

University of Brighton

Checkland Building, Village Way, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9PH

Inspection dates

22 to 25 April 2024

Inspection judgements

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

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

Trainees shine at Brighton's long-established and highly impressive teacher training programmes. The university offers a suite of options to recruit the next generation of teachers. Employers are effusive about the calibre of trainees and how they move from novice to expert. The provider does all it can to prepare trainees for a successful teaching career and to bring 'practical wisdom' for the benefit of all.

The care and dedication shown by staff towards trainees is superb. Trainees are at the heart of everything. They are valued and expertly supported throughout the course. The curriculum skilfully equips trainees in safeguarding, behaviour management and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Trainees impress the placement settings they work in because of their professionalism and aptitude to apply what they have learned.

Trainees acquire research-informed teaching strategies to enable pupils and learners to gain necessary knowledge and skills. This is exceptional in the primary and secondary phases. At primary, trainees master effectively how to teach pupils to read through a systematic synthetic phonics programme.

The wider partnership is wholly committed to co-producing the curriculum. The provider's excellent relationships with placements helps stakeholders to understand the planned curriculum and the important practice and feedback that trainees need.

Information about this ITE provider

- In the 2023/24 academic year, the partnership trained a total of 918 trainees across the early years, primary, secondary and further education and skills (FES) age-phases. There were 14 trainees in the early years age-phase, 505 trainees in the primary age-phase, 288 trainees in the secondary age-phase and 111 trainees in the FES age-phase.
- In the early years phase, there were 14 trainees on the graduate-entry employment-based training route. Trainees gain a postgraduate certificate with early years teacher status.
- In the primary phase, most trainees study towards a three-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) (Honours) in primary education undergraduate degree with qualified teacher status (QTS). There were 77 trainees on the BA (Honours) Primary Education for teaching pupils aged three to seven years old and 352 trainees on the BA (Honours) Primary Education to teach pupils aged five to 11 years old. The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in Primary Education has 15 trainees preparing to teach pupils aged three to seven years old and 46 trainees preparing to teach pupils aged five to 11 years old. There is one trainee on the School Direct programme.
- In the secondary phase, there were 288 trainees in total with 158 trainees on the undergraduate BA (Honours) Physical Education with QTS. The two-year BA (Honours) Secondary Mathematics with QTS is in its final year with seven trainees on this route. There were 94 trainees on the PGCE courses in secondary subjects. There were 11 trainees on the School Direct fee-paying and three trainees on the School Direct salaried route.
- Across the primary and secondary age-phases, there were 29 apprentices on the level 6 teaching apprenticeship route. Fourteen apprentices were in the primary age-phase and 15 apprentices on the level 6 teacher apprenticeship across the subjects of biology, English, history, mathematics, physical education, physics and modern languages.
- In the FES phase, there were 111 trainees in total with 84 in-service and 27 pre-service trainees. Twenty-three trainees were at the University of Brighton; 26 trainees were at Chichester College Group; 24 trainees were at East Sussex College group; 19 trainees were at Bexhill College; 10 trainees were at Reigate College and nine trainees were at Plumpton College. Most trainees were on the PGCE Further Education and Training course. There were 17 trainees on the level 5 Certificate in Education Further Education and Training.
- In the early years phase, the partnership works with 26 schools and settings in four different local authorities.
- In the primary phase, the provider works with 178 partner schools across 12 local authorities.

- In the secondary phase, the provider works with 132 partner schools across 25 local authorities.
- In the FES phase, the partnership works with nine colleges including two large general further education college groups across different geographical areas. These providers have multiple campuses and other settings, including schools and independent learning providers.
- Most schools in the partnership were graded good or better at their most recent inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by 13 of His Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors.
- During this inspection, inspectors held meetings with the associate dean for academic operations, head of ITE and other leaders with oversight of ITE programmes, including the practice learning curriculum lead.
- Inspectors held meetings with a wide range of other university staff, including course leaders, lead mentors, personal academic tutors, link tutors, admission leaders and course administrators.
- The overall lead inspector met remotely with four members of the strategic partnership committee.
- Inspectors met with staff in partner schools and colleges. These included headteachers, senior leaders, professional tutors and mentors.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to the ITE programmes. This information included: subject and phase curriculum documentation; trainees' files, assignments and their records of target setting; assessment documentation and mentoring records; and information relating to the Department for Education's ITT criteria and supporting advice.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to the leadership and management of the partnership. This included the provider's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, quality assurance documents and minutes from meetings of the strategic partnership committee. In addition, inspectors considered surveys from trainees and staff.
- In the early years phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in communication and language including early reading, mathematics and physical development.
- In the primary phase, the focused reviews were in early reading, English, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, history and physical education (PE).
- In the secondary phase, inspectors explored focused reviews in English, mathematics, combined science (biology, chemistry and physics), art and design, modern languages and PE.

