

# The University of Wolverhampton

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

11 – 14 March 2013

This inspection was carried out by 14 of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and eight additional inspectors in accordance with the Handbook for inspecting initial teacher education from September 2012.

The inspection draws upon evidence from each phase 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*

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

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## **Key findings**

- The outcomes for trainees and the quality of the provision in all phases are good and improving because of strong leadership and management at senior levels and within each phase. The central training is of high quality in the university, and in partner further education colleges for the post-compulsory education course, in all phases.
- Senior leaders and managers have a clear vision for the further development of the partnerships within and across all phases and provision, and set high expectations. The management structure enables the effective sharing of best practice and innovative ways of making best use of the expertise within the wider partnership.
- The recently constituted Teacher Education Advisory Group (TEAG), with representation from across the partnership in all phases, is well placed to challenge and support senior leaders in striving for continuous improvement.
- The university has an excellent reputation that enables it to build strong partnerships across the region to support high-quality teacher training and educational improvement. Highly relevant research activity is used well to identify and achieve further improvements in the quality of the provision, and to address key issues affecting educational achievement across the region.
- The partnership in each phase meets local and regional needs extremely well, both in recruiting trainees and in providing teachers for schools, colleges and other settings. Employment rates in all phases are high, with many former trainees working in the region.
- The provision is particularly effective in developing highly professional teachers with the skills to reflect critically on the quality of their teaching in order to improve it. They are valued highly by the schools, colleges and other settings where they secure employment in the region.
- All partnerships are fully compliant with all of the ITT and relevant legislative requirements.

### **To improve the ITE partnership should:**

- reduce the variations in the quality of provision that inhibit the progress and achievement of some trainees and which prevent outcomes from being outstanding
- on some programmes, increase the proportion of trainees who successfully complete the course in good time

- use the rigorous analysis of trainees' progress to set challenging and measurable targets for improving their outcomes.

## **Information about this ITE partnership**

1. The University of Wolverhampton partnership trains teachers for schools in the primary and secondary age ranges and for the post-compulsory (further education and skills) sector. It is involved in Schools Direct and Teach First and also offers an assessment-only route to qualified teacher status (QTS). The School Direct route was not looked at as part of this inspection. University leaders make full use of the breadth of involvement in teacher education and training to identify ways to improve the training and to make full use of the opportunities presented.
2. The primary phase partnership includes around 275 schools across the West Midlands and provides training in teaching in early primary (3–7-year-olds) and primary (5–11-year-olds) education through a three-year, full-time bachelor of education (BEd) programme and a one-year, postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) programme.
3. The secondary phase partnership includes around 200 schools in the West Midlands and beyond and provides a one-year training programme for teaching in eight subjects in the 11–16 or 14–19 age range as appropriate. For the very large majority of trainees, the course leads to a PGCE.
4. The university also works in partnership with primary and secondary schools in the region to offer primary and secondary employment-based routes to qualified teacher status for trainees on the graduate teacher programme. There are very strong links between this provision and the main primary and secondary programmes; many of the schools in the partnership offer placements for trainees from main and graduate teacher programmes.
5. The university works in partnership with six colleges of further education and with RAF Cosford to provide pre- and in-service routes in post-compulsory education leading to either a certificate in education or a professional graduate certificate in education. This phase partnership is expected to expand next year with the addition of a further college. The university has set up a centre for research and development in lifelong education with the Institute for Learning, to support development in the partnership colleges and nationally.
6. The university's School for Education Futures also offers a wide range of non-teaching educational programmes. The school also has a wide range of strategic partnerships across the region, as well as nationally and internationally, with a clear focus on improving educational standards and providing better educational opportunities for a wide and diverse range of learners.

# The primary phase

## Information about the primary partnership

1. The University of Wolverhampton's primary ITE partnership provides three programmes of early years and primary training in conjunction with approximately 275 schools and settings across the West Midlands. At the time of the inspection, 66 undergraduate trainees were following a full-time BEd programme in early primary education and 221 in primary education. Some 114 trainees were following a one-year full-time PGCE programme.
2. At the time of the inspection, there were no trainees on the assessment-only route. The university validates a PGCE programme for the separately accredited Leicester and Leicestershire school-centred initial teacher training.

## Information about the primary ITE inspection

1. Inspectors visited 12 partnership schools. They observed 13 lessons taught by second-year BEd trainees during the first week of their second school attachment, and three by newly qualified teachers (NQTs). These observations were undertaken jointly with headteachers, induction mentors, class teachers or mentors.
2. Inspectors also held discussions with five NQTs in schools.
3. Inspectors observed eight centre-based training sessions. These included training in mathematics, English, professional studies and science in early-childhood education.
4. Inspectors also held discussions with groups of trainees, trainers, leaders and managers, mentors and headteachers, and met with a number of headteachers involved in enhanced partnership arrangements and the Teacher Education Advisory Group (TEAG).
5. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence, including information related to recruitment and selection, statutory safeguarding and compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, tracking and assessment, trainees' teaching evidence, analysis of outcomes for trainees, evaluations and improvement plans, external examiners' reports and the partnership's website and learning platform.
6. Inspectors also took account of the responses to the trainees' online questionnaire, which 91 trainees had recently completed.

## **Inspection team**

Angela Milner HMI: lead inspector

Allan Torr HMI: assistant lead inspector

Alan Cross, additional inspector: team inspector

John Menendez, additional inspector: team inspector

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **The key strengths of the primary partnership**

- The highly professional and reflective trainees who aspire to become good teachers and respond effectively to advice.
- Outstanding training in how to manage behaviour for learning and tackle bullying which enables trainees to establish productive relationships with staff and pupils and to create a good climate for learning in their classrooms.
- Strong personal support from tutors and high-quality documentation which enable trainees to take responsibility for their own professional development.
- The partnership's high expectations and strong reputation locally that help to maintain high employment rates
- Good use of expertise in partnership schools to provide trainees with high-quality mentoring, effective feedback and appropriate targets for improving their teaching.
- The breadth of training experiences in a wide range of educational settings, including opportunities to observe good and outstanding practice, work in special schools and undertake placements in a range of alternative educational settings.
- Good-quality training which prepares trainees to plan their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and to teach phonics (the sounds that letters make) and reading with confidence and increasing competence.
- The rigorous tracking of trainees' subject knowledge and teaching skills by leaders and managers, which is used extremely effectively to identify their individual training needs, provide well-focused interventions and improve trainees' attainment and completion rates.
- The engagement of partnership schools in steering the strategic direction of the partnership in the changing landscape of teacher education.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- share information on trainees' previous experience and training needs more effectively with schools
- provide formal feedback to schools about the quality and impact of their school-based training
- strengthen improvement planning at a module and subject level.

