

Birmingham Newman University

Genners Lane, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 3NT

Inspection dates

18 to 21 March 2024

Inspection judgements

	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase
Overall effectiveness	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 are proud to be members of Birmingham Newman University's close-knit community. Here they gain the knowledge and skills they need to make a strong start to their careers. University staff and partner schools know trainees very well. They seek to understand the circumstances of individuals and work hard to meet their needs. This ensures trainees receive the right support to help them manage their workload and succeed.

Trainees join a partnership that champions diversity and inclusion. They understand and promote the university's values. They are enthusiastic and well-equipped to serve a diverse range of schools and pupils. For example, the curriculum provides trainees with a firm understanding of how to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In addition, they gain a secure knowledge of the role that teachers play in managing pupils' behaviour and keeping children safe. All this means that trainees are well prepared for the practical realities of teaching.

University tutors and mentors work well together. They guide trainees in using a range of effective teaching strategies. In primary education, this includes trainees learning how to teach reading and phonics. Trainees develop their knowledge logically over time, successfully grasping subjects and teaching methods. This builds their confidence in readiness for their teaching careers.

Information about this ITE provider

- The provider has 604 trainees over two phases: primary and secondary.
- There are 464 trainees in the primary age-phase and 140 trainees in the secondary age-phase.
- In the primary phase, trainees are on one of the following routes: an undergraduate Bachelor of Arts with Qualified Teacher Status route; a core Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) route; a PGCE School Direct fee-paid route; and a PGCE School Direct salaried route. Trainees opt for either the three- to-seven primary age-phase, five- to-11 primary age-phase or the seven- to-11 primary age-phase.
- In the secondary phase, trainees are on one of four routes. These are an undergraduate Bachelor of Arts with Qualified Teacher Status route; a core PGCE route; a PGCE School Direct fee-paid route; and a PGCE School Direct salaried route. The provider offers a range of subject specialisms. In 2023/24, trainees were enrolled on the following secondary subject courses: biology, chemistry, computing, dance, drama, English, geography, history, mathematics, physical education, physics, religious education and science with biology.
- In the primary phase, the partnership includes approximately 180 schools in 11 local authorities. In the secondary phase, the partnership includes approximately 65 schools in 11 local authorities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by seven of His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with executive dean and two associate deans of the Faculty of Education. Inspectors also met the head of primary, head of secondary, course tutors, link tutors, admissions staff and the partnership strategy group.
- Inspectors held meetings with trainees, early career teachers (ECTs), subject tutors, school mentors and link tutors.
- In the primary phase, inspectors spoke with 49 trainees and 12 ECTs. Inspectors visited 13 placement schools.
- In the secondary phase, inspectors spoke with 32 trainees and 10 ECTs. Inspectors visited seven placement schools.
- In the primary phase, inspectors conducted focused reviews in early reading, mathematics, English, science, art and design, physical education, music and geography.
- In the secondary phase, inspectors conducted focused reviews in English, science, history, geography and physical education.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of information, including documentation relating to the ITE curriculum in both phases. Inspectors also reviewed documentation in relation to safeguarding arrangements, and audits of the provider's compliance with the Department for Education's (DfE) ITT criteria.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted surveys for staff and trainees.

Primary phase report

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

The provider's commitment to equality and diversity permeates all aspects of the primary provision. Trainees are very well supported to develop into committed and effective teachers. They are especially well prepared to teach in the local community.

Leaders have carefully considered the curriculum's design to ensure that it builds trainees' knowledge of the subjects and phases that they teach. The core content framework (CCF) strands are carefully interwoven throughout the programme, alongside the five Newman themes: the role of the teacher, assessment, adaptive practice, understanding and managing behaviour, and subject knowledge. Mentors and trainees have a clear understanding of the programme's aims. The curriculum is ambitious and builds logically to ensure that trainees revisit important knowledge. This ensures that trainees are well prepared for the rigours of the profession. For example, they develop a strong understanding of how to manage pupils' behaviour.

Trainees are prepared well to teach all the national curriculum subjects and to assess how well pupils learn these subjects. This includes trainees developing an understanding of how to teach early reading, including systematic synthetic phonics. Trainees also review research that shows the importance of pupils learning to read well and the impact that this has on pupils' future outcomes.

Educational research is threaded through all aspects of the ITE curriculum and runs alongside school placements well. There is effective use of research to inform trainees' developing knowledge. Inclusion and the use of adaptive teaching are a golden thread throughout the curriculum. For instance, trainees study key principles of how to adapt teaching for individual pupils. They then build successfully on this learning over time to deepen their knowledge and improve their practice. The curriculum covers content of the CCF and surpasses it in some key aspects such as inclusion and diversity.

