

Bishop Grosseteste University

Bishop Grosseteste University
Longdales Road
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Inspection dates

05 to 08 March 2024

Inspection judgements

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

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

The support that trainees receive is an absolute strength of this provision. Trainees are known well by centre- and school-based leaders, tutors and mentors. Concerns are dealt with rapidly. Workload is effectively managed. Trainees appreciate the 'family feel' of the training. They describe the provision as a 'cocoon of care'.

The curriculum has been carefully constructed with strategic partners and is ambitious and relevant. Trainees are supported to develop an 'expert eye' through the rigour of academic research. The guidance on how to adapt the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a particular strength. Trainees learn how to teach early reading extremely well. Expert subject specialists ensure that trainees acquire strong subject and pedagogical knowledge. This is stronger in the primary and secondary phases. Training reflects local need.

There is a clear intent to ensure that the training develops high quality, insightful teachers who work to address social inequality and 'change pupils' lives'. However, curriculum development to deepen trainees' understanding of the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in the early stages.

Information about this ITE provider

- In the 2023/24 academic year, the partnership had 550 trainees over three phases: primary, secondary and further education and skills (FES).
- Trainees train to teach in the primary phase through one of three routes: an undergraduate, three-year Bachelor of Arts (Hons) course, an undergraduate Bachelor of Arts (Hons) top-up course, or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course. The PGCE course is either university led or part of a School Direct route and is studied full- or part-time. In the secondary phase, all trainees follow the PGCE route. This is delivered through the university or as a School Direct route and is studied full- or part-time.
- This year there are trainees enrolled on the following secondary courses: art and design, business studies, dance, design and technology, drama, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education, science with biology, science with chemistry, science with physics, and social science.
- The FES phase has trainees on a variety of pre-service courses. These training routes are in the professional Graduate Certificate in Education, Training and Skills.
- In the primary phase, the partnership works with 600 schools, covering 25 local authorities.
- In the secondary phase, the partnership works with 130 schools, covering 18 local authority areas.
- In the further education and skills phase, the partnership works with 10 colleges across six local authority areas.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by eight of His Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with leaders, including the vice chancellor, the executive dean of faculty, the head and deputy of ITE programmes and the head of ITT mentoring and partnerships. Inspectors also met with the admissions manager and placement service manager. In addition, they met with members of the strategic partnership.
- Inspectors held meetings with trainees, school mentors, university-based mentors, lecturers, senior lecturers and headteachers.
- Inspectors spoke to 20 primary trainees and five early career teachers (ECTs). They spoke with 18 secondary trainees and 14 ECTs. They spoke with seven FES trainees and two ex-trainees.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to the trainee survey and staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed the provider's documentation, including information relating to improvement planning, curriculum and compliance.
- In the primary phase, focused reviews were conducted in early reading, English, mathematics, art and design, history and physical education. In the secondary phase, focused reviews were conducted in English, mathematics, history, science with

biology and social science. In FES, the taught curriculum was considered through placements and engagement with mentors.

- Overall, inspectors spoke with 10 primary schools, 10 secondary schools and 5 further education colleges.

Primary phase report

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

Across the different courses, leaders have established a well-constructed core curriculum, designed to give trainees a thorough grounding of what to teach and how to teach it. This is skilfully tailored to trainees' starting points. For example, trainees who already have extensive experience of working in schools learn about professional identity at the beginning of their course as they establish themselves as beginner teachers, rather than teaching assistants.

The sequence of this curriculum is well established. As they move through the 'introductory', 'developing' and 'extending' phases, trainees deepen their knowledge of educational research and pedagogical approaches through university's teaching and through placements in schools. Regular checks make sure that the subject teaching that trainees receive is up to date and exactly what they need. Leaders thoughtfully track the subjects trainees teach during placements, so that additional opportunities to deepen trainees' knowledge can be provided in subjects that they have encountered less frequently, such as computing and religious education.

Trainees are prepared exceptionally well to teach phonics. Their knowledge of pure sounds is regularly checked, and misconceptions rectified. They learn about the distinct barriers that pupils with SEND face and how to overcome these. Through regular practice, trainees become highly adept and confident phonics teachers.

