

Edge Hill University

St. Helens Road, Ormskirk L39 4QP

Inspection dates

22 to 25 January 2024

Inspection judgements

	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase	Further education age-phase
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
The quality of education and training	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good	Good	Outstanding

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

Trainees at Edge Hill University flourish. Many trainees spoke proudly about how the ITE programmes have transformed their thinking as new teachers. They learn their phase and subject-specific ITE curriculums with fervour. Trainees exude the high levels of knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to embark successfully on their teaching careers.

Across all phases, trainees benefit from meticulously designed and seamlessly integrated ITE curriculums. These curriculums are steeped in pertinent research which keeps trainees' practice innovative. Trainees demonstrate growing expertise in their chosen subject and age-phase, alongside a secure understanding of generic teaching principles. This is particularly strong for trainees in further education and skills (FES).

Strong communication binds the partnership and helps trainees to experience synergy between centre- and placement-based training. Trainees are immensely well supported by knowledgeable and inspirational tutors and by highly skilled, committed mentors. In the primary and secondary phases, trainees acquire a rigorous grounding in the importance of systematic synthetic phonics in developing pupils' reading fluency.

Trainees were effusive about the quality of the guidance that they receive across the partnership. They value the myriad of support that they receive for their mental health and well-being.

In addition to learning their craft, trainees learn deeply about the importance of equality and social justice. Trainees work with local employers as part of a wider initiative to teach them about the importance of raising aspirations. Equally, trainees develop an impressive array of strategies to manage pupils' and learners' behaviour. Trainees' understanding of safeguarding permeates all that they do.

Information about this ITE provider

- In the 2023/24 academic year, the partnership trained a total of 1,841 trainees across the primary, secondary and FES age-phases. There were 1,443 trainees in the primary age-phase, 343 trainees in the secondary age-phase and 55 trainees in the FES age-phase.
- In the primary phase, the majority of trainees study towards a three-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) undergraduate degree with qualified teacher status (QTS). In 2023/24, there were 260 trainees on the BA (Honours) in early years primary education with QTS route. These trainees were trained in the three to seven age-phase. There were 796 trainees on the BA (Honours) in primary education with QTS. There were 124 trainees on the four-year, part-time BA (Honours) in primary education with QTS. These trainees were trained in the five to 11 age-phase. There were 37 full-time trainees on the one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in early years primary education. A further 181 trainees were on the full-time, one-year PGCE in primary education. In addition, there were six trainees following the primary mathematics specialist PGCE route and 37 trainees following the primary physical education specialist route. Twenty-five trainees on PGCE courses were following the School Direct fee-paying route.
- In the secondary phase, there were 61 trainees on the undergraduate Bachelor of Science (BSc) with QTS route. The BSc (Honours) with QTS route on offer was in secondary mathematics education. There were 42 trainees on the undergraduate Bachelor of Arts (BA) with QTS in secondary English education route, and a further 27 trainees on the BA (Honours) with QTS in secondary religious education route. There were 204 trainees on PGCE courses in secondary subjects and nine trainees on School Direct fee-paying routes. The PGCE subjects that trainees were training to teach in during 2023/24 were: biology; chemistry; computer science and IT; English; geography; history; mathematics; physical education; physics and religious education.
- In the FES phase, there were 55 trainees in total. In 2023/24, there were 31 trainees on the full-time, campus-based, pre-service Postgraduate Diploma in Education route delivered at Edge Hill University. There were eight full-time and two part-time trainees on the Postgraduate Certificate in Further Education and Training route at Wirral Metropolitan College. A further two full-time and 12 part-time trainees were on the University Higher Diploma in Further Education and Training route at Wirral Metropolitan College. There were six FES trainees on in-service training programmes at Wirral Metropolitan College.
- In total, the partnership works with approximately 977 placement settings across 48 local authorities. The current Ofsted inspection grades for those settings, where Ofsted is the inspectorate, range from outstanding to inadequate.

