

University of Northumbria

Coach Lane Campus, Coach Lane, Benton, Newcastle NE7 7XA

Inspection dates

20 May to 23 May 2024

Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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| The quality of education and training | Good |
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| Leadership and management | Good |
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| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |
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What is it like to be a trainee at this ITE provider?

The university provides trainees with the skills and the knowledge that they need to become successful teachers. Leaders ensure that trainees receive training on how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Primary trainees learn about the importance of phonics and its role in supporting early reading. Overall, trainees are well prepared to teach in a variety of school contexts. Most trainees develop a sound understanding of how to teach their subjects in the primary and secondary phases. A small number of secondary trainees are less well prepared. Leaders are taking action to improve provision for these trainees.

Leaders at the university have established high expectations for trainees and for partner schools. These expectations are lived out in practice in most settings. Where there is some variation, for example in mentorship, leaders take action to address this. Trainees receive a largely connected experience across university and school settings. Trainees apply the training they receive at university to their school-based experiences. This helps to deepen their understanding of how theory and research works in practice. This includes their awareness of how to adapt their teaching to better support pupils with SEND.

Leaders ensure that trainees are listened to and that wherever possible, their views are acted on. Trainees feel that they can rely on their guidance tutors for support, both professionally and personally. This support is instrumental in meeting the individual needs of trainees and is a strength of the university's provision.

Information about this ITE provider

- In the 2023/2024 academic year, the University of Northumbria has 369 trainees. Nineteen trainees are in the secondary phase and 350 trainees are in the primary phase.
- There are 271 trainees on the primary undergraduate route and 79 trainees on the primary post graduate route. Nineteen trainees follow the secondary postgraduate route. The primary postgraduate routes are delivered through the university or a School Direct fee-paid route. The secondary postgraduate route is delivered through a School Direct fee-paid route.
- Of the 98 trainees on primary and secondary postgraduate routes, 63 follow the School Direct route.
- In the partnership, there are 225 schools, with inspection judgements ranging from outstanding to inadequate. Partnership schools are located across 15 local authorities.
- In 2023/2024, secondary trainees were enrolled on the following subject courses: art, craft and design, chemistry, English, mathematics, computing and geography.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team was made up of four of His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the ITE leader and programme leaders for the undergraduate, postgraduate and School Direct routes. They met with curriculum leaders, including staff seconded from partnership schools. They also met with those responsible for quality assurance, safeguarding and student well-being.
- Inspectors spoke with 43 trainees in partnership schools and 14 early career teachers who had trained at the University of Northumbria.
- The inspectors conducted focused reviews in the following subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, geography, history, art and design and languages.
- Inspectors visited 11 schools over the course of the inspection. They spoke remotely with trainees and staff from other schools across the partnership.
- Information from trainee and staff inspection surveys were also considered by inspectors.

What does the ITE provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have planned a curriculum that prepares trainees to be effective practitioners. Important aspects of the curriculum, such as safeguarding and behaviour, are foregrounded to prepare students for their initial school placements. The full breadth of the core content framework is woven through trainees' experience.

Some curriculum subjects that trainees study are more developed than others. Leaders have well-considered plans to address any inconsistencies between different parts of the curriculum. Most trainees develop the knowledge that they need to teach their chosen subjects confidently. All primary trainees have opportunities to teach phonics in their placement schools. However, mentors do not get the right information about some of their trainees' subject-specific training. This limits their ability to reinforce some elements of the central training.

Course leaders' commitment to educational research impacts positively on the development of the courses that trainees study. University staff and expert colleagues provide trainees with insight into this important research. For example, leaders involve social care colleagues and use associated research in training activities to deepen trainees' understanding of safeguarding. Equally, opportunities for trainees to engage in other simulated experiences, for example working with parents, prepare them well for their future teaching roles.

Trainees gain a well-informed understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND and who speak English as an additional language. Trainees consistently draw on their learning to meet the needs of these pupils. By the end of their training, trainees are aware of a variety of needs and how to support pupils in different subjects. Course leaders ensure that trainees experience a variety of placements to broaden their awareness of different settings and key stages. A very small number of trainees have not had the breadth of experience needed to prepare them well enough for the profession.

Most trainees are well prepared for their teaching careers. Guidance tutors receive high-quality training to support groups of trainees. This has a very positive impact on trainees' professional development. Leaders largely use quality assurance processes well to identify any inconsistencies in provision for individual trainees and to take very effective action to address this when it occurs. However, the provider is less effective in collating the wider messages from these assurance processes to inform future improvement. Some expectations of the role of mentors in supporting trainees are not communicated as clearly as they could be. This leads to some variation in the quality of mentoring that trainees receive, for example when reviewing trainees' progress and setting targets.

The university is guided by its moral purpose to support education in the region. Headteachers are consistently positive about the quality of trainees from the University of Northumbria. Many appoint trainees to their staff teams because they are well prepared to begin their careers. Early career teachers who have been trained at the University of Northumbria are equally positive about their experiences and how well prepared they are to meet the demands of the profession. Leaders are effective in supporting trainees into teaching. This commitment to remove barriers inspires trainees to do the same for the pupils that they teach.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- There is some variation in how well quality assurance processes are used to identify any patterns in the quality of experience that trainees receive. Some inconsistencies in trainees' experience are not fully identified. The university should make sure that the assurance processes are strengthened so that they can fully address any areas of improvement.
- Some aspects of mentor training do not support mentors as fully as they could. Therefore, the quality of mentoring can be inconsistent for some trainees. Leaders should ensure that training and communication supports mentoring to be fully effective for all trainees.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE provider details

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| Unique reference number | 70125 |
| Inspection number | 10319200 |

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.

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| Type of ITE provider | Higher education institution |
| Phases provided | Primary and secondary combined |
| Date of previous inspection | 23 April and 7 November 2018 |

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jen Sloan, Lead Inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Adrian Fearn | Ofsted Inspector |
| Dughall McCormick | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Julie McGrane | Ofsted Inspector |
| Katherine Spurr | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Lesley Sullivan | His Majesty's Inspector |

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

| Name | URN | ITE phases |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| The Kings Academy | 134223 | Secondary |
| Nunthorpe Academy | 138845 | Secondary |
| Holywell Village First School | 122195 | Secondary |
| Ponteland Primary | 145780 | Primary |
| Sele First School | 122242 | Primary |
| The Drive Community Primary | 108361 | Primary |
| King's Priory School | 139658 | Primary |
| Richardson Dees Primary School | 108596 | Primary |
| Beaconhill Community Primary | 122193 | Primary |
| Knop Law Primary School | 150327 | Primary |
| Backworth Primary School | 108580 | Primary |

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