## **Inspection judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

7. Trainees understand the requirements of the Teachers' Standards and aspire to become good teachers. Over the last three years, the partnership has improved the proportion of trainees demonstrating good or better attainment by the end of their training, but the proportion of trainees reaching outstanding levels of attainment has declined. There is no marked difference in attainment between trainees on the different primary programmes. The use of well-designed and carefully targeted interventions to enhance individual trainees' subject knowledge and improve their teaching skills is proving effective in increasing the proportion of current trainees achieving the highest levels of attainment. NQTs confirmed that the recognition of their potential to be outstanding and the additional support and challenge provided by the university had been key in enabling some of them to reach outstanding levels of attainment. The success of this approach may also be seen in the improving completion rates that are now above the national average and in the consistently high employment rates.
8. Trainees' overall attainment is good because of the partnership's high expectations, the consistently good-quality centre- and school-based training, the strong personal support and the high-quality documentation which enables trainees to take responsibility for their own professional development. Trainees indicated that the 'steps to success' document, which allows them to plan systematically for their own professional development, and the record of professional development were proving to be significant mechanisms for 'raising their own expectations and monitoring their own achievements'. Trainees' files are well organised and demonstrate that they are highly reflective and respond well to advice and the good-quality targets they are set to improve their teaching. In the post-lesson review sessions with mentors, observed by inspectors, trainees were actively involved in self-reflection, responsive to the feedback they received and eager to hear suggestions for improvement.

9. The trainees whose teaching was observed, less than half-way through their training, were already demonstrating strengths in terms of their behaviour management and the professional and personal conduct aspects of the Teachers' Standards; they were willingly involved in all aspects of school life. Trainees establish productive relationships with staff and pupils in schools and understand how to create a good climate for learning in their classrooms. They understand their responsibility to combat bullying, can identify different forms of bullying, including cyber and prejudice-based bullying, and recognise how to support pupils who are most vulnerable. When necessary, they deploy a good range of effective behaviour-management strategies to reduce low-level disruption and enable pupils to focus on their learning.
10. Trainees understand the importance of providing interesting and stimulating activities which engage pupils in their learning and make effective use of a range of teaching and learning approaches, including information and communication technology. Trainees plan and teach sequences of well-structured lessons. They recap on pupils' learning and make sure pupils know what they are going to learn next. Trainees make good use of resources such as shapes, cubes, counters and interactive whiteboards to help pupils visualise the mathematics they are going to learn about. For example, in one lesson on symmetry, the trainee showed pupils on the whiteboard how to draw in lines of symmetry on a range of regular shapes, and this was followed up by pupils folding shapes and checking their answers using mirrors.
11. Trainees draw on their good subject and curriculum knowledge and their understanding of how children learn to plan lessons which cater for the needs of pupils of different abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This enables them to plan and deploy support staff well. Trainees are beginning to assess pupils' learning. Sometimes, trainees miss opportunities to find out how well their pupils are learning during lessons or fail to re-shape activities to meet the needs of higher-achieving pupils. Most trainees teach phonics, reading and mathematics with confidence and increasing levels of competence.
12. Observations of NQTs and discussions with mentors and headteachers confirmed that trainees are usually very well prepared with the skills they need to promote pupils' progress and to contribute well to raising standards in schools. A good number become partnership mentors and many gain whole-school responsibilities, including for the coordination of phonics, during their induction year. Headteachers spoke about Wolverhampton NQTs' good and outstanding teaching, as judged in recent Ofsted inspections of schools, and their retention in the local teaching workforce.
13. The partnership enjoys a strong local reputation. Trainees are very well supported in gaining employment by the university's employment fayre, assistance with applications and well-timed mock-interview sessions. These activities prepare trainees very effectively for recruitment to the

teaching pools which operate within and across local authorities in the West Midlands.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

14. The quality of school- and university-based training is consistently good and some aspects of centre-based training, including that in behaviour management, is outstanding. Training in behaviour management begins for PGCE trainees at the recruitment and selection stage, when they complete useful tasks on behaviour management linked to recent guidance produced by the Teaching Agency. High-quality training in behaviour management remains a key priority for the partnership throughout each training programme. Trainees are provided with high-quality inputs from a guest speaker, helpful behaviour checklists and expert advice. Wider reading and reflection on well-structured school-based tasks and assignments are used extremely effectively to link centre- and school-based training in behaviour management. Mentors, tutors and behaviour experts provide very helpful advice and guidance to trainees. As a result, almost all trainees indicated, in their response to the trainees' online questionnaire, that they can promote good behaviour through their teaching and implement a range of behaviour strategies to maintain discipline. Inspection evidence confirms this.
15. Good quality training prepares trainees to plan their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, well. Trainees have a good understanding of the signs that may indicate disability or special educational needs. They plan sessions to help pupils of different abilities overcome any barriers they may face in their learning. Trainees understand the importance of developing the reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills of the pupils they teach. Good training in inclusion and the provision of good-quality practical experience with pupils from different cultural backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language ensure trainees have sufficient experience in working with the full range of pupils they are likely to encounter.
16. The strong English training programme enables trainees to begin, develop and then continue to enhance their understanding of systematic synthetic phonics and communication and language development very well. Effective training in phonics is delivered by knowledgeable and enthusiastic tutors and coordinated extremely effectively through the use of a comprehensive phonics tracking booklet. A cohesive programme of lectures, effective school-based training tasks, reading, assignments and examinations, combined with very good use of phonics starters in English sessions, supports trainees in developing their knowledge and understanding of phonics and how to teach it extremely well. In addition, as part of their training, every trainee visits a leading literacy partner school where they have the opportunity to observe best practice and work

alongside skilled teachers of phonics. Tutors and experts from local schools work together to plan an annual literacy festival for trainees with renowned national speakers. This is extremely enthusiastically received.

