

Bedfordshire Schools' Training Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates Stage 1: 9–11 June 2014

Stage 2: 29 September–1 October 2014

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors in accordance with the *ITE Inspection Handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from June 2014.

The inspection draws upon evidence from each separate route within the ITE partnership 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

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

The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The Bedfordshire Schools' Training Partnership (formerly known as the North Bedfordshire Consortium) is a well-established provider of school-centred initial teacher training in the secondary phase. Partnership schools are mainly in Luton, Bedford and the surrounding regions. The partnership currently comprises 19 schools and works across four local authorities.
- The partnership offers three different full-time, one-year routes leading to the award of qualified teacher status (QTS):
 - the core programme, which includes academic assessments that lead to the award of a Professional Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE)
 - the School Direct route, which centres on two teaching school alliances and includes academic assignments that lead to the award of a PGCE
 - the School Direct (salaried) route.The partnership also offers an Assessment Only route for suitably experienced candidates. PGCE awards are validated by the University of Bedfordshire.
- At Stage 1 of the inspection:
 - trainees on the core programme were training in one of seven subjects: art, biology, drama, geography, history, mathematics and music
 - trainees on the School Direct programme were training in one of 10 subjects: biology, chemistry, drama, English, geography, history, mathematics, music, modern languages and psychology
 - trainees on the School Direct (salaried) programme were training in art, biology, English, mathematics, media and modern languages.
- Training for media, drama and psychology focuses on the 14–19 age range. Training for all other subjects focuses on the 11–16 age range.
- At Stage 1 of the inspection, there were 10 trainees on the core programme, 30 on the School Direct programme and eight on the School Direct (salaried) programme. All 48 of these trainees completed their training successfully. A sample of these former trainees were observed during Stage 2 of the inspection.
- A training route for teaching in the primary phase, introduced in September 2014, did not form part of this inspection.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed the teaching of seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and seven trainees. They held discussions with a further seven trainees in schools and in the training centre, including one trainee who was on an Assessment Only route.
- Inspectors held meetings with the partnership's managers, including members of the Partnership Committee, as well as headteachers, school-based ITE coordinators, induction tutors and subject mentors.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with senior staff in two schools where trainees were undergoing their second school placement.
- Inspectors scrutinised evidence relating to the training and assessment of trainees, together with a wide range of documentation supplied by the partnership's managers.
- Inspectors took account of survey responses from recent NQTs and 27 trainees towards the end of their training year (17 on the School Direct route, seven on the core programme, and three on the School Direct (salaried) route).

Inspection Team

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Lead inspector
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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- trainees' high employment rates that are well supported by managers' excellent awareness of local needs
- trainees' strong personal qualities, such as their excellent ability to review their own teaching, which help them to respond effectively to advice and build their professional skills
- the good communication between placement schools, and between the partnership and the employing school, that ensures training over time is effective and never loses momentum
- the very effective training in behaviour management that enables trainees to know, and apply successfully, a range of strategies to promote good behaviour in the classroom

- the strong focus on the Teachers' Standards, in training and in feedback, that helps trainees to build a broad range of expertise quickly and effectively
- leaders' and managers' close knowledge of partnership schools that helps them to track how well trainees are progressing and to respond quickly when problems are identified.

What does the secondary partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

- ensure that the additional training planned has a positive impact on trainees' ability to develop pupils' literacy skills, including in extended writing
- ensure that subject-specific feedback on teaching, and an additional emphasis on up-to-date reading, contribute to trainees having a better overview of effective subject pedagogy
- improve completion rates so that they are more consistently above the national figures
- improve the quality of school-based mentoring, in the small minority of schools where it is weaker, so that more matches that of the best.

