

# University of Plymouth

507 Rolle Building, University of Plymouth, Plymouth PL48 AA

## Inspection dates

26 February to 1 March 2024

## Inspection judgements

	Primary age-phase	Further education age-phase
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Good	Good
The quality of education and training	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good	Good

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

Trainees experience an ambitious curriculum. They gain the subject knowledge they need to teach in their specialist areas and phases. The priority placed on teaching trainees about safeguarding ensures that they quickly understand the risks pupils and learners may face. Primary phase trainees learn a lot about teaching early reading. This sets them up well for their initial teaching placements. In the further education and skills (FES) phase, a careful balance between centre-based training and well-crafted assessments deepens trainees understanding of their subjects very well.

The strong focus on employability ensures trainees are ready for their first job. The curriculum teaches them about practical realities such as managing their workload and learning about behaviour management. Trainees learn how to adapt their teaching to respond to pupils' and learners' needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language.

Typically, trainees value the well-being support they receive. FES trainees are highly satisfied with the course. In the primary phase, trainees' satisfaction is on the rise. For example, Year 3 trainees appreciate how the curriculum prepares them well to be early career teachers. Nonetheless, across both phases, the mentoring that trainees receive is not always sufficiently well targeted to fully support trainees' development.

## Information about this ITE provider

- The provider currently has 386 trainees, comprising 287 primary-phase and 99 FES trainees.
- All primary trainees study for a Bachelor of Education (BEd). Trainees can specialise in the three to seven age range, five to 11 age range or SEND pathway. In their third year, trainees achieve what the university calls 'an exit award' in either English, mathematics, science, physical education, history, geography, religious education, art, design technology, computing, music or modern foreign languages. There are currently 38 trainees on the three to seven route, 186 trainees on the five to 11 route and 54 trainees taking the SEND route.
- The provider uses 123 partnership primary schools stretching across seven local authorities in the South West. The schools in the partnership have been judged as outstanding, good, or requires improvement by Ofsted or good by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.
- There are two postgraduate training routes for FES trainees. These are CertEd Certificate in Education (incorporating the Diploma in Teaching (Further Education and Skills)) and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (incorporating the Diploma in Teaching (Further Education and Skills)).
- FES trainees' specialist subjects cover a wide range of vocational and academic subjects. The highest concentrations of subjects are in creative, construction and trade and health clusters.
- There are 13 trainees on the direct route who are based at the university. Eighty-six other trainees receive their training through franchised delivery with four FE colleges, all of which hold an Ofsted overall effectiveness grade of good.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team consisted of eight His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with the director of the institute of education, the primary- and FES-phase programme leaders, other teaching staff at the university and franchised colleges. Inspectors also spoke to staff who arrange partnerships with schools and colleges and lead on trainee recruitment. Inspectors held meetings to discuss the work of strategic partnership bodies across both the primary and FES phases.
- Meetings also took place with several staff from primary- and FES-phase courses. In addition, leaders met with university-based mentors, school- and college-based mentors and headteachers of partnership schools and colleges.
- An inspector talked with two of the vice-chancellor's representatives and members of what the university calls the education futures team.
- Inspectors spoke to 74 primary-phase trainees and three early career teachers. Some of these discussions took place remotely.

- In the primary phase, focused reviews were conducted in early reading, mathematics, science, physical education, computing, music and modern foreign languages.
- FES phase inspectors spoke to 28 trainees and three previous trainees.
- In the FES phase, focused reviews were conducted in creative and visual arts, creative arts and sports, performing arts and a vocational focus, including sports, public services, music performance and construction/trades.
- Inspectors visited 17 primary-phase placement settings and six FES-phase placements settings. One of these visits was conducted remotely.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation from ITE leaders and staff, including subject, phase and route curriculum plans, trainees' assignments, trainees' electronic individual portfolios, mentoring records, policies, safeguarding arrangements, trainee placement information, and self-evaluation documentation.
- Inspectors also reviewed information relating to the Department for Education (DfE) initial teacher training criteria and supporting evidence.
- Very occasionally, Ofsted decides to pause an inspection before the final feedback is given to the partnership. In this inspection, primary phase activities were paused on 29 February for one day. The primary phase inspection was completed on 1 March.

# Primary phase report

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

The partnership has developed a curriculum that builds trainees' pedagogical and subject knowledge year on year. Leaders have ensured that the DfE's core content framework is included in full. It is woven into and built on progressively in each of the three pathways into teaching.

Leaders are astute in reviewing the content and effectiveness of centre-based curriculums. For example, their deliberate decisions to increase subject-specific content and reorganise when and how trainees learn it in Years 1, 2 and 3 are proving effective. As a result, by the time they leave, most trainees feel confident to teach all subjects across the primary curriculum. Most recently, leaders' stringent focus on ensuring that all trainees have high levels of attendance at centre-based training is better equipping them for their teaching placements.

Trainees on all three pathways are well prepared to understand the strategies needed to teach early reading. Coaching sessions with tutors support trainees to increase their subject knowledge of systematic synthetic phonics well throughout their training.