17. The training in primary mathematics is good. Tutors in university-based sessions are knowledgeable, have recent first-hand experience of teaching in schools, and model good practice in their sessions. They encourage trainees to reflect on their practice and make appropriate use of Ofsted surveys and relevant research. There is a good focus on using and applying mathematics in most university-based sessions. Trainees have good mathematical subject knowledge. This is because they are tested frequently and receive effective teaching in workshops and small groups aimed at improving their knowledge and skills. As a result, most trainees are able to use mathematical terms and vocabulary with confidence in their classes and explain clearly how different strands of mathematics connect. In a lesson about dividing numbers by 10 and 100, for example, the trainee made clear the connection between multiplication and division as inverse operations.
18. The training is structured well around a core professional studies programme and is designed effectively to develop trainees' subject knowledge as well as their understanding of teaching and learning. Tutors make effective use of a range of training methods including the university's web-based virtual learning environment and a number of useful computer-based applications. For example, in a first year, professional studies lecture on behaviour management, tutors were able to gain immediate feedback from trainees about the behaviour strategies they had used on their recent school attachment via their mobile phones. Technology was then used very effectively to enable trainees to share their views, collate findings and discuss and reflect on the issues raised.
19. Extremely effective use is made of information gained from pre-course and initial subject knowledge audits and tasks and examinations during the training to group trainees in English and mathematics in relation to their experience and ability. For example, trainees' phonics knowledge and understanding are regularly monitored and tested by the English subject leader. He makes very effective use of examination results, audits and subject information provided by mentors and school attachment tutors, to measure the impact of phonics training and tailor individualised training via the trainee enhancement in national priorities and meeting individual needs programme. Similarly, the mathematics team has an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each trainee's knowledge of mathematics and how well they teach the subject. This is because they collect, collate and analyse lesson observations and amend the course to match the needs of groups of trainees accordingly. Micro-teaching is also used very effectively in mathematics sessions to enable trainees to continue to develop their practical teaching skills between their school attachments.

20. Tutors are experienced and knowledgeable and model effectively the practical skills trainees need to become good teachers. For example, in one outstanding centre-based English training session, observed by inspectors, the tutor modelled excellent teaching and learning strategies for the trainees. These included a well-received phonics starter, fast-paced activities and high-quality questioning. The tutor had very high expectations and provided appropriate levels of challenge for the trainees. The tutor listened carefully to trainees' responses to questions to check on their understanding within the session and ensured that they could constantly reflect on what she was doing and why. As a result, trainees were fully engaged and able to evaluate the English teaching they had observed, planned and taught on their recently completed first attachment with very high levels of criticality.
21. Tutors are involved actively in a number of local, regional and national curriculum initiatives and in their own research and scholarly activity. This provides extensive opportunities for them to retain their credibility with schools and trainees and continue to teach in local partnership schools. For example, the subject leader for mathematics is currently seconded to a local special school. Training programmes have been revalidated recently to ensure they cover the breadth of the primary curriculum and to enhance the links between centre- and school-based training. This has been achieved through the use of well-designed school-based tasks developed with experts from local schools. These tasks ensure trainees observe teaching, practise their skills and then reflect upon both their teaching and pupils' learning.
22. Trainees and NQTs expressed very high levels of satisfaction with their training and indicated how well prepared they are with the evaluative and practical skills and knowledge they need to teach effectively. Almost all trainees who responded to the trainees' online questionnaire were confident that their training would help them to become a good or outstanding teacher. This is in marked contrast to the most recent NQT survey in which the quality-of-training response was below the sector average. Trainees said that they particularly value the support and responsiveness of tutors, the use of visiting speakers from across the partnership and the practical opportunities provided to work in a wide range of educational settings. This includes opportunities to observe good and outstanding practice in schools, to complete attachments in special schools and undertake placements in a range of alternative educational settings such as museums, galleries and outdoor education centres and to visit schools in India.
23. The quality of training reflects the strengths of the partnership and how the relevant expertise of mentors and tutors is deployed skilfully. Schools demonstrate high levels of commitment to developing the next generation of teachers. All provide appropriate training environments, and mentors and headteachers are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. Mentors are well trained and effective in supporting trainees' progress.

They provide good-quality mentoring and coaching, sensitive and effective feedback and appropriate generic targets which enable trainees to improve their teaching.

24. In feeding back to trainees, mentors give useful verbal, subject-specific advice about how they might improve. Although the partnership has developed effective guidance on what good teaching in, for example, English looks like, and what mentors should look for when observing trainees teach, the quality of written subject-specific feedback from mentors is more variable. Subject leaders at the university monitor this carefully and are aware of the need to ensure the quality of written subject feedback is more consistent. School attachment tutors provide excellent support to trainees and mentors. There are excellent lines of communication and this means that any issues related to the progress of trainees are usually dealt with quickly and effectively. A newly introduced grading system, thorough moderation procedures and extensive use of external examiners ensure the consistency and accuracy of assessment in relation to the Teachers' Standards across the partnership.
25. Mentors feel well supported and find joint observations with tutors and regular briefings timely and informative. Mentors have nothing but praise for the training and the well-structured documentation they receive about the nature of each placement. However, inspectors found that although tutors have extensive knowledge of individual trainees' previous experience and targets for professional development, this is not always effectively shared with school-based colleagues to facilitate smooth transitions between placements and ensure trainees achieve the highest levels of attainment.

### **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

26. Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to meeting local and regional needs and respond well to new opportunities within and beyond the partnership. A number of creative and innovative projects have been piloted to enhance the quality of the training. These have been carefully evaluated through the use of well-targeted impact studies. At the same time, leaders and managers are focused on sustaining and enhancing the quality of provision and continuing to improve outcomes for trainees. The rigorous tracking of trainees' subject knowledge and developing teaching skills from recruitment to course completion to identify individual and group training needs, leading to well-considered interventions and improvements in trainees' attainment and completion rates, is one example of this.
27. The partnership demonstrates good capacity for further improvement. This can be seen in the way it has ensured that trainees are well prepared to meet the minimum level of practice expected of teachers as defined in the Teachers' Standards, and in improvements to the quality of feedback and

target setting. This was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection but is now a strength.