Leaders ensure that trainees' school experiences align well with centre-based training. Mentors support trainees effectively to successfully build on their university sessions. Leaders have established clear expectations for how school placements contribute to trainees' development, including the purpose of observations and weekly meetings with mentors. Placement tutors from the university work with mentors to ensure that assessments are accurate and that mentors provide appropriate targets for development. These targets are aligned with the partnership's trainee assessment tool. However, there is variation in how well the role of placement tutors is quality assured. This contributes to some variance in the quality of trainees' and mentors' experiences with training and guidance.

Supporting trainees' well-being is a central part of the university's work. Staff offer appropriate and wide-ranging support for any trainees who struggle and the pastoral offer is

comprehensive. Trainees appreciate and value this. They feel listened to and part of the Birmingham Newman family.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- There is variation in how well the role of placement tutors is quality assured. This means that trainees' and mentors' experiences with support and guidance are variable. The provider should ensure that quality assurance of the role of the placement tutor is robust so that all mentors and trainees benefit from consistently high-quality training and support.

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?

The ITE secondary programme is securely based on a vision of 'changing lives, shaping futures'. The university has designed a course that models and teaches high ambition, inclusive practice and secure subject knowledge. Course tutors know trainees and placement schools very well. Relationships are valued by all. Partner schools embrace the shared values and professional respect that defines the partnership. This provides an excellent role model for trainees, who quickly demonstrate these same professional behaviours.

Trainees benefit from the carefully and skilfully developed 'Newman curriculum'. Based on four interconnecting themes, the curriculum is sequenced well to ensure that all trainees develop a rich and deep knowledge of effective teaching. The curriculum is particularly effective at promoting trainees' professional behaviours and their understanding of adaptive practice. This helps trainees to become inclusive, resilient teachers who want the very best for the pupils that they teach. Subject experts design and deliver the well-considered subject curriculums, ensuring that it fully covers the CCF.

Centre-based staff build very positive relationships with partner schools. These relationships are grounded on a collective ambition to train teachers who have the skills to teach in the local community and beyond. Centre-based training and school placement experiences are explicitly linked so that trainees have every opportunity to apply their learning in classroom practice. Nearly all mentors take advantage of the training available to them and this enhances trainees' experiences. Leaders step in quickly to provide support and guidance to mentors who need it.

Leaders ensure there are effective systems to monitor the progress of trainees. Clear weekly targets, based on lesson observations and coverage of the curriculum 'big questions' ensure that trainees continue to strengthen their practice.

The pastoral support provided to trainees is a strength of the provision. There is a structured programme of support available for trainees who may need it. This means that trainees are fully supported, whatever their needs. Trainees are highly appreciative of the care and support they receive during and beyond their training.

Programme leaders gain extensive information about the quality of trainees' experiences. They use this information to address specific issues for trainees and to further develop the programme. Partner schools and trainees know that their contributions are listened to and make a difference. These qualitative approaches to review are well established and rigorous. However, at times, leaders do not use this information as strategically as they could. This hinders their ability to be as proactive as they might be in building on strengths and addressing areas in which they could further improve provision.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- The provider gathers useful information about the ITE programme and uses this information to identify key priorities. However, sometimes emerging issues are not spotted and acted on as quickly as they might be. The provider should ensure that information that is gathered about the quality of provision is used to even greater effect to further improve the ITE programme.

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	70135
Inspection number	10303771

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	HEI
Phases provided	Primary Secondary
Dates of previous inspection	20 to 22 April and 9 to 11 November 2015

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Emma Gater, Phase lead inspector (Primary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Price, Phase lead inspector (Secondary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Beech	His Majesty's Inspector
Corinne Biddell	His Majesty's Inspector
Rob Hackfath	His Majesty's Inspector
Eve Morris	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Spilsbury	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Whitcombe	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
Fairway Primary Academy	139484	Primary
Olive Hill Primary School	144301	Primary
Tividale Community Primary	133261	Primary
St. Chads Catholic Primary School	140144	Primary
Our Lady & St Kenelm Catholic Primary School	103850	Primary
Tividale Hall Primary	103960	Primary
Our Lady and St Hubert's Catholic Primary	141926	Primary
Burnt Tree Primary	103914	Primary
St Augustine's Catholic Primary	103431	Primary
Moat Farm Infant School	103949	Primary
Princethorpe Infant School	143436	Primary
Kitwell Primary School	103339	Primary
Grove Vale Primary School	103972	Primary
St Paul's School for Girls	103531	Secondary
Oldbury Academy	137701	Secondary
Bartley Green School	136589	Secondary
Harborne Academy	136213	Secondary
St Peter's Catholic School	148094	Secondary
Perryfields Academy	148267	Secondary
St Michaels CofE School	104019	Secondary

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