Staff complete effective ongoing formative assessment of trainee's knowledge. Well-thought-out assignments and school-based tasks enable trainees to draw on pertinent research and make links between theory and practice. Staff identify any gaps in trainees' knowledge through pre- and post-placement discussions and use this information to address misconceptions appropriately. The curriculum teaches trainees to promote inclusion. Trainees' understanding of early years, SEND, those who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils, for example, are purposefully threaded through the curriculum and assessments.

In the past year, the partnership's work with local education leaders has contributed positively to local and regional needs. Mentors and school-based staff show high levels of dedication to support trainees on placement. However, the partnership's checks on the quality of mentoring are not yet having the required impact. This means that at times, the explicit links to what trainees learn at centre-based training do not connect well enough to trainees' classroom-based practice.

Improved systems are in place to support trainees' academic development and pastoral needs. For example, the 'writing café' supports trainees who need extra guidance in producing high-quality academic writing as part of their personal research projects. Most trainees are positive about their training experience. However, a minority of trainees do not feel confident that any concerns will be dealt with quickly. This does not provide them with the immediate reassurance they need to understand how the course is supporting them. The university is aware of this, but is at an early stage of addressing it.

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

### **(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders' work to improve the quality assurance of mentoring in the primary phase is not complete. This leads to inconsistency in the mentoring that trainees receive. Leaders must ensure that the quality of mentoring improves so that all mentors have strong subject knowledge, and all trainees receive high-quality mentoring.
- Trainees' satisfaction is on the rise. Nevertheless, communication across the partnership is not sufficiently strong. It can take too long to remedy some trainees' concerns when they arise. The partnership must ensure that there are strong lines of communication between trainees, placement schools and centre-based staff so that concerns raised by trainees are routinely acted on and remedied swiftly.

## **Does the ITE provider's primary 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 FES phase and what needs to be done better?**

Leaders have designed training which focuses well on the skills which trainees need to be effective teachers within the FES sector. They plan effective opportunities for trainees to apply their new theoretical knowledge into their teaching.

Leaders and managers have developed rigorous moderation and standardisation processes which they use well to ensure that the partner colleges provide high-quality training. College centre leaders value these processes and engage well in identifying improvement priorities which are then swiftly addressed. For example, moderation of the curriculum in society module learning outcomes identified the need for greater practical application of the theory taught, so that it may be applied to the trainees' teaching. As a result, the assessment outcomes were revised, supporting a greater application to teaching practice.

Leaders and college centre leaders value their effective training partnership. They work collaboratively to review and design the curriculum, sharing expertise and best practice. Leaders balance the need for standardisation of training across the partnership with a level of autonomy, allowing college centre leaders to develop training which meets the needs of their specific trainees. For example, one college included additional content on information technology to address a skills gap in trainees' digital literacy.

Leaders ensure that all mentors are trained in their role and equipped to help trainees translate the theory that they learn into their teaching practice. New mentors also follow a useful development programme. Because of this, most mentors are highly effective in supporting trainees' development and provide valuable guidance on subject-specific pedagogy and applying theory into practice. However, in a minority of instances the support and training provided by mentors is not sufficiently well organised to ensure that all trainees develop new skills and knowledge at the pace expected of them.

Lecturers complete effective ongoing formative assessment of trainee's knowledge and skills. They use their frequent review of trainee's reflective logs and regular teaching observations to provide feedback which is both valuable and timely. As a result, trainees develop their skills and knowledge swiftly and are well versed on what they need to do to improve.

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

### **(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)**

- Some aspects of the mentoring programme do not enable trainees to develop their skills sufficiently well. The partnership must work with college providers to ensure that

all mentors are sufficiently well trained and understand their role so that trainees know how to apply the new knowledge they learn to their teaching practice.

## ITE provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70059
<b>Inspection number</b>	10307493

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 Further education and skills
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 to 22 May 2014

## Inspection team

Julie Carrington, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Heather Barraclough, Primary phase lead	His Majesty's Inspector
Marie Thomas, Primary phase lead	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul James, FES phase lead	His Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Battersby	His Majesty's Inspector
Dale Burr	His Majesty's Inspector
Non Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Folland	His Majesty's Inspector
Matt Hann	His Majesty's Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Ofsted Inspector



## Annex: Placement/employment settings, schools, and colleges

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>ITE phase</b>
King's School	113595	Primary
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School	140726	Primary
Mount Wise Community Primary School	145656	Primary
Hooe Primary Academy	139299	Primary
Prince Rock Primary School	143476	Primary
Whitleigh Community Primary School	132215	Primary
The Grove School	113234	Primary
Blisland Primary Academy	145519	Primary
Totnes St John's Church of England Primary School	146534	Primary
Callington Primary School	140577	Primary
Woodlands School	113644	Primary
Goosewell Primary Academy	143826	Primary
Mayflower Academy	139710	Primary
Dartington Church of England Academy	148490	Primary
Mill Ford School	113651	Primary
Heathcott Primary School	113343	Primary
South Petherwin Community Primary School	111947	Primary
Truro and Penwith College	130629	FES
Bridgwater and Taunton College	130803	FES
Cornwall College	130627	FES
Petroc College	130646	FES
City College Plymouth	130649	FES
Arts University Plymouth	130650	FES

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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