

Loughborough University

Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough LE11 3TU

Inspection dates

10 to 13 June 2024

Inspection judgements

Secondary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education and training

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

Trainees describe how 'brilliant it is to sit in the university and learn'. They form strong, mutually respectful relationships with their tutors. Trainees feel tutors' passion for education is infectious. The personal and academic support that trainees value so highly often forms the basis of long-term relationships with the university. Former trainees are effusive in their praise and say that once you have completed your training, you will 'always be part of the Loughborough University family'.

The quality of training at the university and in placement schools is exceptional. Trainees and mentors consistently comment on the clarity and quality of communication across the partnership. Trainees become critically reflective teachers who understand how they can improve throughout their careers. They develop excellent theoretical and practical understanding related to their subjects. Trainees are well prepared to become, as one stakeholder commented, 'The curriculum movers and shakers of the future.'

Course leaders are committed to nurturing inclusive and caring practitioners. Trainees' secure knowledge in relation to teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language is an impressive testament to one way in which these ambitious aims are achieved.

Mentors provide expert support and guidance to trainees. One of the distinctive elements of the partnership is the way in which mentors and ITE coordinators in placement schools develop their own practice, using the expertise of colleagues at the university.

Information about this ITE provider

- Loughborough University currently has 61 secondary trainees.
- All trainees study for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. A small number of trainees follow a School Direct (non-salaried) route. Trainees follow the same centre-based curriculum, regardless of route.
- The provider has 55 partnership schools in the secondary phase. The Ofsted inspection judgements of partners schools that have placed trainees this year range from outstanding to requires improvement.
- Trainees specialise in either mathematics or physical education (PE).

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by three of His Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the director of teacher education, the partnership manager, programme leaders and module leaders in mathematics and PE. Inspectors also met with the pro-vice chancellor for education and student experience, the associate dean for education and student experience and the head of programme quality and teaching partnerships.
- In addition, inspectors spoke with school-based staff, including headteachers, training coordinators and mentors. Inspectors held discussions with members of the partnership committee, which includes staff from across the partnership, and met with one of the programme's external examiners.
- Focused reviews were carried out in mathematics and PE.
- Inspectors visited nine partnership schools. They met with 23 trainees and 10 early career teachers.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for initial teacher education for trainees and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the provider's documents, including improvement plans, curriculum plans and resources, trainees' assignments and portfolios and self-evaluation documentation.

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

The training course at Loughborough University is outstanding. The curriculum is ambitious and precisely designed so that trainees develop a sophisticated understanding of teaching and education theory. Trainees understand exactly how to apply this understanding to their practice in school. The course goes beyond the core content framework, providing trainees with an excellent grounding in the requirements of teaching, including in upholding the highest standards of professionalism.

The curriculum has been constructed by those at the forefront of educational research who have worked with experts nationally and internationally and who have sought the views of

colleagues working in schools and classrooms every day. Trainees benefit from a course which is taught seamlessly across the university- and school-based elements. School leaders provide personalised opportunities which enable trainees to experience, in schools, the broader theoretical concepts they have learned as part of the university's general professional studies module. Trainees develop as subject-specialist teachers with a clear sense of their own professional identity as thoughtful and caring practitioners. For example, PE trainees learn from expert bodies, such as the Lawn Tennis Association, and apply the knowledge they acquire to their teaching.

Trainees receive high-quality guidance and developmental targets about how to improve from the moment they gain a place on the course. Their understanding of the curriculum is checked regularly, including during university sessions, mentor meetings and through the completion of assignments. Trainees receive the advice they need to improve. For example, personal academic tutors provide a range of bespoke advice, including in relation to subject knowledge development.

Leaders take a forensic approach to reviewing the quality of the course. They are relentless in their pursuit of refinements, which will make a meaningful difference to trainees who already benefit from an exceptional offer. Leaders know that excellent teaching can have far reaching consequences for the pupils in a school and society as a whole. It is with this in mind that leaders identify priorities and take effective action to improve the course. For example, leaders made improvements to the lesson planning process, which supported trainees to be reflective about their practice, at the same time as reducing trainees' and mentors' workloads.

Highly effective mentors play an integral role in helping trainees to be very well prepared for their careers in teaching. Trainees consistently report high levels of satisfaction with the quality of mentoring. Mentors understand precisely how their work aligns with the university curriculum. They use weekly meetings to successfully encourage trainees to reflect and develop the skills to improve their practice throughout their careers.

Trainees develop a deep understanding of how pupils learn, including pupils with SEND. They plan and teach sequences of lessons which are skilfully tailored to meet the needs of the pupils in their classes. Nothing is left to chance. Mentors receive vital information about trainees' knowledge and experiences. This enables them to design bespoke timetables for trainees that address any areas where they have less experience, for example teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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	70042
Inspection number	10326230

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 Institution
Phases provided	Secondary
Dates of previous inspection	23 April and 1 October 2018

Inspection team

Matthew Fearn-Davies, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rakesh Patel	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Tordoff	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
Beauchamp College	139624	Secondary
East Leake Academy	138964	Secondary
Heath Lane Academy	138327	Secondary
Rushcliffe Spencer Academy	138482	Secondary
The Fernwood School	136724	Secondary
The Kimberley School	138641	Secondary
The Queen Elizabeth Academy	139937	Secondary
Wigston Academy	137984	Secondary
Woodbrook Vale School	137401	Secondary

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