

# University College Birmingham ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 22–24 June 2015 Stage 2: 23–25 November 2015

---

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty’s Inspectors, in accordance with the ‘Initial teacher education inspection handbook’. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2015.

The inspection draws on evidence from the primary phase to make judgements against all parts of the evaluation schedule. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees.

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is requires improvement; grade 4 is inadequate

	<b>Primary QTS</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	2
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	2
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	2
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	2

## The primary phase

### Information about the primary partnership

- University College Birmingham offers three routes towards qualified teacher status (QTS) in primary education: the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), the School Direct (SD) training route and an assessment only route.
- PGCE trainees specialise in either the 3 to 7 or 5 to 11 age range.
- The partnership works with 121 schools and early years settings, including special schools, in a range of locations in the Birmingham area.

### Information about the primary ITE inspection

- The same two inspectors carried out this inspection at both stages.
- At stage one they visited five schools. Inspectors observed the teaching of 12 trainees across all three routes, in most cases jointly with the school-based mentors. Inspectors also looked at trainees' files to evaluate how well they met the teachers' standards. They held discussions with trainees, mentors and headteachers in schools. At the university, meetings were held with university tutors, programme leaders, university lecturers, partnership leaders and the Dean of School Education and Community. The team took into account the responses to the newly qualified teacher (NQT) survey and the 31 responses from trainees to Ofsted's online survey.
- During stage two, inspectors visited eight schools. They observed seven NQTs teach. The induction targets of the NQTs were considered. Discussions were held with headteachers, induction tutors, one school-based mentor and eight NQTs. Discussions were held at the university with leaders and managers, five NQTs and four partnership leaders.
- A wide range of information was taken into account, including the partnership improvement plan, self-evaluation, tracking and assessment information, NQT induction targets, the partnership's analysis of trainee outcomes, evidence of the compliance with statutory safeguarding and initial teacher training requirements, training documentation and information in relation to recruitment and selection procedures. Inspectors also took account of the 36 responses to the Ofsted online trainee questionnaire and the NQT survey.

### Inspection team

Ann Henderson HMI	lead inspector
Deana Holdaway HMI	team inspector

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

### The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- All trainees exceed the minimum level of practice expected of teachers at the end of their training. Their personal and professional development is consistently good.
- Employment rates are high.
- Recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous.
- Personal tutors provide good support to trainees, which enables them to sustain their training even when difficulties and personal issues arise. This is greatly valued by trainees.
- A wide range of training placements are offered to trainees, including two weeks' experience of teaching in special schools. Trainees speak highly of this invaluable experience. They have a good understanding of teaching pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.
- Trainees have a good understanding of teaching pupils whose first language is not English. Their knowledge of equality and diversity is strong.
- Trainees and NQTs have a well-developed understanding of how to keep children safe in education. They manage pupils' behaviour well.
- Leaders and managers are committed to providing effective training programmes which support trainees in developing good teaching skills. They aspire to increase the proportion of trainees who become outstanding teachers.

### What does the primary partnership need to do to improve further?

#### The partnership should:

- Further increase the proportions of trainees completing their training and whose teaching is outstanding at the end of their training, by:
  - ensuring that all trainees are given clear and helpful targets to improve the effectiveness of their teaching, both throughout their training and in preparation for their induction as NQTs
  - increasing the precision of the partnership's self-evaluation, using a wider range of information to pinpoint the most important priorities for development
  - ensuring that targets set in the partnership improvement plan are precise and measurable, identify suitable timescales and are evaluated critically to determine their effectiveness

- monitoring rigorously the impact of actions taken in response to identified areas for improvement.

