools appreciate leaders' regular and structured communication. Leaders have

effective systems in place to support the work of mentors and trainees. Target setting is a collaborative process. Mentors and trainees reflect regularly on individual targets in order to support development with structured oversight from university tutors. Trainees quickly develop into reflective practitioners. They continually reflect on their own knowledge and understanding.

What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the primary phase?

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not structured a well-sequenced curriculum for trainees to learn how to teach some foundation subjects well. As a result, trainees do not feel confident in teaching across a range of subjects beyond the core subjects. Leaders must ensure that curriculum approaches to foundation subject specificity are embedded within the primary curriculum so that trainees feel prepared to teach all subjects well.
- Leaders' work to strengthen trainees' understanding of how some subjects build from the early years is in its infancy. As a result, not all trainees have a sufficient depth of knowledge about how the curriculum progresses from the early years. Leaders should ensure that the primary ITE curriculum fully integrates and consistently builds from the early years across all subjects.

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?

The Marjon Teacher Education Programme (MTEP) curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced for secondary trainees. Trainees build their understanding incrementally and are ready to gain qualified teacher status by the end of the course. Leaders have ensured that all aspects of the CCF are fully integrated into the curriculum. Most trainees gain the knowledge they need in their subject specialisms and learn about the approaches to teaching them that are most effective. However, a small minority of trainees do not have strong enough knowledge by the end of the course to be fully prepared for their first year as ECTs.

Many trainees undertake placements in special schools. This enhances their understanding of how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in mainstream education. Trainees become proficient in making adaptations for pupils with SEND so that they can learn alongside their peers.

When school partners know exactly what trainees are learning through the MTEP curriculum, they provide well-aligned support for trainees to develop their classroom practice that builds precisely on their centre-based learning. However, a few school partners do not have sufficiently precise knowledge of the centre-based curriculum. Consequently, not all trainees benefit from the same high-quality support that their peers receive.

Trainees develop a strong knowledge of educational research, including research pertinent to the specific subjects they teach. Assignments expose trainees to a wide range of research and prompt high levels of review and reflection. Trainees complete these at appropriate points in the course. They do not bring unnecessary workload or pressure.

The training and guidance that mentors receive from centre-based staff leads to high-quality mentoring. Mentors and trainees work closely together to set targets that focus on the precise development needs of individual trainees. Leaders check that trainees are getting the right support from their mentors. On the rare occasions that the quality of mentoring is not strong enough, they act promptly so that trainees get the support that they need.

Trainees are well prepared for their wider professional responsibilities, including for pupils' pastoral care. All trainees gain a secure understanding of how best to teach personal, social, health and citizenship education, in addition to their chosen subject specialism. They gain experience of the tutor role and understand how they can contribute to the wider life of the school.

Leaders check the quality of all aspects of the programme. They seek the views of trainees and school partners to identify areas that need improvement and how they can best support schools and school leaders in the local area. They are responsive to the views of all stakeholders. For example, many trainees now develop the knowledge to teach more than one specialism. This is highly valued by headteachers. Leaders have also changed the sequence of the curriculum in light of the views of trainees.

What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the secondary phase?

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not build trainees' knowledge sufficiently in some subjects. Consequently, some trainees are not as well prepared to teach as they could be. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum enables all trainees to deepen their knowledge of the subject they are training to teach.
- Some school-based partners do not have a strong enough knowledge of the provider's curriculum. As a result, they cannot always ensure that trainees link their centre-based learning precisely to what they are doing in their school placements. Leaders should ensure that they further develop their work with partner schools to ensure that the curriculum is well integrated within school placements.

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	70131
Inspection number	10167323

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	Early Years Primary Secondary
Date of previous inspection	23 to 26 June 2014 Primary Secondary

Inspection team

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Heather Barraclough, Phase lead inspector (primary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Favager-Dalton, Phase lead inspector (secondary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Dale Burr	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Dennis	His Majesty's Inspector
Angela Folland	His Majesty's Inspector
Kelly Olive	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Hesketh	His Majesty's Inspector
Gillian Hickling	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Placement/employment settings, schools and colleges

Inspectors visited the following settings, schools and colleges as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
Eggbuckland Community School	140104	Secondary
Callington Community College	143649	Secondary
Sir John Hunt School	113533	Secondary
Fowey River Academy	140836	Secondary
Coombe Dean School	113538	Secondary
Devonport High School for Girls	136588	Secondary
Hele's School	136557	Secondary
Lipson Academy	136668	Secondary
Marine Academy	136166	Secondary
Notre Dame School	140737	Secondary
Okehampton College	113540	Secondary
Plymstock School	136568	Secondary
Saltash Community College	136575	Secondary
Tavistock College	145336	Secondary
Priory ACE	136155	Secondary
ACE Schools Plymouth	142835	Secondary
Montpelier Primary School	142849	Primary
St Paul's Catholic Primary School	140676	Primary
Chudleigh Knighton CE Primary School	137666	Primary
Newton Ferrers Primary School	137664	Primary
Prince Rock Primary School	143476	Primary
Plympton St Mary CE Infants School	147277	Primary
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	140764	Primary
St Peter's CE Primary School	113425	Primary
Woodlands School	113644	Primary
Drake Primary Academy	144385	Primary
Ham Drive Nursery	113051	Early Years
Munchkin's Day Nursery	299719	Early Years
Daisy Play Centre	23337	Early Years

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