28. The cohesive and collegiate primary team keeps abreast of changes in ITE. Tutors seek every available opportunity to enhance the quality of centre- and school-based training and contribute to improvement in local schools. They do this through their extensive involvement in research, their active promotion of subject and curriculum knowledge and their modelling of high-quality teaching.
29. School-based trainers said that the partnership is mutually beneficial and provides good-quality professional development opportunities for all involved. Headteachers commented on how their schools and colleagues benefit from the knowledge and expertise of university tutors and their willingness to support action research projects, improvements in teaching and school improvement. University staff have benefited enormously from the high-quality professional development provided by teachers in special schools. School-based trainers provide invaluable input to course development and the recruitment and selection process and contribute increasingly to centre-based training at the university.
30. Headteachers are enthusiastic about the overall quality of training provided by the partnership and about the trainees they receive and the NQTs they employ. They said that the university is very responsive to feedback from schools and has willingly taken on board a range of suggestions which have moved the partnership forwards. Although headteachers praised relationships and communications with the university, they would like to receive more formal feedback about the quality and impact of the school-based training they provide.
31. All members of the partnership seek further improvement. Schools want to work with the university and are appreciative of Wolverhampton's willingness to provide more opportunities to become involved in teacher training. This willingness is evident in the university's positive response to validating school-centred initial teacher training for another provider, the way it has supported the greater involvement of special schools, the establishment of two local teaching school alliances, and the university's continuing engagement with leading literacy and numeracy partner schools. Partnership schools are heavily involved in steering the strategic direction of the partnership and Teacher Education Advisory Group plays a key role in monitoring the quality of provision and in shaping its continuing development.
32. The partnership has a proven track record for attracting and training teachers to meet the needs of local and regional employers. A common recruitment and selection process is now in operation across the school-centred initial teacher training partnership validated by the university, for School Direct and postgraduate applicants to the university. Recruitment and selection processes are robust and secure a good understanding of trainees' starting points. PGCE trainees commented favourably about the

challenging recruitment process and the 'hit-the-course-running' materials they received post-interview to address any shortcomings in their subject knowledge before the course began. A range of assessments is used well to identify trainees' strengths. This includes audits, one-to-one interviews, tasks, presentations and recently introduced non-cognitive tests to test applicants' aptitude and suitability for teaching.

33. The partnership meets its recruitment targets and especially those for male applicants and those from minority ethnic groups. This is because the recruitment and selection process balances carefully equality of opportunity with the selection of the most suitable trainees. The partnership has continued to increase the academic requirements for entry to both primary programmes but at the same time continues to use widening-participation links with local colleges to increase applications from candidates with non-traditional backgrounds.
34. Leaders and managers effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. Thorough quality assurance through regular visits to partner schools, moderation events and detailed evaluations completed by school attachment tutors, means that the Director of Partnership has a very well-developed understanding of the quality of provision.
35. Self-evaluation is perceptive and robust. It draws extensively on quantitative and qualitative data and provides leaders with a clear view of the partnership's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders use measurable success criteria linked to outcomes for trainees in departmental improvement plans which are rigorously implemented and secure the necessary improvements. However, some module and subject improvements plans are insufficiently detailed in terms of their analysis of performance and benchmarking data in relation to outcomes for trainees and some targets are insufficiently challenging or measurable.
36. The partnership meets all relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination. The initial teacher training criteria are fully met.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Bleakhouse Junior School  
Millfield Primary School  
Moorcroft Wood Primary School  
Oakham Primary School  
Park Hall Junior Academy  
Penkridge Middle School  
Randlay Primary School  
Ryders Green Primary School  
The Radleys Primary School  
Villiers Primary School  
Woodfield Junior School  
Yew Tree Primary School

## **The secondary phase**

### **Information about the secondary partnership**

37. The university works in partnership with around 200 schools across the West Midlands and beyond to provide secondary teacher training. The secondary programme trains teachers to teach in the 11–16 age range in the following subjects: design and technology, English, information and communication technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, science (biology, chemistry and physics) and physics with mathematics. Teachers of psychology are trained to teach across the 14–19 age range. Business studies (14–19) is no longer offered, although a small number of trainees are still completing the programme. Those being trained on 11–16 routes usually are provided with some experience of teaching post-16 courses.
38. In addition to qualified teacher status, for the very large majority of trainees, the training leads to the award of a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) that includes Master's level accreditation. A few trainees do not complete the Master's level work and are awarded a professional graduate certificate in education.
39. At the time of the inspection there were 129 trainees on the secondary programme.
40. Four trainees, three mathematics and one modern foreign languages, were following a School Direct route. These trainees follow the same centre-based training as the PGCE but have additional placement days in their 'employing school'.

### **Information about the secondary ITE inspection**

41. The five secondary inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by trainees covering the full range of subjects offered at the university; all observations were undertaken with the trainee's school-based tutor (subject mentor). In most cases the inspector observed the feedback given by the tutor and conducted separate interviews with the trainee and the tutor. Wherever possible, brief interviews with headteachers and/or professional tutors were carried out. Inspectors also observed lessons taught by seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs) from the previous cohort. In addition, individual or small-group interviews were undertaken with 25 other trainees. Inspectors took account of a wide range of documented evidence, including that on the university's web-based virtual learning environment.

42. At the time of the inspection, secondary trainees had recently started their second main school placement and were in the second week of the main teaching block. Because the trainees were in schools, it was not possible to observe any university-based training. Inspectors looked at the record of professional development for each trainee interviewed, and a sample of records of professional development in each subject.
43. Inspectors took account of the 115 responses to the trainees' online questionnaire.
44. In-depth, thematic inspections were undertaken in modern foreign languages and science. Mathematics was also inspected in some depth. Greater breadth of evidence was gathered from all of the other secondary subjects offered by the provider.

### **Inspection team**

James Sage HMI: lead inspector

Joana Beckford-Hall HMI: assistant lead inspector

Brian Cartwright HMI: team inspector and subject inspector – thematic programme (science)

Jane Jones HMI: team inspector (mathematics)

Susan Wareing HMI: team inspector and subject inspector – thematic programme (modern foreign languages)

### **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

#### **The key strengths of the secondary partnership**

- The reputation of the university that helps it to build strong partnerships across the region to support high-quality teacher training and school improvement.
- The very high employment rates and meeting the needs of schools in the region.
- Trainees' professionalism and ability to reflect critically on their teaching.
- Trainees' teaching that sets high expectations and promotes students' good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The structure of the course that supports trainees' progress well.
- The quality of the partnership in providing trainees with a rich diversity of experience that prepares them well for teaching.

- Robust assessment and moderation arrangements that lead to the accurate assessment of the quality of trainees' teaching and performance against the Teachers' Standards.
- The tenacity of the secondary leaders in constantly developing the provision to ensure that the best use is made of the partnership and the opportunities presented by the changing landscape of teacher education and training.

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

The partnership should:

- ensure that all trainees make as much progress as they can to become as good a teacher as possible by the end of the training by:
  - providing all trainees with feedback on their teaching that is based on an evaluation of the impact of their teaching on students' learning, and has a clear, subject-specific focus
  - providing all trainees with precise, subject-specific developmental targets
  - tightening the monitoring of the quality of feedback and target setting.
- reducing further the proportion of trainees who do not successfully complete the course, particularly those who do not successfully complete the first school attachment.
- focus course review, self-evaluation and improvement planning more tightly on the analysis of the outcomes for trainees.

