

# Middlesex University

Middlesex University, The Burroughs, London NW4 4BT

## Inspection dates

4 to 7 March 2024

## Inspection judgements

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

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

Middlesex University goes out of its way to support trainees on their journey to become qualified teachers. The large majority of trainees are satisfied with the arrangements that leaders make for their teaching placements. Secondary trainees are fulsome in their praise for their tutors at the centre and while on placements. However, a small number of primary trainees were less positive about the timeliness of information about their school placements.

The partnership places a strong focus on enabling trainees to apply what they have learned at the centre to the everyday practicalities of the classroom. This includes, for example, adapting teaching to meet pupils' needs, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is a key thread that runs through the programme.

Secondary trainees develop an in-depth knowledge of their subject and how to teach it effectively. This is because subject tutors are experts in their field and the programmes build trainees' learning sequentially. The same is true for nearly all primary subjects, including early reading, mathematics and music. Occasionally, the essential knowledge that trainees need for teaching a small number of the foundation subjects is not given sufficient

emphasis. However, all trainees finish their training well prepared to contribute fully to school life.

The communication between partner schools and staff at the centre is strong. The university has developed a comprehensive range of documents for schools. The placement handbooks and the professional development journal (PDJ), for example, provide extremely helpful guidance about the course and how to manage feedback. Timely visits by link and subject tutors, and the weekly emails, add to this strong partnership.

## **Information about this ITE provider**

- Middlesex University currently has 222 primary trainees and 76 secondary trainees.
- In the primary phase, the university provides programmes for the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) route, the three-year graduate BA Primary (QTS) degree course, the School Direct (salaried) route and the Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship programme at level 6.
- In the secondary phase, the programmes followed are the PGCE and the School Direct (salaried and non-salaried) routes, and the postgraduate Teacher Apprenticeship programme at level 6.
- The provider offers the assessment-only route in both the primary and secondary phases. At the time of this inspection, the number of candidates on this route was very small.
- During this academic year, the provider is working with 114 partnership schools in the primary phase and 70 in the secondary phase.

## **Information about this inspection**

- The inspection was carried out by six His Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the provider's leaders, phase leaders, subject leaders and link tutors. They also met with members of the partnership steering group.
- Inspectors held meetings with trainees, school mentors, school-based leaders and early career teachers.
- Inspectors scrutinised the provider's documents related to improvement planning and curriculum content.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to the trainee survey and to the staff survey.
- Inspectors observed primary and secondary teaching sessions at the university.
- In the secondary phase, inspectors spoke to 19 trainees and five early career teachers.
- In the secondary phase, focused reviews were conducted in English, science (physics, biology and chemistry), and history and geography with humanities.
- In the primary phase, inspectors spoke to 50 trainees and five early career teachers,

either face to face or remotely.

- In the primary phase, focused reviews were conducted in early reading, mathematics, history, geography, art and design, music and religious education.
- Inspectors visited seven secondary and 13 primary schools.

# Primary phase report

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

This is a programme where course leaders have made sure that the ITE curriculum is ambitious in scope and content on all routes offered. It is coherently sequenced so that learning progresses logically over time. Important concepts are revisited to help trainees to reinforce their learning. The core content framework (CCF) is integrated fully and effectively within the curriculum. Leaders have considered each of the statements carefully and coherently. This insightful work means that the requirements are incorporated judiciously into each element of the course, both at the centre and on placement.

Course leaders have prioritised early reading in the ITE curriculum. Over time, the taught sessions build on trainees' prior knowledge and experiences effectively. This is further embedded in the early reading profile that trainees are expected to complete over the course of their studies. Trainees really value the 'micro-teaching' sessions, during which they get to see and reflect on their peers teaching a range of phonics programmes.

There is a strong focus on trainees having a secure knowledge of how to teach the core national curriculum subjects. The curriculum is planned to ensure that this knowledge builds thoroughly over time. Subject tutors are experienced and knowledgeable, helping to ensure that trainees receive high-quality training. All the foundation subjects of the national curriculum are taught, many of them in detail. However, in a few instances, activities in the interdisciplinary taught sessions do not deepen trainees' subject knowledge sufficiently. When this happens, trainees often remember the activities rather than the subject knowledge. For example, they could talk enthusiastically about what they did on a field study trip but were unclear about the connection to specific subject content.

The ITE curriculum is purposefully integrated across its different provider settings. In addition, the in-school tasks and weekly mentor meetings help to ensure that trainees embed their understanding further and apply it effectively to their practice. The training and quality assurance of mentoring is of a high standard. Mentors say that the training is valuable professional development for them. There is a consistent approach, across all placement schools, to the way trainees are supported by mentoring. This is because the PDJs and placement handbooks, for example, make very clear the university's expectations. Where school-based training falls short of these expectations, course leaders step in and provide mentors with additional guidance.

On all routes, trainees are taught discretely the professional behaviours that are needed for a successful career in teaching. This content is taught carefully and features in most lectures. The sessions ensure that trainees develop a detailed understanding of the professional standards and how these impact classroom practice. For example, on the PGCE route, managing classroom behaviour features in week two of the course and is revisited throughout the programme.

Trainees have a good understanding of the purpose of assessment. They are taught how to use both formative and summative assessments to help identify and respond to pupils' misconceptions and gaps in knowledge. This work is linked well to helping trainees develop their understanding of how to adapt learning to meet pupils' needs, including those with SEND.