Inspection Judgements

1. All trainees who successfully complete the course exceed the minimum level of practice outlined in the Teachers' Standards. Most trainees and NQTs demonstrate teaching that is consistently good, with some that is outstanding. There is no difference between the attainment of trainees on different programmes, or in the quality of their teaching.
2. Trainees and NQTs have strong personal qualities and display high standards of professional conduct. They are reflective, self-critical and able to identify their own strengths and areas for development. They demonstrate excellent abilities to review the quality of their teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. All are keen to take advantage of opportunities to further their experience and develop their professional expertise.
3. Trainees and NQTs know their subjects well. They use this knowledge to good effect in planning lessons that focus on a progression of ideas and in responding to questions from pupils. They make effective use of assessment in planning activities that engage pupils and focus on building their learning. They understand the importance of setting high expectations and they are beginning to set challenging learning targets for pupils. NQTs are fulfilling their wider professional responsibilities very

well, particularly in supporting the learning of their subject in after-school support sessions or clubs.

4. Trainees and NQTs understand their role in developing pupils' literacy and mathematical skills in their teaching. Those spoken to by inspectors gave examples of where they had emphasised key vocabulary, used graphical representations in non-science subjects, and used aspects of measure, shape and space to improve pupils' work on tessellations. However, other inspection evidence showed that some trainees and NQTs are not rigorous enough in checking regularly pupils' written work in class, especially to support those who lack confidence or motivation in extended writing. Partnership managers accept that recent trainees sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' literacy in their subject teaching and marking. Partnership managers have appropriate plans to strengthen this aspect of the training, to offer additional support for NQTs, and to measure the impact of new provision.
5. Trainees develop a good understanding of disability and special educational needs and take care to adapt their planning appropriately. While weaker NQTs are developing their skills in providing suitable challenge to pupils of all abilities, the strongest are able to plan activities that provide good learning opportunities for the most able as well as for those who need additional help.
6. Completion rates fluctuate between average and above average. In the most recent year, completion was higher for trainees on the School Direct routes than for those on the core programme. Employment rates are consistently high for all groups of trainees.
7. During the training year, arrangements for transition between different schools promote excellent transfer of information about the trainee and contribute to the strong coherence of the training. Similarly, at the end of the training, the *Career Entry and Development Profile* that summarises trainees' strengths, areas for development and longer-term career aims, provides a useful bridge between the training year and the induction year. Employing schools value the quality of the analysis and the way that trainees are keen to adapt it to form a training plan for their induction year.
8. Trainees and NQTs understand the circumstances that lead to inequality. The partnership's focus on promoting equality and addressing underachievement ensures that trainees are aware of their responsibility to focus on closing achievement gaps. As a result, in their planning, trainees take appropriate account of pupils' individual characteristics. NQTs are beginning to contribute to school initiatives aimed at providing additional support and challenge for pupils from underachieving groups.

9. Trainees and NQTs have a good understanding of safeguarding and know to whom they should report if they come across something that concerns them. They are aware of their role in combating bullying and know how to deal with, for example, homophobic bullying or pupils using derogatory language, particularly when anti-bullying is given a high priority in their placement school.
10. The quality of training is good. Central training is comprehensive and includes input from a wide range of contributors. Both professional studies and subject training are highly regarded by trainees. Managers have responded to feedback given at Stage 1 of the inspection by giving more focus to subject associations and up-to-date subject-specific reading in course handbooks. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of this change on trainees' understanding of subject-specific pedagogy.
11. Trainees express particularly positive views about the quality of their training in behaviour management. All 27 of those who responded to the trainee on-line survey felt they knew how to promote good behaviour through their teaching and knew how to implement a range of behaviour management strategies. Inspection evidence supports this view. The trainees and NQTs observed made clear to pupils the standards they expected and employed appropriate strategies to promote good behaviour. For example, in a class containing several pupils with challenging behaviour, an NQT planned work at the right level, spoke calmly to those whose behaviour fell below the expected standards, and used the school's system of rewards and sanctions where appropriate. As a result, he maintained a quiet and orderly atmosphere in which pupils had the opportunity to learn effectively.
12. Training takes place in suitable schools, including some in challenging circumstances and others that are judged to 'require improvement'. Placement schools provide opportunities for all trainees to see and learn from good and outstanding practice. Subject mentors in the main placement school provide a unifying thread of training that helps trainees to make good progress in developing their skills. Mentors show strong commitment to their role; all arrange regular meetings to support training and help trainees to gather the evidence they need to demonstrate competence against the Teachers' Standards. The focus on the Teachers' Standards comes through strongly in teaching observation feedback and weekly targets set. This ensures that trainees gain an appropriate range of skills. However, not enough feedback on teaching refers to aspects of subject-specific pedagogy.
13. Trainees make the best progress when they are given regular, clear direction about how to develop their teaching skills so that pupils' learning is more effective. In general, mentors who work in schools that are well embedded in the partnership provide more consistently strong

