

# University of Leicester

21 University Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE1 7RF

## Inspection dates

5 to 8 February 2024

## Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

### Overall effectiveness

### Outstanding

The quality of education and training

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

Trainees are exceptionally positive about the high quality of training they receive. They benefit from an ambitious curriculum, delivered by experts, and supported by relevant, up-to-date research. Trainees have ample opportunities to integrate theory and practice. They learn to be instinctively reflective, and this helps them to decide the beliefs and values they will hold as a teacher.

Trainees are absolutely clear about how their learning at the university fits together with their school placements. Close working relationships with their mentors/co-tutors are highly prized. A carefully planned school programme helps trainees understand what is going well and how they can improve.

Trainees gain rich experiences in schools with different contexts. Primary trainees secure an in-depth understanding of early reading and phonics. Secondary trainees develop their detailed subject-specialist and pedagogical knowledge. Trainees hone their 'noticing' skills to enable them to create inclusive learning environments where all pupils get the support they need.

High levels of mutual respect mean that staff always have the trainees' best interests at heart. Trainees' views are listened to, and their suggestions make a positive difference. They know that their well-being is prioritised.

School leaders recognise that trainees are remarkably well prepared for the rigours of the profession. As a result, trainees often secure their first teaching post in a school that works with the university.

### **Information about this ITE provider**

- The provider provides initial teacher training for both primary and secondary education phases.
- The provider currently has 99 trainees, 43 in the primary phase and 56 in the secondary phase.
- For both primary and secondary phases, the provider offers the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) route and the PGCE School Direct fee-paid route. The provider is currently working with seven lead partners to deliver the PGCE School Direct fee-paid route. The provider also works with four school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) providers to support the delivery of their training.
- In the secondary phase, trainees are enrolled on the following secondary subject courses: biology, chemistry, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physics, religious education and social sciences. Classics is also offered as a subsidiary.
- During the current academic year, the University of Leicester is working in partnership with approximately 90 schools across six different local authorities.
- The schools currently working with the provider vary in size and are located in different contexts. These schools were judged outstanding, good or requires improvement at their previous Ofsted inspection. A few of these schools are awaiting their first inspection since converting to become an academy.

### **Information about this inspection**

- The inspection was carried out by three of His Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the director of teacher education, who is also the primary phase PGCE lead, the two secondary phase PGCE co-leads and the head of the school of education. Inspectors also spoke with other senior leaders and course tutors and some members of the professional services team.
- Inspectors spoke with six members of the partnership management group, including representatives of the lead partners who work with the provider, and a sample of senior school leaders. Inspectors also spoke with four representatives of the SCITT providers who work with the university.
- Inspectors carried out focused reviews of reading and humanities, including history and geography, in the primary phase. In the secondary phase, inspectors completed focused reviews of English, history and chemistry.
- Inspectors visited five primary schools to meet with trainees, mentors, initial teacher training coordinators and headteachers. These visits included short observations of trainees' teaching.

- During the inspection, secondary-phase trainees were involved in university-based training sessions. Inspectors visited a number of these sessions. Inspectors met with a sample of secondary-phase trainees and spoke with co-tutors from seven schools who had supported these trainees during their most recent school placements.
- Inspectors spoke with 31 trainees and 13 former trainees.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for initial teacher education for trainees and staff.
- Inspectors checked the provider's conformity with the ITE compliance criteria and looked at records of safeguarding checks.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation linked to the training programme, including curriculum plans, training materials, information about trainee assessment, provider policies, self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.

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

The provider has a long-established reputation for training high-quality teachers. Despite this, there is absolutely no sense of complacency. The curriculum is continually reviewed to ensure that it remains responsive to the changing educational landscape. The recently trialled intensive training and practice modules have served to enhance an already successful programme. This proactive and ambitious strategy provides trainees with the best possible experience.

The provider is unashamedly rigorous in its recruitment and selection processes. University tutors support each successful applicant through the exacting demands of the course and help them to secure their first teaching posts. Many trainees stay in touch with their tutors long after they embark on successful teaching careers.

The curriculum is thoroughly thought through. Each requirement of the core content framework is deftly interwoven. The provider's 'knowing, doing, being, becoming' approach teaches trainees about the theoretical principles of teaching and how to apply them in practice. Trainees develop a complex understanding of how pupils learn. Every opportunity is taken to enhance trainees' subject and pedagogical knowledge. This includes a strong emphasis on the importance of phonics for trainees in the primary phase. Trainees' understanding of how to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs is a particular strength. One trainee explained that, by doing this, 'Every child can achieve greatness.'

The university- and school-based training are intricately aligned. Highly skilled mentors/co-tutors guide trainees through a precisely planned programme of weekly meetings, focused lesson visits and 'talkthrus'. Trainees frequently reflect critically on their teaching practice and identify pertinent targets for improvement. Visits by university tutors during school placements reinforce the excellent and effective work that takes place between mentors/co-tutors and their trainees.

The 'CARD' system used to assess trainees is very well understood and highly efficient. Carefully chosen statements identify aspects of teaching that trainees can demonstrate

with confidence and those that need more work. Additional and timely support gives any trainee who needs it a welcome boost. Trainees make the most of their online portfolios to collate relevant evidence of their professional practice. The vast majority of trainees successfully complete the course, gain qualified teacher status and are awarded their PGCE.

School leaders and local partners are highly complimentary of the provider's outward-facing, collaborative approach. As one professional typically explained, 'We work in genuine partnership with the sole purpose of creating the next tranche of really good teachers.' Another simply stated, 'I am proud to be associated with a provider who works tirelessly to meet the needs of local schools and of the pupils in those settings.'

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

## ITE provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70400
<b>Inspection number</b>	10309351

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.

<b>Type of ITE provider</b>	Higher education institution
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary and secondary combined
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 June and 7 October 2015

## Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Fearn-Davies	His Majesty's Inspector
Hazel Henson	His Majesty's Inspector

## Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

<b>Name</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>ITE phases</b>
Hazel Community Primary School	120071	Primary
Medway Community Primary School	120108	Primary
Ridgeway Primary Academy	138347	Primary
Scraptoft Valley Primary School	120086	Primary
Sparkenhoe Community Primary School	146857	Primary
English Martyrs' Catholic School	146196	Secondary
Leicester High School for Girls	120324	Secondary
Loughborough Grammar School	120332	Secondary
Moat Community College	120292	Secondary
Sir Christopher Hatton Academy	137912	Secondary
St Paul's Catholic School	136470	Secondary
The Winstanley School	143844	Secondary

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