## **Inspection judgements**

1. The overall effectiveness of the partnership is good. Leaders and managers responded well to the outcomes of stage one of the inspection and improvements are underway, particularly in relation to ensuring more consistent mentoring support for trainees.
2. Trainees and NQTs are positive about their training. Many select University College Birmingham because the provider is small. Trainees unanimously agree that their personal tutors know them well and provide them with personalised individual support. They are confident that the training they receive, both at the university and through their placements has enabled them to develop effective teaching skills. All trainees who complete their training exceed the minimum standards they need in order to be awarded qualified teacher status. The teaching of the vast majority of trainees and NQTs is good and some is outstanding. The proportion of trainees who complete their training dipped in 2013/14 but is now in line with sector averages. Employment rates are high.
3. Headteachers are positive about the quality of NQTs they employ from the university. They say that NQTs are well prepared for their teaching roles and responsibilities. Headteachers and induction tutors say that NQTs are reflective and responsive to the feedback they receive and all are eager to continually improve their practice.
4. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate high levels of personal and professional conduct. Their training provides them with a thorough knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities to secure equality of opportunity, ensure the prevention of extremism and safeguard the welfare of the pupils they teach. NQTs display a good understanding of their role in promoting British values. They are clear about their role to promote tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, develop pupils' understanding of democracy and ensure pupils are involved in making decisions.
5. The partnership between the university and partner schools is good. Contrasting placements enable trainees to successfully teach pupils in schools that have been judged by Ofsted to require improvement as well as schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances. Considerable use is made of the expertise in partner schools. Partnership leaders are eager to provide the best possible experience for trainees, to enable them to become at least good teachers. They plan and deliver effective training and offer specific areas of expertise, providing opportunities for trainees to observe high quality teaching, for example in physical education, phonics (the sounds letters make) and forest schools.

6. The three routes into teaching offered by the partnership provide trainees with a range of options into the teaching profession. Candidates on the assessment-only route welcome the improvements made to the grading system, giving them opportunities to demonstrate good and outstanding achievement in line with trainees on the PGCE and SD routes.
7. There are a number of unique features to the PGCE programme. The partnership includes a number of special schools. Headteachers of these schools offer trainees an enhanced two-week placement to observe high quality teaching. Trainees speak with enthusiasm about this experience which they and NQTs agree is a valuable and very beneficial experience. It provides them with effective opportunities to develop their understanding of teaching disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Many choose to begin their teaching career in special schools. Those teaching in mainstream schools gain much from this opportunity too; it enables them to effectively plan and deliver lessons which are well-matched to the learning needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is a strength of the university provision.
8. Both PGCE and SD trainees also enjoy the 'legacy projects'. These short-term projects, at the end of PGCE trainees' first placement and SD trainees' alternative placement, support trainees' wider curriculum knowledge and development. Projects such as enhancing outdoor play provision, creating videos for schools to share with parents during open days, and developing outdoor garden areas, aid trainees' team working skills and provide them with the opportunity to leave a particularly memorable piece of project work at the school. Headteachers value these projects and trainees and NQTs say that pupils develop new learning skills during this project work.
9. Trainees are well-prepared to teach pupils whose first language is not English. Their skills in managing pupils' behaviour are strong. They have a good understanding of how to deal with issues of bullying, including homophobic and prejudice-based bullying. University-based training provides a good basis for further learning in school placements.
10. Trainees develop effective skills in teaching early reading and mathematics, which are further developed during their school placements. Checks of trainees' subject knowledge in English, mathematics and science take place at the start of their training. Further checks throughout the training identify trainees who need to improve their subject knowledge. They are directed toward resources and further reading to increase their understanding. Final checks at the end of the training programme make sure that the subject knowledge of all trainees is secure. This was evident in the observations inspectors carried out at stage two of the inspection.