- In the primary age-phase, the partnership works with 762 schools in 42 local authorities.
- In the secondary age-phase, the partnership works with 250 schools in 40 local authorities.
- In the FES phase, the partnership works with 32 colleges and other settings in 14 local authorities.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by 10 of His Majesty's Inspectors and four Ofsted Inspectors.
- During this inspection, inspectors held meetings with the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Education, the strategic lead of ITE and other leaders with oversight of ITE programmes. These leaders included: heads of department for primary, secondary and FES programmes; associate heads of department for primary, secondary and FES programmes; associate deans for student experience, and research and impact; the head of academic services; the head of partnership development; the strategic lead for mentoring and the head of student recruitment.
- Inspectors held meetings with a wide range of other university staff, including course leaders, lecturers, senior lecturers, academic tutors and admissions tutors.
- Inspectors also held conversations with members of the strategic partnership board, including the chair, and members of the strategic development and quality committee, including the chair. Inspectors met with representatives of the School Direct partnership, Wirral Metropolitan College, and lead mentors from within partnership schools.
- Inspectors met with staff in partner schools and colleges. These included headteachers, senior leaders, professional mentors and subject mentors.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to the ITE programmes. This information included: subject and phase curriculum documentation; trainees' files, assignments and their records of target setting; assessment documentation and mentoring records, and information relating to the Department for Education's (DfE's) ITT criteria and supporting advice.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to the leadership and management of the partnership. This included leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, quality assurance documents, and minutes from meetings of the strategic partnership board and from the strategic development and quality committee.
- The inspection was carried out through in-person meetings, virtual meetings and on-site visits to partner schools and colleges.
- Inspectors visited five centre-based training sessions in the primary phase, three training sessions in the secondary phase and two teaching sessions in FES.
- In the primary phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading, mathematics, science, geography, art and design, music, and physical education.

- In the secondary phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in mathematics, English, geography, history, physical education and religious education.
- Inspectors carried out eight focused reviews in the FES phase. The subjects were: hair and beauty; English and English for speakers of other languages; sport; childhood studies; early years; health and social care; history, and sociology and psychology.
- Across all three phases, inspectors spoke with 160 trainees and 19 early career teachers.
- During the inspection, inspectors visited 18 schools and four colleges.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and trainees.

Primary phase report

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

Leaders have established an inspirational and exceptionally well-thought-out ITE curriculum for the primary phase. They make certain that their ambitious vision, together with the DfE's core content framework, is widely understood and woven throughout curriculums. Leaders have precisely identified the essential knowledge that trainees should learn across the centre-based and school-based training programmes, including learning about equality and social justice. Trainees learn to think deeply about important curriculum issues and to deliver school curriculums skilfully. They adapt their teaching to the needs of different pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), especially well.

Tutors and mentors are clear about what information to teach trainees and when. They build trainees' subject-specific knowledge and their understanding of generic pedagogy in depth. Tutors and mentors evaluate trainees' progress in learning the ITE curriculum carefully. They connect the key information that trainees have already learned with the new knowledge that they are expected to learn. Trainees build their expertise in primary national curriculum subjects, and generic teaching principles, impressively well.

Trainees learn about the importance of teaching new vocabulary to pupils, so that pupils develop the language to explain complex concepts and ideas. Knowledgeable tutors guide trainees skilfully to understand how to teach early reading. Schools ensure that trainees learn how to support pupils who need extra help to catch up in their learning to read. Trainees are exceptionally well prepared with the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need to meet the requirements of QTS.

By drawing on up-to-date educational research, leaders ensure that trainees gain a well-informed knowledge of primary education, including the early years. Those trainees who specialise in the education of three- to seven-year-olds develop a deep knowledge of what a high-quality school curriculum for young children, including for two-year-old children, should look like. Leaders make sure that tutors are experts in their field. Tutors encourage trainees to carry out research in what constitutes high-quality education. Trainees apply and test out the efficacy of this research in their day-to-day teaching practice. This is achieved because tutors have forged strong relationships with national associations, schools and other educational settings.

