

St Mary's University

St Mary's University, Waldegrave Road, Twickenham TW1 4SX

Inspection dates

13 to 16 May 2024

Inspection judgements

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

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

Trainees said that there was not a scenario they had encountered on school placement that had not already been anticipated and covered in detail by the university. Trainees praise the depth and quality of this exceptionally ambitious ITE curriculum. This includes extensive exploration of early reading in the primary phase. Key concepts, such as cognitive science, are introduced and regularly consolidated. As a result, trainees demonstrate a remarkably strong grasp of how pupils learn. They know how to make helpful adaptations to their teaching so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL) can thrive. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on current, credible research, which shapes all aspects of training and mentoring.

Trainees benefit from first-class levels of support from university staff from the point of application. The rigorous recruitment process considers both trainees' subject knowledge as well as their potential to teach. University staff know trainees as individuals and recognise when they are 'not themselves'. Trainees particularly value learning about how to look after their physical and mental health while on school placement.

All staff expect great things of trainees' academic work, classroom practice and professionalism. Trainees respect and appreciate their tutors' expertise because they say that tutors 'practise what they preach'. Trainees have an incredibly secure understanding of their responsibility to safeguard pupils, including within the contexts of their placement schools.

Information about this ITE provider

- St Mary's University currently has 498 trainees in the primary phase and 141 secondary-phase trainees.
- Trainees in the primary phase can study a three-year undergraduate Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in primary education with qualified teacher status or a one-year postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) route. The university also offers a two-year work-based route in primary education.
- The university works with Wrexham University as a lead partner. Wrexham University delivers the BA primary programme and the PGCE primary course to 89 trainees.
- The secondary phase has trainees on the PGCE route. A small number of trainees are following the School Direct salaried route. The university offers eight subjects in the secondary phase.
- The provider currently has 243 partner schools in the primary phase and 108 partner schools in the secondary phase.
- Almost all schools used for trainee placements are judged good or better by Ofsted for their overall effectiveness.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by seven of His Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the head of the school of education, the head of initial teacher education and the heads and subject leaders for education partnerships. Inspectors also met with the subject leads of the undergraduate BA course in primary education and the undergraduate work-based course as well as the primary and secondary PGCE course leads and subject leaders. Inspectors met with the lead for ITE recruitment.
- Inspectors also met with partners who work with St Mary's University, including members of the strategic partnership board.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders from partnership schools. They held meetings with school-based mentors, trainees and early career teachers.
- Inspectors spoke to 60 trainees in the primary phase and 17 trainees in the secondary phase. They also spoke to 23 early career teachers. Some of these discussions took place remotely.
- In the primary phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading, mathematics, science, physical education, music, computing, religious education and design and technology.
- In the secondary phase, focused reviews took place in English, science, history, languages and physical education.
- Inspectors visited 18 schools in the primary phase and 11 in the secondary phase.
- For both phases, inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for trainees and staff.

Primary phase report

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

University leaders and staff aspire for primary-phase trainees not only to be the best possible class teachers, but also to be school leaders of the future. The university has a clear and exceptionally ambitious intent for the curriculum, which is understood and shared by all stakeholders. Trainees are prepared thoroughly to teach the full national curriculum, regardless of their route into teaching. Highly rigorous curriculum design gives all foundation subjects equal coverage, resulting in trainees being well versed in subject-specific principles from day one of their teaching careers.

Subject tutors and lecturers have strong knowledge and expertise. They have designed a curriculum which highlights the key knowledge and skills that trainees need in each subject. Staff work collaboratively across all subjects in designing and evaluating curriculum content. They routinely check trainees' knowledge and understanding of the taught curriculum, plugging any gaps that arise with promptness and precision. The professional studies team works closely with all subject departments. They make sure that the behaviours and pedagogical understanding required of a teacher form the 'backbone' of the course. This means that trainees develop a deep understanding of how to secure high-quality, inclusive learning. Leaders have also sequenced the programme to ensure that it revisits important topics at key points in trainees' journey to becoming a teacher. The core content framework (CCF) is threaded throughout all aspects of university and school-based training.

Leaders have clearly defined expectations for how up-to-date, pertinent research will contribute to trainees' development. For example, the university provides summaries of the chosen research and signposts both trainees and mentors to these. This not only ensures that mentor meeting discussions are focused and informative, but also exemplifies the university's commitment to keeping course workload realistic. Leaders check the work of school-based mentoring systematically to make sure it aligns with the university-taught programmes. Regular communication between the centre and placement schools brings transparency and coherence to everyone's work. Mentor training is rigorous. For example, it provides mentors with a shared understanding of the university's approach to pedagogical principles such as adaptive teaching and assessment.

Through tutorials and lectures, trainees gain a secure understanding of how pupils learn. In every session, staff model the pedagogies that they want trainees to adopt, helping to make them purposeful and explicit to different contexts and subjects. University staff also sensitively consider how best to organise curriculum content so that the demands of the course remain manageable. An example of this is when staff teach trainees about cognitive overload. Leaders make sure that they break down information into manageable chunks, so that trainees grasp and apply ideas step by step.

