Brit College

602 Commercial Road, Limehouse Lock, London E14 7HS

Inspection dates 9 to 12 October 2023

Inspection judgements

Further education age-phase

Overall effectiveness	**Inadequate**
The quality of education and training	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	N/A

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

Leaders do not plan a curriculum that adequately informs trainees about the realities of teaching in the FE and Skills (FES) sector. The content of what trainees are taught is weak and trainees do not benefit from exposure to teaching in FES settings. For example, trainees are not taught well enough how to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). As a result, trainees do not know how to identify specific needs or what their role is in supporting learners with SEND.

Leaders and staff do not recognise the different subject or teaching knowledge needed to teach different subjects. Consequently, they do not prepare trainees to teach their specialist subject well. There are no taught classes on teaching individual subjects and no deliberate steps to provide subject-specific guidance through the placement or mentor. Therefore, trainees do not understand well enough how to teach their chosen subject. Too many trainees from early cohorts do not understand sufficiently well what their teaching subject is.

Many trainees feel that they are supported effectively by their tutors and other staff such as welfare officers. Trainees benefit from additional guidance with academic writing and with employability skills such as preparing a curriculum vitae. However, trainees do not receive enough guidance on how to improve their teaching skills in the subjects they want to teach.

Information about this ITE provider

- At the time of the inspection, there were 1,178 trainees enrolled on ITE programmes at Brit College.
- All of the trainees were studying for the Diploma in Education and Training (DET) awarded by City and Guilds.
- All trainees are pre-service and are studying the DET programme on a one-year full-time basis.
- Most trainees who have secured teaching placements to date are completing these at private colleges, tutoring providers and employer premises.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by two Senior His Majesty's Inspectors, three His Majesty's Inspectors and four Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the college oversight board, the chief executive officer, the head of quality, the director of academic operations, the registrar, the finance and accounts manager and the director of communications. They also spoke to programme leaders, operations managers, and tutors from the five different Brit College sites.
- Inspectors spoke to trainees who were attending face-to-face and/or online classes at all Brit College sites during the inspection. They also spoke to individuals and small groups of trainees from different cohorts enrolled at each of the sites.
- The majority of trainees have 'business' listed as their specialist subject. However, this information was not available to inspectors until after the start of the inspection. Inspectors carried out focused reviews into cohorts of trainees at each of the five Brit College sites. Inspectors also completed a focused review of those trainees who complete their placement at the Brit College Limehouse site.
- Inspectors visited three placement settings as part of the inspection. They made additional calls to individual mentors and placement providers.

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

Leaders and tutors do not plan or teach an ambitious curriculum. They are over-reliant on standardised resources that do not introduce contemporary or evidence-based approaches to teaching. All trainees are taught the same content, regardless of their location in the country or area of teaching interest. As a result, trainees are not being prepared to teach in a way that reflects current teaching and assessment practices in the FES sector.

Leaders do not plan or sequence the centre- and placement-based elements of the programme in a way that enables trainees to apply in practice the theories they learn about in class. Although there is a window during which trainees are expected to complete their teaching placement, too many trainees do not secure a placement in time for this. As a result, trainees write assignments about what they might do as a teacher, rather than

what they have actually demonstrated in a classroom.

Leaders do not ensure that trainees complete adequate or suitable teaching placements. Too many trainees, particularly those in Oldham and Dudley, complete their teaching in restaurants and other business organisations, rather than FES settings. In addition, trainees spend too much of their time on 'placement' preparing resources and lesson plans. They do not teach for 100 hours as required by the specification.

Leaders and staff do not make the requirements of the placement clear enough to trainees or mentors. Neither trainees nor mentors understand well enough what the placement requirements of the DET programme are. Mentors see their role as to simply complete observation reports rather than providing guidance to trainees on how they might improve their teaching.

Trainees do not receive sufficient or suitable feedback on their teaching. Too often, observations are very close together, they are not linked, and the written observation reports do not contain feedback on the craft of teaching. Consequently, trainees do not know how to improve the way in which they teach. While some trainees receive useful information about what they do well in their written work, they are not told enough about how to make improvements.

Leaders recruit tutors with suitable teaching qualifications and very high levels of academic qualifications, often to doctoral level. Although a small number of staff have experience of teaching in FES providers, many other staff and leaders do not understand well enough what the FES sector covers or the requirements of ITE within it.

Leaders and managers implement a range of systems for checking on the quality of the programme. They carry out peer observations and student surveys. However, these activities do not identify weaknesses in the actual ITE curriculum. Therefore, these checks are not able to inform the actions needed to improve the programme.

Leaders do not carry out checks on the suitability of trainees to work in the FES sector. They inform trainees that they might need to obtain certain checks, such as those from the Disclosure and Barring Service. However, leaders do not realise that the trainee cannot do this themselves. Leaders cannot be assured that trainees are appropriate to work in any placement setting.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Trainees are not taught enough about how to support learners with SEND. Trainees do not know how to identify learners' needs or how to adapt their teaching to meet those needs. The provider needs to update and improve the curriculum to ensure that trainees receive the guidance they need to be able to teach all learners well in the FES sector.
- The planned ITE curriculum does not recognise well enough the knowledge, skills and behaviours that trainees need to teach different subjects well. The provider must

review the way in which the DET programme is designed and taught, so that trainees receive specific guidance on how to teach their chosen subject effectively.

- Leaders do not ensure that trainees benefit from an ambitious curriculum. The provider should enable staff to learn about and introduce current evidence-based approaches into the curriculum. This is so that trainees can learn about and practise the techniques that are widely used in FES providers.
- Trainees do not benefit from a purposefully integrated programme of centre- and placement-based training. The provider needs to review the way in which the placement element of the curriculum is organised and sequenced. This is so that trainees can practise what they learn about in class, reflect on their progress, and improve their knowledge and skills in teaching and assessment.
- Mentors do not understand well enough what their role is. The provider must define precisely the role and expectations of the mentor and ensure mentors are suitably qualified and experienced to carry out the role. Leaders should provide suitable training so that the mentors know what they need to do to support the trainees beyond the completion of observation forms.
- Too many trainees do not complete adequate or suitable teaching placements. The provider needs to outline clearly what the placement should entail and ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for all trainees. Leaders should also monitor carefully the progress of trainees while they are on placement.
- Leaders do not understand their responsibility or do enough to check the suitability of trainees to work in the FES sector, or in their placement settings. The provider must urgently review recruitment systems to ensure that adequate checks are carried out in a timely way. Leaders must assure themselves that trainees are appropriate for the settings in which they want to teach.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	2755441
Inspection number	10309704

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	ITE in FE
Phases provided	FES
Date of previous inspection	N/A

Inspection team

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Annex: Placement settings

Inspectors visited the following placement settings as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)
Alliance and Associates	N/A	FES
Crescent College	N/A	FES
Elizabeth School of London	2741633	FES

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