The core content framework is woven carefully throughout the course. In all subjects, trainees learn about how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Sessions at the university cover a broad range of learning difficulties that pupils may have. However, trainees do not always get the opportunities that they need to deepen their knowledge of how to support pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Leaders provide useful training for school-based mentors. Guidance documents clearly explain to placement schools what trainees have learned about previously. University-based mentors provide valued advice to schools so that trainees can build on this. However, not all school-based mentors understand exactly how to give trainees the right support. For example, the targets which trainees are working towards sometimes lack precision. Leaders, through their checking, have identified this as an area for improvement. Work is underway to address this.

Leaders check on the progress that trainees are making. Those who are beginning to struggle are spotted straight away. Appropriate plans and adaptations help most trainees to get swiftly back on track. Many trainees say that they are supported extremely well. They say that they are known 'as a name, not a number' and that they get the right help at the right time to become 'fully fledged' by the end of their course.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- A few trainees do not benefit from a consistently effective mentoring. Targets are not always written with precision so that trainees can build their practice incrementally. Leaders should ensure that all mentors engage with the high-quality training and resources which are available to support them and fully understand the expectations of them during trainees' placements.
- The course programme does not routinely include opportunities for trainees to deepen their knowledge of strategies to support pupils who speak English as an additional language. Some trainees find it hard to explain what they learned. Leaders should ensure that as part of the curriculum for all trainees, they have the opportunity to systematically revisit and extend their knowledge of how to ensure that their teaching removes barriers for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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 developed an ambitious training curriculum. The 'ADEPT' (ambitious, diverse, evidence-based, professionally transformative) curriculum has the requirements of the ITT Core Content Framework as its foundation. Leaders have thought about what they want trainees to learn and when. The curriculum is adapted to meet local recruitment, and trainees', needs. Subject curriculums dovetail with the core curriculum to build precise pedagogical and subject knowledge.

Purposeful integration of theory and practice is very well blended across core, subject, school placements and academic assignments. Trainees appreciate the balance of core and subject-based learning at the start of the week, with the school-based placement learning. A typical trainee comment was, 'We love Mondays!' Another trainee commented, 'Theory and practice link closely together.'

Communication across the partnership is a particular strength. The weekly 'guidance sheet' enables school-based mentors to focus on precise learning. Weekly targets are sharp and link to school- and university-based learning.

Leaders ensure that the school-based mentors are trained well. Mentors understand their responsibilities. They value the mentor training and appreciate additional opportunities to enhance their mentoring skills.

Trainees develop a strong appreciation of the needs of pupils with SEND. Learning about adaptive teaching, related to SEND, is a particular strength of the provision. This SEND-related learning is threaded through the training curriculum. However, training related to addressing the barriers that pupils who speak English as an additional language face is not fully embedded.

Trainees value the equality, diversity and inclusion week. They broaden and deepen their learning through a variety of research projects. These include, for example, gender diversity in sports, trans awareness and gender determination in languages.

Training is underpinned by relevant research. Trainees read widely. They benefit from mature discussions and debate. They undertake meaningful action research projects. Many trainees relish this intellectual aspect of their training. They learn very well.

Leaders' approaches to assessing trainees integrate the different parts of the training. Trainees receive ongoing formative feedback. They build an electronic record of learning, reflection and of progress across the training. Final assessment is rigorous and is in line with the university's assessment procedures.

Leaders employ rigorous quality assurance processes. Their self-evaluation is accurate. They rightly identify many strengths. Leaders are not complacent.

The provider helps trainees to balance workload well. There is a strong focus on supporting trainees' personal and pastoral needs, as needed. Trainees are nurtured to become responsible new teachers.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- The provision has not fully embedded training that enables trainees to understand how to adapt teaching to addresses the barriers that pupils who speak English as an additional language face. As a result, not all trainees gain a depth of learning related to this area of adaptive teaching. Leaders need to consolidate and embed training opportunities, enabling trainees to adapt teaching to address the barriers faced by pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

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Further education and skills phase report

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

Leaders and managers have developed an initial teacher education curriculum for aspiring further education and skills teachers that is suitably ambitious. The taught elements of this curriculum focus on general pedagogy. The curriculum introduces trainees to established theories and evidence-based teaching methods in a logical sequence. However, occasionally, the training focuses too much on learning activities and learner engagement and this occasionally results in trainees thinking too little about curriculum content. In a few cases, this leads to them teaching lessons that lack ambition.