Leaders' arrangements to check and review the quality of primary ITE programmes are ambitious and extremely well considered. Their evaluation is rigorous and insightful, drawing on feedback from multiple sources, including trainees and partner schools. Leaders have devised an innovative and highly successful system of linking tutors with mentors. This results in precise support and checks on the quality of mentoring that trainees receive.

Leaders skilfully use a wide range of information to improve the primary phase ITE programmes, including for trainees on the School Direct routes. School Direct trainees, undergraduate trainees and postgraduate trainees experience equity across the ITE programmes. They are well supported to understand their wider responsibilities, such as safeguarding pupils. Trainees achieve exceptionally well. Deeply committed and knowledgeable leadership underpins trainees' success.

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?

Leaders have created a clear, consistent and ambitious vision for what they want trainees to achieve throughout their teacher training experience. This vision is fully understood and realised by all, including trainees, mentors and subject tutors in the university.

Leaders have crafted an ambitious and highly rigorous curriculum for trainees to learn. Key themes which are important to the local area, such as social justice and a clear understanding of the adaptations required for pupils with SEND, are woven throughout all components of the ITE programmes. Regular opportunities for trainees to revisit and enhance their knowledge are fundamental to how well prepared trainees are when they arrive to start their placements in schools.

There is seamless integration between the centre-based elements of the curriculum and the school-based placements. A wide range of relevant and up-to-date research is the bedrock of trainees' learning. Leaders share this research with mentors to ensure that they weave it seamlessly into the professional discussions that take place in school. The curriculum coverage goes well beyond the expectations of the DfE's core content framework. For example, the rich curriculum that supports trainees to understand their responsibilities around safeguarding, personal, social, health and economic education, and relationships and sex education is exceptional.

Communication between leaders and partner schools is highly effective. Regular updates, and clear expectations across the partnership, mean that mentors fully understand their responsibilities. These also contribute strongly to trainees developing their professional skills. Subject tutors work closely with mentors to ensure that they are highly skilled in helping trainees to identify accurately the next steps in their subject-specific and general pedagogical development.

Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that there is a consistent high-quality experience for all trainees. Leaders place a sharp focus on checking the quality of training and mentoring that trainees experience. These checks are pivotal in ensuring that trainees make exceptional progress on their journey to becoming qualified teachers.

Leaders have carefully considered how to reduce trainees' workload while delivering all aspects of the programme, without compromising leaders' high standards. For example, they have streamlined the approach that they use to assess trainees throughout the course. This has ensured that there is no repetition of recording and reporting of information. This has had a positive effect on the well-being of trainees, mentors and staff.

University leaders and tutors prioritise inclusion and equality for all trainees across the ITE programmes. They have developed a range of subject enhancement courses to encourage trainees from a diverse range of qualifications and experiences to be able to access their

courses. There are well designed, suitably rigorous recruitment and selection processes in place to ensure that the candidates most suited to the profession are recruited.

Engagement across the partnership is highly effective. Leaders regularly seek out, and act on, feedback from the partner schools that they work with. Well-structured, robust systems enable those responsible for governance to hold leaders to account fully for the quality of education and training that trainees receive. These systems ensure that the provider remains innovative and reflective, which helps to secure continual improvement to the ITE programmes.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Further education and skills phase report

What works well in the further education and skills phase and what needs to be done better?

Trainees benefit from a well-designed, highly ambitious curriculum that is underpinned by pertinent and up-to-date research. Expert tutors deliver the curriculum in a logical order. They develop trainees' foundational knowledge successfully, which prepares trainees well to commence their teaching placements.