The way in which leaders' plan and deliver content about adaptive teaching is exemplary. There are discrete sessions on how to meet the needs of pupils with a variety of SEND and those with EAL. The theory and practice of adaptive teaching is interwoven into every aspect

of the ITE curriculum. Consequently, trainees have an exceptional understanding of inclusion and the absolute importance of making appropriate adaptations so that all pupils can succeed.

Staff are research informed and have an in depth understanding of the importance of early reading and systematic synthetic phonics. They have carefully mapped out essential theory and early reading content so that trainees on every route get an equally comprehensive offer.

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 designed an exceedingly ambitious curriculum in all respects. Prior to enrolment, leaders check trainees' subject knowledge thoroughly. They provide the help that trainees need to build on this incrementally over the course. Subject curriculums are rigorous and introduce trainees to a wide range of contemporary and relevant academic literature. The content extends beyond the statutory CCF. For example, in physical education, trainees gain a detailed understanding of how to develop pupils' motor skills, and their understanding of game strategies and tactics over time. Another example is in science, where careful curriculum design means that trainees develop deep knowledge of the disciplinary aspects of the subject.

The professional studies and subject specialist courses align in a highly logical and purposeful manner, so that important concepts, such as adaptive teaching, are taught thoroughly and revisited regularly. Events such as the 'Diversity café' help to solidify trainees' understanding of inclusive practice. Staff regularly check trainees' grasp of taught content and address any misconceptions. As a result, trainees in all subjects are exceptionally well prepared for their career in teaching.

Leaders work seamlessly with placement schools so that trainees continue to build their subject and pedagogical knowledge and skills. Trainees learn to be highly reflective practitioners who critically consider the impact of their pedagogy on pupils' progress. Trainees are taught to present information to pupils clearly so that it builds on prior learning. Right from the start of their school placements, trainees appreciate the importance of checking that pupils can recall key concepts. The university also prepares trainees to uphold the highest expectations in class. For example, the curriculum emphasises the importance of building positive professional relationships between trainees and pupils from the outset.

Leaders provide high-quality training for the school-based mentoring programme. The university also communicates with placement schools frequently and concisely. This supports mentoring to provide timely and effective guidance to trainees throughout their placements. University link tutors continually check the standard and usefulness of mentoring. Tutors visit schools regularly to make sure that trainees have the best experience possible. Mentoring guidance is fully informed by the central curriculum that trainees follow. Those involved in mentoring understand their significant role in enhancing trainees' knowledge and skills in line with this programme. For example, mentoring uses pertinent research as a springboard for purposeful and reflective weekly discussion. Trainees and recent graduates of the course said that they felt exceptionally well prepared for the professional demands of their first years in teaching. Many trainees advance to leadership positions in local schools shortly after qualifying.

Leaders are continually mindful of workload for both trainees and school-based mentors. For example, leaders recently streamlined course assignments to further reduce trainees'

workload. This is just one example of how leaders adopt a resolute and responsive approach to making sure that the ITE curriculum is sensitive to trainees' needs and provides them with the best possible all-round start to a teaching career.

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	70120
Inspection number	10327506

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 April and 3 December 2018

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, Overall lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Guy Forbat, Phase lead inspector (secondary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Aliki Constantopoulou, Phase lead inspector (primary)	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam Hainey	His Majesty's Inspector
Emily Henry	Ofsted Inspector
Carrie MacMillan	Ofsted Inspector
Kate O'Shaughnessy	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Rawlings	His Majesty's Inspector
Adam Vincent	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Wright	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
Latchmere School	138689	Primary
Ecclesbourne Primary School	136566	Primary
Feltham Hill Infant and Nursery School	102484	Primary
Hounslow Heath School	150224	Primary
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School	102916	Primary
Orleans Primary School	102895	Primary
Hampton Infant School and Nursery	102888	Primary
The Vineyard School	102906	Primary
The Blue School	102523	Primary
Collis Primary School	102903	Primary
St Mary's C of E Primary School	102914	Primary
Chase Bridge Primary School	102905	Primary
Dorchester Primary School	102982	Primary
Oaklands School	102555	Primary
Marshgate Primary School	133728	Primary
Heathfield Infant School	102891	Primary
Nelson Primary School	145122	Primary
St Mary's and St Peter's Church of England Primary School	102917	Primary
Ricards Lodge High School	102673	Secondary
Orleans Park School	138651	Secondary
Sacred Heart School	137935	Secondary
Saint Cecilia's School	141808	Secondary
Isleworth and Syon School for boys	137940	Secondary
Nishkam School	137940	Secondary
Salesian School	143367	Secondary
Twyford Church of England School	137546	Secondary
Twickenham School	143420	Secondary
Richmond Park Academy	136208	Secondary
Holy Cross School	138459	Secondary

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