11. Trainees' attainment is good. This is because the training they receive is good. NQTs teach well-structured lessons. They have a good understanding of the different learning needs of the pupils they teach and plan lessons which cater appropriately for their learning, matching activities and tasks that are well-suited to pupils' abilities. Trainees and NQTs make effective use of a range of resources, including interactive white boards. Most NQTs make effective use of additional adults during lessons. Relationships between trainees and pupils, and those between NQTs and pupils, are good.
12. The quality of support provided by university link tutors and school-based mentors is generally good, but varies in quality. Although areas for development are identified by mentors and tutors, following lesson observations, they are not always followed up rigorously at subsequent observations. The targets set for trainees to help them to improve their teaching are not specific enough, including their transition targets at the end of their training. Targets are vague and do not make it clear how their success will be measured, for example in terms of outcomes for pupils. They do not provide precise timescales to help trainees and NQTs know when improvements are expected to be achieved. This slows the progress of some trainees.
13. The leadership and management of the partnership is good. Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to improve outcomes for trainees. Effective systems are in place to make sure the trainees recruited to the programmes are suited to teaching and have the potential to become at least good teachers. Partnership leaders take an active role in the recruitment process. Trainees know that the range of activities during the interview process is designed to check their abilities and aptitude for teaching. The proportion of trainees reaching the highest level at the end of their training increased in 2014/15.
14. Although leaders and managers are dedicated to work in close partnership with placement schools, their vision for excellence has not been conveyed clearly enough. As a result, there is a lack of clarity about how improvements will be achieved. For instance, there is a clear commitment to increase the proportion of trainees who become outstanding teachers, but how this will be achieved is not communicated well enough. Partnership leaders are not routinely involved in monitoring and evaluating the provision or contributing to identify the most important areas for improvement. Currently, targets for development are not specific. It is unclear how the success of the improvement plan will be measured.
15. Following stage one of the inspection, a number of emerging areas for improvement were identified. The partnership responded quickly; leaders and managers devised a new improvement plan but it is unclear how the plan will be monitored in order to check the impact of the actions taken.

16. The variability in the quality of mentoring support was one aspect identified at the end of stage one. Planned improvements in mentoring support for trainees are underway. For current mentors, a revised programme of training and support has been devised by leaders at a partnership school. This is currently being piloted in the School Direct programme. Best practice videos of mentor feedback to trainees are helping to improve the quality and consistency of mentors' support to trainees. Mentors are now provided with clear guidance and prompts to support their weekly meetings with trainees. Expectations have been raised. For example, all mentors are now expected to provide feedback to trainees on the quality of pupils' progress seen during lesson observations. This demonstrates a strong capacity for further improvement.
17. The assessment of trainees is checked effectively through a systematic moderation process. As a result, the partnership's judgement of trainees at the end of their training is accurate. There is a clear commitment to provide further support to NQTs during their first year of teaching. University tutors have begun to visit them in their schools. NQTs welcome the range of formal and informal opportunities for them to share ideas and network together, attend conferences and gain on-going support from the university. Currently, leaders and managers do not routinely gather information from induction tutors about the progress of the NQTs, which would help them to identify any further priorities for improvement to the training programmes or professional development needs of NQTs.
18. Leaders and managers ensure the partnership is compliant with all the initial teacher training requirements. The partnership meets all the relevant safeguarding requirements, including those in relation to equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and newly qualified teachers' (NQTs') teaching:

### **Stage 1**

Chad Vale Primary School, Edgbaston  
Devonshire Infant Academy, Smethwick  
Great Barr Primary School, Great Barr  
Langley School, Sutton Coldfield  
Stechford Primary School, Stechford

### **Stage 2**

Alston Primary School, Bordersley Green  
Beaufort School, Hodge Hill  
Chilwell Croft Academy, Newtown

Colebourne Primary School, Hodge Hill  
Princethorpe Infant School and Nursery, Weoley Castle  
Springfield House Community Special School, Solihull  
Streetsbrook Infant and Nursery School, Solihull  
Tudor Grange Primary Academy, Solihull



## ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70159
Inspection number	10004308
Inspection dates	Stage 1 22–24 June 2015
	Stage 2 23–25 November 2015
Lead inspector	Ann Henderson HMI
Type of ITE partnership	HEI
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	16–19 March 2009
Previous inspection report	<a href="http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70159">http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70159</a>

Provider address	University College Birmingham Summer Row Birmingham B3 1LB
------------------	---



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2016