### **Inspection judgements**

#### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

45. The outcomes for trainees are steadily improving and have risen each year since the previous inspection. Evidence from the observations of current trainees' and NQTs' lessons and the analysis of the provider's own data, show that this trend of improvement is being maintained. The inspection confirmed that the provider makes accurate assessments of trainees' teaching and of their overall performance against the Teachers' Standards. The external examiners in each subject confirm the accuracy of these assessments and the effectiveness of moderation arrangements.
46. The teaching of a very high proportion of trainees, well over 90% of those who complete the course successfully, is at least good by the end of their training. The proportion whose teaching is outstanding by the end of course is around 30% and steadily rising. The proportion of the current cohort of trainees whose teaching was judged to be at least good by the

end of their first school attachment is significantly higher than for the previous cohort.

47. The quality of trainees' teaching and their achievement of the Teachers' Standards is consistent across the subjects. Trainees in all subjects make good progress from their starting points. The university analyses the achievement of all groups of trainees and there are no significant differences in the proportions whose teaching is judged to be at least good. Fewer male trainees, mature trainees and those from minority ethnic backgrounds have teaching which is outstanding. The university has analysed this carefully and is tracking the progress of these groups to identify any aspects of training and/or support that need to be improved. The strong system for tracking the progress of individual trainees helps with this analysis.
48. The teaching of a small proportion of trainees, around 6% each year, while meeting the Teachers' Standards, is not good by the end of the training. To meet the needs of schools in the region, particularly in those subjects where recruitment is more difficult, the university takes carefully calculated and well-managed risks. All of these trainees have the potential to become good teachers, but they may not achieve this potential until they have been teaching for two or three years. First-hand inspection evidence, evidence from the schools visited and analysis of the partnership's own data show that the overwhelming majority of these trainees secure teaching posts and are still teaching two or three years later and that most have become at least good teachers.
49. Even at this stage in the training, it was possible to identify trainees' strengths; these were more pronounced among the NQTs observed. Trainees have a strong sense of professionalism: they fit into school well, take and act upon advice and take on the wider responsibilities of being a teacher. Many want to work in schools in challenging circumstances and, to quote one secondary headteacher, 'They do really want to teach children.' Many trainees have already developed a strong presence in the classroom. Trainees and NQTs reflect critically on their teaching, making good use of the skills they develop in the university. They understand well the importance of promoting good behaviour through lively and engaging teaching; behaviour was good in many of the lessons observed. The trainees are fully aware of the wide range of special educational needs many students have, although they may not yet have the skills to deal with them. They also know the importance of developing students' literacy, communication, numeracy and independent-learning skills. All trainees take the development of their subject knowledge very seriously; the pre-course enhancement courses, that many attended, are valued highly in all subjects.
50. At this stage in the training some skills are inevitably underdeveloped. However, observations of NQTs highlighted some aspects of teaching that need to be improved through training. Many use a limited range of strategies when planning for the different levels of ability of the students

in their classes. Clear steps in the learning needed to reach identified outcomes are not planned carefully enough, making it difficult to judge students' progress. Some NQTs do not have a wide enough repertoire of subject-specific teaching approaches. The university-based training has a very strong focus on developing deep subject pedagogical understanding. Some trainees and NQTs need more guidance in applying this to their subject teaching.

51. The overall proportion of trainees who successfully complete the course is too low, although not low enough to undermine the overall good outcomes. The proportion of trainees who withdraw from the course has reduced significantly and is low for the current cohort – much lower than for previous cohorts at this stage in the course. There is some slight variation across subjects, but this is not significant given the relative sizes of subject cohorts and the difficulties in recruiting in some. At the end of the first school attachment, the partnership determines those trainees who are doing well, those that need more support or more time in schools and those that need to start the attachment again. This latter group takes 'leave of absence' and returns the following year, or in a small number of cases, in the year after that. This group is smaller for the current cohort than for previous years, but is still around 6 to 7%. Because only about half of these trainees do actually return, the overall proportion that successfully completes the training is lower than it should be.
52. The two secondary programme leaders, and subject pathway leaders, monitor all non-completions very carefully to identify any improvements that could be made to the recruitment and selection arrangements or to the training and support provided for trainees. Selection procedures have been further tightened to be even more rigorous, but these improvements will have more impact on the next cohort.
53. Employment rates are consistently very high; almost all of the trainees that complete the training successfully secure teaching posts, many in the region and often in partnership schools, and remain in teaching. In addition, the partnership recruits strongly from the region, providing routes into teaching for a diverse range of candidates and meeting the needs of schools well. All of the headteachers met during the inspection were extremely complimentary about Wolverhampton trainees and the impact they have had on school improvement. This is an outstanding feature of the secondary provision.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

54. The quality of training is good overall, with some very strong features that provide a secure structure for further improvement. Feedback from trainees and from the NQT survey shows high levels of satisfaction with the training overall; they rate highly some specific areas, such as how well trainees are prepared for behaviour management and for working with disabled students and those with a range of special educational needs.

Schools also are very positive about the training and the quality of the trainees. Trainees are extremely positive about the high-quality training in the university, both in their subjects and, for example, in addressing how to promote good and manage poor behaviour and dealing with the wider roles and responsibilities of teachers. They feel well prepared to apply this to their teaching and there is good evidence from the NQTs observed that they can do this. Through the training, trainees are fully aware of the need to develop their students' literacy and mathematical skills. However, the extent to which NQTs can do this is sometimes constrained by the practice in their schools.

55. The secondary course is structured well to achieve good coherence between the different elements: between university- and school-based training and between professional and subject work. The training in the university develops trainees' deeper understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of teaching, drawing well upon recent and relevant research; most schools value this highly. Trainees are also provided with practical ideas and approaches to teaching that they can readily apply. The sets of school-based activities and assignments help trainees make links between theory and practice.
56. Training is based on an excellent model. There is a very well-planned, progressive approach through the university-based training and the two main school attachments to deal with subject knowledge development and application, generic and subject-specific pedagogy, and the wider roles and responsibilities of teachers. More and more emphasis is placed on developing deeper pedagogical understanding and applying this to teaching as the training progresses. However, some trainees need more help from school-based tutors in transferring what they have learned from university sessions to their teaching.
57. The two school attachments are complementary and give trainees a good breadth of experience of different types of student, areas of the subject and approaches to teaching, and of post-16 experience for some. The primary school attachment is well placed between the main two attachments. There is a careful and sensitive matching of the second attachment to each individual trainee's needs, balancing well trainees' professional development and personal circumstances. During the early weeks of each attachment, trainees spend part of their time in school and part in the university. This supports the coherence of the overall programme well, but also enables trainees to get a feel for the school and establish relationships, undertake some of the school-based activities and gather information for assignments. A clear strength of the provision is the good use made of the expertise within, and the diversity of, the partnership.
58. The overall monitoring of trainees' progress during school attachments is good and recorded in the well-structured record of professional development. There is a very well-planned sequence of monitoring events. During the school attachments, trainees have weekly meetings with their