- In the FES phase, the inspection team looked at art and design, creative arts, creative industries, SEND (SEND teaching of learners with special needs and English for speakers of other languages), history, horticulture, and travel and tourism.
- Inspectors spoke to 106 trainees and 20 early career teachers or former trainees. The inspection team visited 26 schools or colleges as part of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the responses to staff and trainee surveys.

Early years phase report

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

This provider has high ambition for trainees and aspires for them to make a positive difference to the quality of early years education. Relationships and stakeholder engagement across partnership settings are strong. These contribute to the effective way that university-based learning is interwoven with the practice that trainees gain in their settings. Engaging with academic research also means that trainees understand the theory behind their professional practice.

Course leaders have used their considerable expertise to design training that is bespoke to early years. Overall, trainees are prepared well to teach in this phase and to meet the early years teachers' standards. Emphasis is given to child development and the prime areas of learning. Trainees develop a secure understanding of teaching approaches and how children learn. Trainees are skilled in teaching specific areas of learning such as mathematics. However, there are currently fewer opportunities for trainees to learn deeply about some other specific areas of learning such as understanding the world.

Communication and language are highly prioritised. Trainees learn the important role that they have in interacting with children to support this vital aspect of their development. Along with sounds awareness, trainees know that songs, rhymes and stories pave the way for early reading and phonics. Trainees learn about the theory and rationale that underpin the teaching of phonics and about correct articulation. However, they do not have the opportunity to learn about this aspect of early reading in depth or to gain substantial teaching experience in implementing a systematic synthetic phonics programme in Reception Year.

The provider's well-thought-out assessment processes enable course leaders and university tutors to keep track of trainees' progress. Leaders use this information strategically in partnership with the steering committee to adjust course content. For example, this year they have given greater focus to trainees' knowledge of inclusive practice and behaviour management which has served trainees very well.

Mentors receive timely training and are well informed about the partnership's expectations and course content. Trainees benefit from and value their expertise and guidance. Nevertheless, the provider has rightly identified that some aspects of mentoring are not as effective as they could be. Trainees' targets are not always of high quality. For example, these do not provide a clear enough picture of trainees' strengths and the key priorities for improving their knowledge and practice.

What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the early years phase?

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Some content of the ITE curriculum does not precisely identify what trainees need to learn. This includes some specific areas of learning that trainees should know when teaching in Reception Year. As a result, trainees are not prepared as well as they could be in teaching across the age ranges. The provider should further strengthen the ITE programme to ensure that trainees can develop their knowledge and practice equally well across the breadth of the curriculum, including systematic synthetic phonics in Reception Year.
- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of the mentoring programme, such as the precision of trainees' reflections and some target setting which is too broad. These areas are not always closely matched to the planned ITE curriculum. This can lead to the provider not having an incisive overview of trainees' learning and next steps. The provider should ensure that the mentoring programme fully equips setting-based mentors with the knowledge and expertise to provide high-quality guidance to trainees.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Primary phase report

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

The quality of education and training in the primary phase is exceptional. Leaders' high ambition extends to all trainees who are truly at the heart of this inclusive and highly personalised provision. The inspiring vision is fully realised in the way trainees are so well prepared to begin their careers.

The ITE curriculum for all primary routes is well constructed and sequenced. It fully meets the requirements of the core content framework (CCF) and extends far beyond. High-quality centre-based training is skilfully delivered by experts, utilising the latest educational research. Pertinent content about teachers' professional behaviours is expertly woven into all curriculum content.