Leaders communicate regularly with mentors to reinforce the concepts and knowledge in the centre-based ITE curriculum. This helps mentors to support trainees exceptionally well to use research and to deepen their knowledge of subject and generic pedagogy. This means that trainees have a secure understanding of relevant research, and they are able to apply this successfully to teach their subjects.

Leaders are relentless in their drive to ensure that the quality of education and training that trainees receive remains exceptional. They have put in place highly effective quality assurance processes, which they use impressively to carry out systematic and rigorous evaluations of the ITE programmes. Leaders work successfully with placement settings and trainees to continually improve the curriculum that trainees experience. For example, leaders have carefully redesigned recruitment processes so that trainees are recruited only where they have mentors with appropriate subject expertise.

Trainees benefit from an ITE curriculum that carefully links centre-based training to their professional practice through highly effective mentoring. All mentors are subject specialists, and they receive comprehensive core and phase-specific training from the university. Mentors are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, and they highly value the ongoing support and regular feedback that they receive from their liaison tutors and the university.

Tutors and mentors use ongoing assessment to check trainees' progress through the ITE curriculum. For example, they use weekly or bi-weekly discussions to model effective practice and to deconstruct the curriculum to develop trainees' subject-specific knowledge. Trainees who do not make the expected progress are supported exceptionally well by their tutors and their mentors. As a result, trainees catch up quickly and they remain on their programme. Tutors provide exceptionally clear and purposeful feedback to trainees. Trainees successfully use this feedback to develop their knowledge and skills of how to teach their chosen subjects.

Trainees develop secure knowledge of adaptive teaching and strategies to support learners with SEND. Trainees complete a range of tasks in their settings to help them to understand the varying needs of learners in their classes, and in the wider FES-phase ages and levels. Trainees use this knowledge to apply a range of adaptive teaching strategies effectively at every phase of their development. As a result, trainees plan teaching, learning and assessment that is inclusive for all learners.

Trainees gain experience of teaching across the range of provision types and courses within their subject areas. This supports trainees' understanding of the range of learners, such as young learners aged between 16 and 18, adults, and learners with high needs who they may teach in their future careers. Trainees attend talks from guest speakers who discuss in detail careers in the FES sector. Newly qualified trainees spoke passionately about their exceptional training experience which they tell us has prepared them systematically for their first teaching roles.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70129
Inspection number	10258052

This inspection was carried out in accordance with the [initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook](#), which 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	Primary Secondary FES
Date of previous inspection	12 to 15 May 2014

Inspection team

Rachel Goodwin, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tim Vaughan, Phase lead inspector (primary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Mawson, Phase lead inspector (secondary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Humphreys, Phase lead inspector (FES)	His Majesty's Inspector
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Emma Gregory	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Pennington	His Majesty's Inspector
Jenny Jones	His Majesty's Inspector
Aly Spencer	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Keenan	Ofsted Inspector
Tanya Evans	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Placement/employment settings, schools, and colleges

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

Name	URN	ITE phases
Downholland-Haskayne Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School	119479	Primary
Little Digmaor Primary School	119297	Primary
Marton Primary Academy and Nursery	141867	Primary
Our Lady's Church of England Primary School	104894	Primary
St Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School	104815	Primary
St John's Church of England Primary School	104894	Primary
St John Vianney Catholic Primary School	104812	Primary
St Lukes CE Primary School	104897	Primary
Tarleton Community Primary School	119158	Primary
St Brigid's Catholic Primary School	104474	Primary
Lathom High School	119774	Secondary
Range High School	137612	Secondary
St Julies Catholic High School	104712	Secondary
Ormskirk School	148254	Secondary
Meols Cop High School	149828	Secondary
Burnley High School (remotely visited)	141028	Secondary
Bank View High School	133441	Secondary (SEND)
Chesterfield High School	137514	Secondary
Hugh Baird College	130490	FES
Runshaw College	130741	FES
Wirral Metropolitan College	130493	FES
Riverside College	130622	FES

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