school-based tutor that focus well on short-term issues and targets. These are interspersed with 'main meetings' every other week that provide opportunities for setting longer-term developmental targets and taking a more holistic view of the trainees' progress. The outcomes of these meetings feed into mid- and end-of-attachment reviews. University tutors make at least two visits during each school attachment, undertaking observations of the trainee teaching with the school-based tutor, and conduct individual tutorials before, between and after the attachments. Progress is monitored using a set of very well-developed 'progression grids' – indicators of progression through the strands of the Teachers' Standards. These grids are popular with both trainees and school-based tutors and provide a good mechanism for monitoring progress and setting targets. However, despite these good procedures and the excellent practice within the partnership, there is some variation in the quality of feedback and target setting for trainees that inhibits the progress of some and prevents the training from being outstanding.

59. In a minority of cases, the feedback to trainees following observations of their teaching lacks a clear focus on the progress made by the students in the lesson – there is no space on the observation record to record this. While trainees are expected to evaluate learning in their frequent evaluations of their own teaching, they are not always shown how to do this in the feedback from the school-based tutor. The excellent practice in some schools, where trainees are clear that the quality of their teaching will be judged not just through observations but also by the progress made over time by those they teach, could usefully be shared more widely.
60. The recorded targets set for trainees from lesson observations and at the meetings with school-based tutors often lack a subject-specific focus. While it is clear, from meetings with trainees and with NQTs, that the conversations they have with tutors often do have this sharper focus, this is not always the case. Discussions about the trainees' subject knowledge development sometimes do not lead to the planning of appropriate teaching experiences. In a small minority of cases, there is a lack of precision in the longer-term developmental targets and it is difficult to see how trainees are supposed to progress through these targets.
61. Monitoring arrangements have an excellent focus on the progress of individual trainees. From selection and throughout the first school attachment, the potential of each individual trainee is identified. Targets are then set against these individual expectations: from those trainees that need most support to those who might be expected to achieve well beyond the minimum expectations of the Teachers' Standards. This excellent system often works very well in challenging trainees to fulfil their potential, but is sometimes let down by the lack of precision identified above or by the poor quality of the targets set for second attachment at the end of the first. This inhibits the progress of a small minority of trainees and is a key factor in why the outcomes and provision are not yet

outstanding. The partnership's grading systems are based on a developmental model to support trainees' progress. This leads to a mismatch between these grades and grading the quality of teaching against the Teachers' Standards. The final grade lacks a close alignment with the standards and what will be expected of the trainees once they enter teaching posts in schools.

62. Moderation arrangements, including the increased and good use of teacher moderators, work well in ensuring consistent judgements at the key points in each school attachment and the course overall. School-based tutors value highly the moderation meetings because of the opportunities for, and the quality of, the professional conversations they have with subject colleagues; these sessions are very well attended, with good follow-up when the tutor cannot attend. Regular use of joint observations also supports standardisation and the consistency of judgments.
63. The quality of training in modern foreign languages is good, both at the university and on school attachments, resulting in increasingly good outcomes from their starting points for trainees and NQTs. Trainees have good subject knowledge and subject leaders give every support to helping them maintain and extend their confidence and competence. The quality of personal support and academic guidance given to trainees is an outstanding feature of the course. The directed reading set by the subject leader at the university is a strength that assists trainees' critical reflection, which is at the heart of the course. In their teaching, trainees rightly place a strong emphasis on students' accurate use of subject terminology. However, they do not always use, and help their students to use, the target language as extensively as they could throughout lessons.
64. The supportive relationships that languages trainees and NQTs establish with their students are an outstanding feature of trainees' work that makes students keen to work with them and ensures that they enjoy their language learning. Trainees and NQTs plan their lessons well. They ensure that students know how well they are learning and how to improve their work further. Trainees devise interesting and stimulating group and paired activities that encourage students' independent learning. Trainees' questioning is generally good, but sometimes students are not given enough time to think and respond in depth. All trainees make use of information and communication technology to support students' learning, but there were few examples of students' own use of technology to practise their skills and enhance their language learning.
65. Training in science is good; university and school-based training are valued highly by trainees. There are several key factors that underpin the effectiveness of the training, beginning with the close and long-standing links between the university and its partner schools. Most schools have confidently employed new science teachers trained by the university for many years. Recently qualified teachers teach good lessons; their recruitment has supported school improvement in science and led to school managers seeking to maintain the partnerships in order to retain

access to new staff. Because schools see the value of partnerships in their own professional development, they are diligent in meeting the professional requirements for school-based tutors. This leads to consistently very good science teacher training in schools that aligns closely with the university-based training, both at subject level and in the wider professional studies programme. All school-based science tutors interviewed attended centre-based training and moderation meetings with other tutors. Judgements on trainees' outcomes in science, by school-based and university tutors, are consistently accurate. University tutors track trainees' progress well using the electronic monitoring of the records of weekly and fortnightly mentor meeting with trainees. However, many trainees lack subject-specific developmental targets.

66. Systematic training helps trainees to use scientific enquiry as the basis for teaching pupils about how science works, as well as to inform and exemplify scientific phenomena. This was illustrated very well in a Year 8 lesson in which pupils found out what happens when magnesium, iron and copper are heated in air. Some of these experiments are spectacular, and triggered surprise and delight amongst pupils, but they then went on to build their understanding of chemical reactions and make predictions of what might happen with other metals. Such good science teaching does depend on the placement schools fully supporting this approach; not all do.
67. Science trainees' skills in behaviour management are a significant strength. Trainees have systematically planned opportunities to teach some potentially challenging pupils in very challenging schools. The trainees observed noticed and dealt effectively with early signs of disaffection. Trainees are good at self-reflection, and are consistently encouraged to do this by school-based tutors. The university tutors carefully mix up attachments to ensure trainees experience a range of different educational settings. This works particularly well when trainees are at risk of failure, as tutors use placements that can address specific weaknesses and mentors who are motivated to want to try and help. Specialist subject knowledge audits for physics, chemistry and biology form an essential part of the recruitment process, and can lead to conditional offers subject to formal subject knowledge enhancement courses. Trainees are responsible for on-going, subject knowledge enhancement, but there is no further formal checking of this as the course progresses. University-based training includes specialist input from experts in different aspects of science, such as earth science. Some trainees have begun to introduce science-in-context themes in their lessons, and have discovered how effectively this approach can motivate and engage pupils. More work could be done to develop trainees' skills in contextualising science.