Trainees strongly build on the knowledge they acquire in their centre-based training during their school placements. There is absolute clarity and precision in the way school-based tasks deepen trainees' skills and extend their knowledge. This creates a seamless curriculum journey. Subject-specific content skilfully starts from what trainees already know and is then impressively shaped through weekly curriculum overviews, tasks and targets. Trainees know exactly what is expected of them and when.

In the teaching of early reading, trainees are exceptionally well prepared to teach the curriculum content and gain purposeful practice. This includes knowledge about a range of systematic synthetic phonics programmes and an in-depth understanding of the importance of developing pupils' oracy.

There is a strong thread of inclusion running through the entire curriculum. As a result, trainees develop an impressive understanding of how to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND, through subject-specific adaptive teaching. Focused and well-timed tasks ensure trainees accumulate knowledge about pupils' varying needs and the experts they can consult, for example the special educational needs coordinator and other multi-agency professionals.

Trainees are extremely well supported by university tutors and mentors. Relationships are very strong and purposeful because of well-established lines of communication. Mentors are exceptionally well informed about the ITE curriculum and they have access to its plentiful resources. Trainees' school placements are highly relevant and completely align with the curriculum. Ongoing assessment of trainees is thorough with an approach which is expertly tailored around individual trainees' needs.

Quality assurance processes are extensive and highly responsive. Stakeholders' views are sought and acted on in a genuine and valued partnership approach. Rigorous and robust systems are used to routinely examine the trainee experience from every angle and in every aspect.

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 experience the same high-quality curriculum and training as all other trainees. There is careful consideration given to their starting points which ensures that the curriculum builds appropriately on their prior knowledge and skills. The weekly centre-based training aligns exceptionally well with the ongoing school experience and there is appropriately protected time for all apprentices.

Apprentices benefit from robust mentoring processes and well-informed employers. Strong communication across the partnership means that individual apprentices receive the pastoral and academic support that they need. They develop exceptional knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to complete their apprenticeships.

Secondary phase report

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

The provider has an ambitious and inclusive vision for excellence that is fully realised in practice. Trainees benefit from a carefully sequenced and consistently strong curriculum across all routes and subjects. In its design, there is precise subject teaching so that trainees develop an evolving toolkit of pedagogical techniques that they are taught to use judiciously and skilfully.

Trainees move from beginner to expert in their knowledge and skills. They learn how to apply these effectively in the classroom. The ITE curriculum is research informed, with trainees taught to engage critically with their reading. This, coupled with the expert teaching that trainees receive, ensures that trainees passing through the secondary programmes do so confidently. The curriculum fully meets and goes beyond the requirements of the CCF. It ensures that trainees receive a range of broad experiences, including the teaching of pupils with SEND. Therefore, trainees are exceptionally well prepared in knowing how to adapt their teaching to support the different needs of pupils in the classroom.

A significant strength is the highly effective engagement between the provider and the schools within its partnership. The exceptional course design ensures that the school and centre-based training components are carefully woven together to develop trainees' expertise. All stakeholders have a say, and the strong foundational relationships that underpin the partnership help to secure the ongoing strengths in the courses offered.

Mentors are well trained to support the trainees in their care. Leaders ensure that there are careful mechanisms in place to check the experience that trainees receive so that they can take quick and effective action if they need to. This leads to high levels of satisfaction in trainee surveys and from all stakeholders in the partnership. Stakeholders feel confident that the provider listens to them and acts with the best interests of trainees and pupils in mind.

Trainees experience ongoing and highly effective formative assessment. This supports them in knowing what to do to become even stronger practitioners. Mentoring discussions form the heart of trainees' reflective practice and they are supported by expert colleagues to consider their practice in the light of educational research. Visits from university tutors further assess trainees' progress and quality assure the work undertaken in schools. These highly effective systems impact not only on the professional development of the trainees but also that of the colleagues in the placement schools.

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.

The apprenticeship provision is exemplary. The provider has carefully designed a curriculum that expertly supports apprentices to develop knowledge and skills. As well as school placements, apprentices benefit from regular opportunities to reflect and develop their knowledge in university-taught sessions.