Trainees' opportunities to improve their subject-specific teaching are not as well developed as those for general pedagogy. Trainees largely rely on their placement mentors to support this aspect of their learning. While mentors provide useful support to their trainees, in a very few cases they focus on general pedagogy or themes such as behaviour management, rather than subject-specific teaching skills.

Leaders ensure that placement mentors have appropriate teaching experience and subject expertise. In the rare instances where this is not the case, university subject experts provide support to mentors. The programme leader provides mentors with a useful introduction to the course and the expectations of mentors. He provides weekly updates so that mentors know exactly what trainees are learning. This is supplemented with suggested questions for mentors to ask trainees, and related targets that they might like to set. As a result, the work of mentors complements the taught curriculum well and helps trainees to make good progress.

Leaders carry out several checks that mentors fulfil their responsibilities. However, these checks can sometimes focus too much on ensuring that mentors have completed activities, such as learning walks and meetings with trainees, and do not focus enough on the quality and impact of these interactions. Although most mentors work effectively with their trainees, quality assurance processes are not as effective as they need to be.

Teacher training staff and mentors conduct frequent, rigorous assessment of trainees' progress. They set academic assignments, mark them thoroughly and provide trainees with clear feedback that helps them to understand what they have done well and what they need to improve. Staff and mentors conduct frequent lesson observations and learning walks that help trainees to gauge their progress, often tracking specific development themes through multiple observations. They review trainees' reflections and periodically discuss their progress against the professional standards for teachers. As a result of this activity, trainees are clear about their progress and areas for improvement.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Training places too much emphasis on activities and engagement and not enough on curriculum content. As a result, when planning lessons, trainees occasionally focus too much on ensuring that they include enough activity and too little on the contribution that these activities make to teaching the intended curriculum content. Consequently, such lessons lack ambition. Leaders should therefore consider how they can adjust the ITE curriculum so that trainees understand that it is the curriculum content that should engage learners and that teaching methods should be carefully matched to the topics to be learned.
- Quality assurance activities related to mentors focus too much on ensuring that mentors have completed activities rather than the extent to which those activities contribute to trainees' learning and development. Leaders should adjust their focus so that they pay greater attention to the content and impact of mentors' interactions with trainees rather than just checking that they have been completed.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70004
Inspection number	10309357

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
Dates of previous inspection	15 June 2015 and 30 November 2015

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Davies, Phase lead secondary	His Majesty's Inspector
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Caroline Poole	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Whelan	His Majesty's Inspector
Martin Finch	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Lee	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Moore	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Placement/employment schools and colleges

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

Name	URN	ITE phase
Belmont Community Primary School	120401	Primary
Boston College	130761	FES
Bottesford Junior School	117727	Primary
Bucknall Primary School	120443	Primary
Caistor Grammar School	136350	Secondary
De Aston School	136491	Secondary
Eastoft Church of England Primary School	118043	Primary
Franklin College	130586	FES/Secondary
Hartsholme Academy	146559	Primary
Havelock Academy	135294	Secondary
Ingoldsby Academy	141390	Primary
John Leggott Sixth Form College	130588	FES
Lincoln Christ's Hospital School	137447	Secondary
Long Bennington Church of England Academy	138047	Primary
Louth Academy	144968	Secondary
Nottingham College	130776	FES
Oakfield Primary School	134867	Primary
Retford Oaks Academy	137117	Secondary
Riseholme College	130584	FES
Sir Robert Pattinson Academy	130584	Secondary
Sir William Robertson Academy, Welbourn	138839	Secondary
Sturton by Stow Primary School	120478	Primary
The Elizabethan Academy	138076	Secondary
Wybers Wood Academy	138975	Primary

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