## **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

68. There is a clear trend of improving outcomes for trainees as a result of improvements in the quality of the provision. The strengths identified in the previous inspection report have been sustained and the recommendations addressed effectively. While much of the provision and training is of a very high quality, it is not outstanding because of the small amount of variation in the quality of the training that inhibits the progress of a small minority of trainees so that they do not fully realise their potential, and because the overall successful completion rate is not high enough. More rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, building on the existing robust arrangements, are already having a beneficial impact on the recruitment of the next cohort of trainees.
69. The two secondary programme leaders work extremely well together and have complementary skills. They provide a clear vision for the partnership and focus determinedly on improving the quality of the provision in order to improve the outcomes for trainees. The two leaders set high expectations and work hard to keep ahead in the constantly changing initial teacher education landscape. Subject pathway leaders are valued highly by trainees. Together with the programme leaders, they form a very strong secondary team which knows its trainees and schools extremely well.
70. The partnership is highly coherent and cohesive, with excellent relationships between the university and the schools. The views of schools are considered very carefully and they are fully involved in the review, further development and improvement of the partnership, including the arrangements for recruitment and selection. Schools value highly the qualities of Wolverhampton trainees; the very high employment rates and meeting the needs of the region are testament to this. The programme leaders, and the partnership more widely, are exploring more flexible arrangements between the schools and the university, such as schools working in clusters around hubs and different ways of working together to maximise the opportunities presented by Schools Direct and Teach First. This is all consistent with the wider role of the university and the School for Education Futures in improving education in the region.
71. Overall, self-evaluation and improvement planning are thorough and make good use of qualitative and quantitative data from a wide range of sources. They lead to sharply defined priorities for further improvement that are focused well on improving the outcomes for trainees, particularly in moving more trainees from good to outstanding and 'adding more value', including for particular groups and subjects. Data about the progress and outcomes for trainees are systematically gathered and analysed well to identify what is working and what needs to be improved. The progression grids enable this evaluation to be undertaken at a fine level, including the analysis of groups of the Teachers' Standards and the

various strands that underpin them. This self-evaluation has a strong focus on the quality of trainees' teaching. The evaluation of the quality of training is based on extensive feedback from trainees and schools and the external examiners' reports. However, it is not as well informed as it could be by a detailed analysis of the outcomes for trainees. Similarly, the evaluation of leadership and management, to some extent, also lacks this focus on outcomes.

72. Careful monitoring ensures that trainees receive their entitlement in schools, with a very good system for identifying schools that need additional support or might not be used for future placements. Plans are being developed to feed some of this information back to schools, who would welcome it. However, basic systems and procedures still need to be tighter to ensure that all trainees are challenged and supported to fulfil their potential by the end of the course. Although external examiners make visits to schools, undertake lesson observations and report on what trainees tell them about the support they receive, they do not provide evaluative feedback on the quality of the school-based training.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Aldridge School  
Arthur Terry School  
Burton Borough School  
Codsall Community High School  
Deansfield High School  
George Salter Academy  
Heath Park Business and Enterprise College  
Joseph Leckie Academy  
Shelfield Academy  
Shire Oak Academy  
St Michaels C of E High School  
St Thomas More Catholic School  
Wood Green Academy

## **The employment-based routes**

### **Information about the employment-based partnership**

73. The employment-based initial teacher training partnership incorporates those schools involved in the university's primary and secondary training programmes across the West Midlands and Black Country. It aims to address the need for high-quality recruits to schools in the locality, to raise achievement in local schools and assist in the regeneration of the region.
74. At the time of this inspection, 77 trainees, including two self-funded trainees, were following a full-time secondary graduate teacher programme. There were 61 trainees in the primary phase, more than double that at the time of the last inspection. Training for the secondary phase is currently offered in mathematics, English, science, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, design and technology, music, physical education, business studies and psychology.
75. One trainee has so far completed the assessment-only programme successfully and more are currently in the stages of initial application and assessment for suitability.

### **Information about the employment-based ITE inspection**

76. Inspectors observed 10 lessons taught by trainees in the secondary phase. Additionally, seven NQTs across both primary and secondary phases were observed teaching in 11 of the partnership schools. Twelve of these observations were undertaken jointly with mentors.
77. At the time of the inspection, primary trainees were not in schools but attending university-based training in the university. Inspectors observed some centre-based training sessions.
78. Inspectors also held discussions with individuals and groups of trainees, NQTs and former trainees working in partnership schools, university-based tutors, leaders, managers and headteachers, and school-based subject and professional mentors.
79. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence, including information related to recruitment and selection, statutory compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, tracking and assessment, trainees' teaching evidence and assignments, the analysis of outcomes for trainees, evaluations and improvement plans, external moderator reports and the university's web-based virtual learning environment.
80. Inspectors also took account of the responses to the online questionnaires completed by trainees.

## **Inspection team**

Ian Hodgkinson HMI: lead inspector

David Edwards HMI: assistant lead inspector

Janet Palmer HMI: team inspector

Trevor Riddiough HMI: team inspector

Kiran Campbell-Platt, additional inspector: team inspector

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **The key strengths of the employment-based partnership**

- The impact of the university in ensuring that local schools can recruit from a pool of well-trained professionals, which is reflected in high rates of employment for trainees.
- High-quality university-based training which equips trainees with a range of skills and strategies which they apply readily in the classroom.
- Trainees' confident subject knowledge and their effective strategies for helping pupils learn independently.
- The access trainees have to a wide range of resources through the university to help them teach, including the virtual learning environment.
- Trainees' high standards of personal and professional conduct, which help to establish positive relationships and good behaviour in the classroom.
- Well-developed systems, in the secondary course in particular, for ensuring that trainees and mentors recognise the characteristics of effective teaching, which underpin the high-quality feedback that trainees receive on their progress and how to improve.
- Effective systems for tracking trainees' progress and for ensuring the accuracy of the assessments of trainees' standards.
- The constructive engagement of the university and its partners in shaping programmes which respond effectively to changes in national educational priorities.
- The sharp rise in the proportion of trainees who are outstanding at the end of their training in the secondary phase.
- A collaborative style of leadership which promotes innovation, creativity and professionalism among trainees and trainers alike.