Exceptionally well-supported mentoring ensures these two elements thread seamlessly together. Apprentices gain a cohesive and coherent experience that prepares them extremely well for teaching. Excellent communication is the bedrock of this provision. Highly effective systems facilitate all stakeholders to develop apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. These support apprentices to greatly contribute to their workplace and the teaching profession.

Further education and skills phase report

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

The provider is ambitious and aspirational for trainees to become innovative teachers. It ensures their practice is centred on up-to-date educational theories and concepts. Leaders have carefully designed the ITE curriculum based on pertinent educational theories which they have linked closely to the professional standards.

Managers and teachers carefully sequence learning based on three phases: 'emerging, embedding and enhancing'. Tutors closely monitor the development of trainees' knowledge and skills through effective formative assessment. As a result, trainees at different stages of the learning process become increasingly competent and confident teachers.

Most trainees develop their subject-specific skills very well through their own research for assessments and highly effective support from mentors. Trainees become adept at applying relevant and current education theories and strategies to their teaching practices. For example, trainees reflect on how they have adapted behaviourist, humanist and democratic theories to improve learners' engagement.

Trainees demonstrate an assured understanding of the principles of adaptive teaching and how to support learners across a range of capabilities. Trainees learn to teach those with SEND through a range of well-adapted topics and modules. Trainees articulate well how topics on inclusion and digital skills are integrated into their programmes and how this impacts positively on the support for these learners.

Trainees have opportunities to undertake peer review activities in similar settings, courses and levels. However, there are limited opportunities for trainees to visit wider settings or to understand the breadth of opportunities. This means that they are not as well prepared to teach in a range of settings as they could be.

Stakeholders value the effective training partnership. They work collaboratively to share expertise and best practice. The provider gives their partners autonomy which enables partners to purposefully integrate the curriculum to meet the needs of their trainees.

The provider works effectively with partners to monitor the quality of the mentoring programme. Most trainees benefit from high-quality, focused and supportive mentoring that aids their continuous professional development. The provider takes purposeful action with partner colleges where areas for development are identified. However, there is a time lag between when trainees start on the programme and the provider's quality assurance activities. Consequently, not all trainees benefit from effective support and feedback throughout the programme.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Not all trainees have the opportunity to observe training in different settings and the range of levels and capabilities of learners. The partnership must increase the range and breadth of placements and the experiences of the further education sector available to trainees so that they are better prepared to teach in a wide range of providers.
- Some aspects of the recruitment and quality assurance of mentoring are not sufficiently rigorous. Consequently, not all trainees benefit from high-quality support. The provider needs to further develop the rigour of mentor selection to ensure that all trainees experience high-quality and timely feedback. The provider should also ensure that quality assurance activities support trainees to develop their professional and subject teaching skills from the start of their programme.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70005
Inspection number	10332847

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 institute
Phases provided	Early years Primary Secondary FES
Date of previous inspection	23 April and 15 October 2018

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Laura James	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Keeling	His Majesty's Inspector
Emma Leavey	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Mayman	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Pearson	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sackett	His Majesty's Inspector
Sara Staggs	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools and colleges

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

Name	URN	ITE phases
Aldrington Church of England Primary School	114555	Early years
All Saints Church of England Primary School	114491	Early years
Silverdale Primary Academy	141713	Early years
Wallands Community Primary and Nursery School	114405	Early years
Bolnore Village Primary School	150097	Primary
Carden Nursery and Primary School	131789	Primary
Chesswood Junior School	125961	Primary
Harbour Primary and Nursery School	114441	Primary
Hove Junior School	114403	Primary
Patcham Junior School	114372	Primary
Rudyard Kipling Primary School	114486	Primary
St Joseph's Church of England Junior School	143553	Primary
St Lawrence Church of England Primary School	139879	Primary
Western Road Community Primary School	114406	Primary
Woodlands Meed School	136114	Primary
The Angmering School	126081	Secondary
The Cavendish School	138475	Secondary
Davison Church of England High School for Girls	126093	Secondary
King's School	139409	Secondary
Seaford Head School	138473	Secondary
St Oscar Romero Catholic School	126096	Secondary
Steyning Grammar School	148221	Secondary
Bexhill College	130670	FES
Brighton Metropolitan College, part of Chichester College Group	130843	FES
East Sussex College Group	130665	FES
Plumpton College	130667	FES

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