support than those in other schools. While targets following lesson observations are very clear and often linked to outcomes for pupils, some of those that follow weekly mentor sessions, especially early on in their training, focus too much on task completion or teacher activity and are not linked clearly to pupils' progress.

14. Assessment on all programmes, including the Assessment Only route, is undertaken according to set guidelines. It is accurate at the pass/fail boundary. While assessments are generally accurate, a small minority of trainees are over-graded in their final assessment.
15. The quality of leadership and management is good. Leaders and managers are knowledgeable about national developments in initial teacher education and show the vision required to ensure that the partnership continues to evolve and improve. For example, they have sought to address an identified shortage of English teachers in the local area and have extended provision to include the primary age phase.
16. The partnership demonstrates good capacity to improve. Leaders and managers have successfully maintained high employment rates for several years and there is a trend of improvement in the proportion of trainees graded good or better. While in the past, the attainment of minority ethnic trainees has been lower than for other groups, the gap closed in 2013/14. Where managers have taken action in response to feedback, it has had a positive impact. For example, evidence suggests that stronger training in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language is leading to trainees' greater confidence in meeting their needs. However, a small number of those starting their induction year are still seeking further training and experience in this area.
17. There is strong involvement from across the partnership in the management of the course. School-based trainers meet regularly and this helps all involved in the partnership to understand where training is more effective and where it is less effective. As a result, leaders and managers know how well trainees are progressing and respond quickly when problems are identified. For example, where weaker mentoring was identified in schools new to training on the School Direct route, managers intervened to minimise the impact on trainees' progress. Improved arrangements are in place for professional tutors to meet so that they can share aspects of good practice more effectively. Strong communication across the partnership contributes to effective monitoring and evaluation of both the training provided and its impact on trainees' progress.
18. Robust self-evaluation recognises where improvements can be made and identifies appropriate priorities. Improvement plans respond comprehensively to external views, such as those of the external moderator, and have an appropriate focus on improving outcomes for

trainees. Managers take full account of local needs in their development plans and this contributes to trainees' high employment rates. The partnership makes a significant contribution to the supply of teachers in the local area, including in schools that sometimes find it difficult to recruit as well as those in challenging circumstances.

19. Recruitment and selection are rigorous and ensure that only suitable candidates are accepted for training. This contributes to the strong reputation of the partnership and ensuring that those completing successfully are well prepared for employment.
20. The partnership complies with all the national requirements for teacher training, including the criteria specific to the Assessment Only Route.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and NQTs' teaching:

Bedford Academy, Bedford
Bedford Free School, Bedford
Denbigh High School, Luton
Etonbury Academy, Arlesey
Kimberley College, Kempston
Northampton School for Boys, Northampton
Redborne Upper School, Ampthill
Samuel Whitbread Academy, Clifton
Stopsley High School, Luton
Stratton Upper School, Biggleswade
Westfield Middle School, Bedford

ITE partnership details

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Provider address	Best House Samuel Whitbread Academy Shefford Road Clifton Bedfordshire SG17 5QS

