

Oxford Brookes University

School of Education, Humanities and Languages, Harcourt Hill Campus, Oxford OX2 9AT

Inspection dates

13 to 16 January 2025

Inspection judgements

Primary age-phase

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

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

The experience for trainees has transformed since the last inspection. Trainees value the first-class support they receive at Oxford Brookes University. Dedicated staff look after trainees well and seek the very best for each trainee. The provider's values of character, equity and inclusion are at the heart of this. If a trainee needs support, staff are on hand right away. Trainees are happy and proud to learn in such a nurturing environment.

Trainees benefit from a thoroughly planned curriculum that prepares them for their first teaching post effectively. Trainees experience diverse school placements which enrich their knowledge of educating children in modern Britain. This includes exploring life in a small village school to working with pupils in specialist provision. As a result of the carefully crafted curriculum, trainees know how to keep children safe, how to run an effective classroom and how to cater for pupils with additional needs.

Leaders ensure that trainees master early on how to teach pupils to read by using a suitable systematic synthetic phonics programme. As well as learning to teach the national curriculum, trainees are immersed in what it is like to be a primary school teacher. Together, the provider and partnership schools strive for trainees to have a long-lasting teaching career.

Information about this ITE provider

- Since the last inspection, Oxford Brookes now solely offers primary-phase teacher training. Trainees can either study a Bachelor of Arts (BA) (Honours) undergraduate degree in primary teacher education leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) or a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE). In the 2024/25 academic year, there were 186 trainees. This comprised 158 undergraduate and 28 postgraduate trainees.
- The provider is also accredited in offering an assessment only route. This is open to unqualified teachers working in primary, secondary or special schools. This academic year, there have so far been three entrants to this route to QTS.
- The provider works with 125 partner schools across Oxfordshire and other neighbouring local authorities. Nearly all were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection.
- For the start of the 2025/26 academic year, Oxford Brookes is in the process of moving its teacher training provision from Harcourt Hill to its Headington campus.

Information about this inspection

- This was a reinspection and was carried out by four of His Majesty's Inspectors.
- During this inspection, inspectors held meetings with the head of the school of education, humanities and languages; the programme lead for initial teacher training (ITT); and other leaders with oversight of ITE programmes. The lead inspector met with some members of the partnership advisory group.
- Inspectors held meetings with a wide range of other university staff, including course leaders, lead mentors and admission leaders.
- Inspectors met with staff in partner schools. These included headteachers, senior leaders and teacher mentors.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to the ITE programmes. This information included subject and phase curriculum documentation, course handbooks, trainees' portfolios, assignments and their records of target setting, assessment documentation and mentoring records, and information relating to the DfE'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 partnership advisory group. In addition, inspectors considered surveys from trainees and staff.
- In the primary phase, the focused reviews were in early reading, mathematics, science, computing, design and technology and physical education.
- Inspectors spoke to 22 trainees and eight early career teachers. The inspection team visited eight schools as part of the inspection.

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

Leaders at Oxford Brookes University have brought about improvements with a relentless pace of change. This has led to a marked improvement in the quality of education and training for the next generation of teachers. Headteachers in the partnership schools describe a 'reset' for the better and an equal partnership. Leaders work collaboratively with partnership schools to train and recruit dedicated primary practitioners who want to make a difference to children's lives.

The refreshed ITE curriculum is highly ambitious. It is firmly rooted in the core content framework and covers well both core and foundation subjects. Trainees learn content in a logical way so that they are ready to apply their knowledge on their teaching placements. They learn from insightful and passionate subject leaders who help deconstruct educational theory. As a result, trainees can apply what they learn about at the university to their teaching in a primary classroom.

Within the curriculum, leaders select purposeful content for the intensive training and practice (ITAP) elements. For example, the climate for learning ITAP is set at the start of the programme so that trainees quickly learn how to establish culture, high expectations and relationships with pupils.

For the placement-based training, teacher mentors are clear about what trainees need to know and master. The curriculum booklets and weekly bulletins provide the consistency needed across all partnership schools. Trainees' academic assignments and tasks help them successfully apply their centre-based training to the realities of teaching. Trainees benefit from a well-structured reflective process that helps them to think deeply about their development as a teacher.

Leaders prioritise strongly the teaching of early reading. Trainees learn about and practise how to teach the different parts of a phonics programme so that pupils quickly become fluent readers. Trainees also recognise how important it is to regularly read stories aloud to deepen pupils' vocabulary and understanding. A strength within the ITE curriculum is how the latest educational research informs trainees' subject and teaching knowledge. This includes approaches to revisiting pupils' prior learning and adaptive teaching strategies which are ambitious for all pupils.

The provider's rigorous quality assurance checks are now forensic. Leaders have a clear handle on strengths and key priorities for the year ahead. The work on improving and checking the impact of mentoring now results in a more joined-up approach. Teacher mentors identify improved communication that helps to keep trainees on track in their learning and practice. The trainee progress profile helps guide the assessment of trainees. It ensures that the trainee, the placement school and the provider are clear about trainees' strengths and next developmental steps. Leaders recognise that there are still areas of inconsistency as important changes settle in and that the impact of some improvements to the curriculum are not yet fully realised.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Within some aspects of the planned ITE curriculum, implementation is at an early stage. This means the intended impact is not yet fully seen in trainees' overall achievement. The provider should continue with enacting its robust plans and quality assurance processes so that all aspects of trainees' professional practice are consistently strong.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70008
Inspection number	10362911

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
Dates of previous inspection	26 to 29 February 2024

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Joanna Brinkley	His Majesty's Inspector
Harry Ingham	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Sackett	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
Combe Church of England Primary School	123116	Primary
John Blandy Primary School	140307	Primary
John Henry Newman Academy	138774	Primary
North Leigh Church of England School	142152	Primary
St John Fisher Catholic Primary School	139480	Primary
St Mary and St John Church of England Primary School	123213	Primary
St Nicolas Church of England Primary School	123166	Primary
Windale Primary School	146381	Primary

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