

University of York

Department of Education
University of York
University Road
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Inspection dates

22 to 25 January 2024

Inspection judgements

Secondary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

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

Trainees are given the training and support that they need to succeed. Local headteachers are impressed by the resilience and professionalism of trainees and their readiness to become confident practitioners. Early career teachers who trained here are thoroughly prepared for their fundamental responsibilities, such as for safeguarding, managing behaviour and meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders ensure that all aspects of trainees' practice are informed by high-quality research and supported by high-quality teaching. Trainees gain an extremely strong grounding in pedagogy and in their own subjects. The incisive subject-specific input that trainees experience prepares them extremely well to teach their subjects.

Leaders at the university have established extremely high expectations for both trainees and partner schools. They ensure that well-considered support is in place to realise these expectations. Professional tutors and mentors in schools feel closely connected to, and supported by, the university. There is an absolute clarity about the entitlement of trainees to a cohesive experience across university and school settings.

Leaders' commitment to the well-being of trainees is tangible. Trainees report feeling 'fortunate' and 'well looked after', thanks to the layers of support that are available. Leaders make sure that trainees are listened to and that, wherever possible, their views are acted on.

Information about this ITE provider

- In the 2023/24 academic year, the University of York's initial teacher education (ITE) provision has 83 trainees. All trainees are in the secondary age-phase. From September 2024, the provider will be moving into the primary age-phase as well.
- All trainees follow the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) route. This is delivered through the university or a School Direct, fee-paid route.
- There are two School Direct partnerships: Pathfinder Teaching School Hub and Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.
- In the partnership, there are 116 schools, with inspection judgements ranging from outstanding to inadequate. Partnership schools are located across eight local authorities.
- In 2023/24, trainees were enrolled on the following subject courses: English, geography, history, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics and modern foreign languages (a combination of two chosen from French, Spanish and German).

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team was made up of two of His Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector.
- The inspectors met with the director and deputy director of ITE. They also met with curriculum area leaders for mathematics, chemistry, physics, geography, modern foreign languages and history and with the school partnership facilitators. They also met with the co-heads and the deputy head of the Department of Education at the University of York. They met with the associate dean for the Faculty of Social Science. An inspector met with representatives from the two School Direct partnerships and spoke to the chief external examiner by telephone.
- Inspectors spoke with 39 trainees and 20 early career teachers who had trained at the University of York.
- The inspectors conducted focused reviews in the following subjects: mathematics, chemistry, physics, history and geography.
- The inspectors visited six schools over the course of the inspection. They spoke with trainees or staff based at a further 14 schools.

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

Leaders have carefully structured an ambitious curriculum that prepares trainees to be reflective and competent practitioners. Curriculum content is organised to complement trainees' development, with key aspects such as safeguarding, behaviour and adaptive teaching suitably foregrounded. The full breadth of the core content framework is explicitly woven through trainees' experience and reinforced through assignments at key points.

Course leaders demonstrate commitment to educational research. The seamless interweaving of education theories and research into the subject-specific aspects of the curriculum makes trainees' experiences here distinctive. University staff and expert colleagues from partner schools provide trainees with deep insight into education research that is continually applied to classroom practice. The curriculum is taught in ways that model effective pedagogy for trainees. Trainees learn through a range of lectures, cross-curricular seminar groups and subject sessions where they have opportunities to practise teaching their peers. Leaders have intelligently sequenced the training programme. Trainees use their cumulative knowledge and experience to inform a final assignment towards the end of the course. Through this, they carry out their own action research to further consolidate the deep learning that they have acquired.

The provider strongly promotes inclusion. Trainees gain a secure understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND and recognise the importance of having ambition for these pupils. Their confidence in how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of these pupils builds during the course. However, trainees are less confident in how to meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Leaders listen and respond to feedback. As a result, trainees undertake two school placements of equal length. This means that trainees return to the same school after the Christmas break, allowing them some familiarity to consolidate their practice.

The provider closely engages all stakeholders in the delivery of the ITE curriculum. Partner schools are well informed about what trainees learn at university and ensure that school experiences complement this. Regular training, strong communication and clear review systems ensure that trainees receive effective mentoring. Leaders give mentors clear guidance on the importance of setting clear developmental targets for trainees and check that this is happening. Where variability in the quality of target-setting occurs, leaders take swift action to address this. Overall, trainees benefit from purposeful formative assessment processes that support their development.

The university is committed in its mission to work for the public good. Course leaders fulfil this by providing a stream of high-quality teachers to the region's schools. This provider is the central hub around which an exceptionally strong network of schools has been built. The University of York is an innovative and outward-facing institution leading the continual development of ITE locally and beyond. The relentless drive for excellence from the leaders here is one that is benefiting schools across the local area.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Trainees are not as fully prepared to support pupils who speak EAL as they could be. Leaders are already refining how they should enhance this training for trainees. Leaders should ensure that trainees' experience provides them with a secure grounding in how best to support pupils who speak EAL in the classroom.

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	70087
Inspection number	10306330

This inspection was carried out in accordance with the [initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook](#), which set 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	Secondary
Date of previous inspection	22 to 25 April 2013

Inspection team

Katherine Spurr, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Lane	Ofsted Inspector
Jessica McKay	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
All Saints Catholic School York	149517	Secondary
Archbishop Holgate's School, a Church of England Academy	136617	Secondary
Fulford School	144711	Secondary
Huntington School	121673	Secondary
Selby High School Specialist School for the Arts and Science	121702	Secondary
York High School	144652	Secondary

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