Trainees' development, and in turn their step-by-step progress towards obtaining QTS, is assessed thoroughly and regularly throughout the duration of their studies. Each stakeholder is clear on the role that they have, and this contributes to leaders' work on continuous improvement of the programme. The assignments set for trainees are skilfully designed and strategically positioned within each route, both to support well-being and the careful build up of trainees' knowledge.

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

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

- On some of the routes in the primary phase, in a small number of the foundation subjects, the essential knowledge and skills that trainees need are not emphasised sharply enough. Because of this, there are occasions where trainees do not benefit from a curriculum which develops their knowledge with the same breadth and depth as that found in others. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum enables all trainees to deepen their understanding of subject-specific content equally well across all foundation subjects.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

## **Do apprenticeships in the ITE provider's primary phase satisfy the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision?**

The provider meets the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision in the primary phase.

Apprentices are supported well to gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours and to achieve their full potential. From the initial assessment, leaders and staff plan carefully for each apprentice's development. Ongoing assessment shapes the training programme purposefully. All those involved in supporting apprentices provide up-to-date subject knowledge that reflects expected practice and meets employers' needs. The planned off-the-job training ensures that apprentices acquire new knowledge, skills and behaviours that

are relevant to their job role. These enable them to contribute to their workplace, fulfil their career aims and complete their apprenticeship successfully.

# Secondary phase report

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

Leaders believe that all trainees can become exceptional teachers. They have planned an ambitious and personalised curriculum which realises this ambition successfully. Every component is carefully sequenced and based on relevant and credible research. The curriculum goes far beyond the minimum requirement of the CCF. For example, English trainees gain an in-depth understanding of how pupils learn to read as 'tots' and develop a love of reading as 'teens'. The highly aspirational and rich training programme, together with expertly led input from university staff, leads to trainees being fully ready for and confident about embarking on their career in teaching.

The CCF is threaded throughout the curriculum very effectively. It is clearly signposted in the PDJ that trainees and mentors use as a focus for research-based discussion each week. During centre-based training, subject tutors skilfully refer to pertinent sections of the CCF to extend trainees' understanding of how they apply these principles to their teaching. Tutors are subject and phase experts. They model excellent strategies for teaching that trainees can adopt in the classroom. School-based training seamlessly aligns with the curriculum. All of this ensures that trainees can make helpful connections across different aspects of the ITE curriculum and what this means for their practice.

Trainees are exceptionally well versed in the teaching of pupils with SEND. They learn about different types of SEND and the role of the special educational needs coordinator. This introduction is built upon effectively through a focus on subject-specific adaptive teaching as the course progresses. Trainees consolidate their knowledge through a short placement in a specialist setting. Centre-based training is carefully designed to meet the individual needs of trainees, many of whom have relevant prior experience in SEND.

Mentoring is consistently top-notch. This is because mentors undergo training which is subject specific as well as procedural. Quality assurance processes are robust. University subject tutors work collaboratively with each trainee and mentor on placements, checking that mentoring and observations of practice align tightly with the university expectations, for instance through observing practice jointly with mentors. Subject tutors also check the quality of mentoring feedback with rigour. They keep a very close eye on the PDJ, ensuring that trainees' targets identify precisely what they need to do next.

These processes also form part of trainees' ongoing formative assessment. Trainees value highly the regular professional learning conversations, which identify strengths and areas that require greater focus. Trainees appreciate the expert support they get in breaking down their written assignments. This helps in their management of workload.

Leaders constantly seek and respond to stakeholder feedback in order to further strengthen the training programme. They draw reflectively on the expertise of colleagues in the partnership who contribute to centre-based sessions on topics such as behaviour

management. In return, school staff value the opportunity for professional development that working with the university affords.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

### **Do apprenticeships in the ITE provider's secondary phase satisfy the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision?**

The provider meets the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision in the secondary phase.

From the start, leaders ensure that the programme for apprentices is aligned with that of trainees on other routes. Apprentices experience the same high-quality training as their peers. Subject tutors skilfully draw on apprentices' unique experiences in schools. This develops the learning of all trainees effectively.

Expert school-based mentoring ensures that apprentices receive clear and precise weekly targets. This enables them to become confident practitioners. The extended second school placement ensures that apprentices are well prepared for end-point assessment and their future careers in teaching.

Leaders work closely with employing schools to ensure that they are aware of the requirement to release apprentices for off-the-job training. They manage the apprenticeship route most effectively.



## ITE provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70048
<b>Inspection number</b>	10307562

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 institute
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary Secondary
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 June and 7 November 2016

## Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Aliki Constantopoulou, Phase lead inspector (primary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Strong, Phase lead inspector (secondary)	His Majesty's Inspector
David Radomsky	His Majesty's Inspector
Jeff Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Pearson	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Wright	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebekah Iiyambo	Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Welch	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>
Ashmole Academy	136308	Secondary
City of London Academy Islington	135587	Secondary
The Sacred Heart Language College	146245	Secondary
Whitmore High School	102239	Secondary
Dame Alice Owen's School	136554	Secondary
Queensmead School	136711	Secondary
Saracens High School	145921	Secondary
Millbrook Park Primary School	140601	Primary
St Andrew's (Barnsbury) CofE Primary School	100448	Primary
St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School	146179	Primary
Underhill School	101301	Primary
Whitings Hill Primary School	101304	Primary
Ashmole Primary School	142772	Primary
Bell Lane Primary School	101259	Primary
Broadfields Primary School	140236	Primary
Brunswick Park Primary & Nursery School	101264	Primary
Chalgrove Primary School	101309	Primary
Colindale Primary School	101269	Primary
Hazelbury Primary School	143198	Primary
Church Hill	101266	Primary

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