## **What does the employment-based partnership need to do to improve further?**

### **The partnership should:**

- continue to reduce the number of trainees who withdraw from their training in both primary and secondary phases
- increase the proportion of good and outstanding trainees in the primary phase
- set demanding and measurable targets for improving trainees' outcomes, and rigorously evaluate the success of improvement strategies against these targets
- offer structured support and guidance to the minority of less confident trainees on how to evaluate their teaching in terms of its impact on the learning of different groups of pupils in their classes.

## **Inspection judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

81. Trainees have a strong understanding of the Teachers' Standards. They aspire to be good or better teachers, and across both primary and secondary phases the large majority of trainees are good or outstanding by the end of their course. There are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of trainees, except that those with the highest qualifications on entry perform best. Attainment in the secondary phase has improved very sharply, especially in the proportion of trainees graded outstanding. In the primary phase, as trainee numbers have doubled, overall attainment has fallen back from the very high levels at the last inspection. In both phases, non-completion rates have been relatively high, particularly withdrawals from courses. For the year to date, from current data, it appears as though these rates will be reduced.
82. The university has a strong reputation locally for developing effective teachers, and as a consequence employment rates are high. Trainees have often been in work before embarking on their training programmes, and in the primary phase many have worked in schools as teaching or support assistants. Such experience, combined with strong induction into the teacher training programme and the expectation that trainees will become fully involved in all aspects of the life of their schools, underpins trainees' highly professional approaches to their work with colleagues and young people. Trainees are typically confident, well presented and well organised, and offer very good role models for their pupils. They promote an atmosphere of mutual respect in their classrooms, so that good

relationships and good behaviour prevail. They manage their classes calmly and assertively.

83. Trainees' subject knowledge and expertise develop well during their training. Any shortcomings in subject knowledge are identified before the training starts and, where appropriate, prospective trainees attend enhancement courses which boost their skills and understanding. Trainees maintain careful records of the development of their subject knowledge throughout the training, drawing upon a wide range of resources and courses available at the university to help them. Trainees' secure subject knowledge enables them to communicate topics to their classes with clarity and confidence. It also enables them to set clear objectives for learning in lessons and plan engaging activities which help pupils to learn independently.
84. Trainees are keenly aware of their pupils' prior attainment and the specific needs of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and pupils who speak English as an additional language. They generally use this information well to arrange their classes and group pupils to promote effective interaction. Lessons and activities do not always offer enough challenge to more-able pupils, though, and this shortcoming was observed in the work of NQTs as well as trainees. Trainees often do not plan well enough to make the most of teaching assistants or other adults in the room to accelerate the progress of particular groups of pupils in their classes.
85. Across both phases, trainees systematically evaluate the effectiveness of their lessons and other aspects of their training, and often do so in detail. However, a minority of trainees focus insufficiently on the impact that their teaching has on the learning of different groups of pupils in their classes. The sharing of detailed criteria on the characteristics of good and outstanding teaching among tutors, mentors and trainees in the secondary phase has done much to raise attainment. It has raised trainees' expectations and generally sharpened their reflections on how to improve. This approach is now to be introduced into the primary phase.
86. Trainees use information and communication technology with much confidence in their teaching. Across both phases, and across subjects in the secondary phase, trainees take opportunities to promote and develop pupils' literacy skills, for example through marking. In the primary phase, trainees' understanding of how to teach phonics to help pupils read and write is very well developed.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

87. In both primary and secondary phases, the university-based training and support are highly regarded by trainees. They were also widely praised by the NQTs working in schools who spoke with inspectors. Most trainees are very well prepared before starting their training, by the requirements for

experience in school and through a detailed subject auditing process. The subject audit identifies any need for prospective trainees to boost their knowledge, understanding or skills in key elements of the subjects they will be teaching. A range of enhancement courses is available before the training begins and courses are flexibly suited to trainees' needs.

88. Throughout the training, university-based subject sessions are of a high quality. They explore many aspects of pedagogy and conceptual development, and equip trainees with a very useful range of practical teaching strategies and resources to take into the classroom. For example, in a primary mathematics session on shape and space, trainees explored common misconceptions and definitions, and experimented with activities which could be used to test the prior knowledge of their pupils and develop their understanding. In the same session, trainees were able to look at relevant websites to support their teaching with high-quality resources. This session, in common with others, was followed by tasks for trainees that included further reading and self-reflection that they recorded carefully in their learning journals. Primary, university-based training presently takes place in four-day blocks once every half term, although this is due to change because it breaks the continuity achieved by the one-day-per-week model followed in the secondary phase. Throughout their training, trainees are able to draw on high-quality resources for their teaching and their own learning through the university's virtual learning environment.
89. University- and school-based professional studies programmes give an appropriately high prominence to national training priorities. From centre-based training, trainees gain an excellent understanding of how to recognise different forms of bullying and actions which should be taken to counter these. They feel confident in applying their schools' behaviour management strategies, but understand that the best form of behaviour management is by engaging all pupils in purposeful learning; they therefore group pupils carefully and distribute questions effectively around their classes. Trainees report that most university-based sessions on teaching pay specific regard to meeting the needs of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. As result, trainees' lesson plans often clearly recognise these groups, although not all trainees measure carefully enough the impact of their teaching on the learning of different groups. University- and school-based training gives a high priority to the development of literacy across the curriculum. There was less evidence for numeracy across the curriculum, where centre-based training had not occurred by the time of the inspection. In the primary phase, training in phonics is a key strength. Secondary English NQTs also praised the high quality of the training they received in phonics for helping them to promote children's reading.

90. School-based mentors are well trained and well supported. The progression grids set out clearly the expectations for what should have been achieved by trainees and mentors at key points in the programme. Regular meetings at the university ensure that the majority who can attend regularly play an important role in shaping training programmes and getting briefings on new developments. Through the partnership, school-based mentors have developed supportive networks to share good practice in training provision and the moderation of outcomes. Mentors typically provide trainees with high-quality support and guidance. They regularly observe the teaching of trainees and give very precise feedback on strengths and areas to improve which takes full account of the Teachers' Standards. In the secondary phase, mentors also apply the characteristics of good and outstanding teaching very well in evaluating performance. Weekly meetings between mentors and trainees set precise developmental targets and are key components in driving the strong progress made by most trainees. However, in one case the targets for a trainee were largely repeated week on week and, as a consequence, the trainee's progress was inhibited. In secondary science, where the early enhancement of subject knowledge is a key strength of an effective programme, weekly targets often relate to generic teaching skills and not to subject-specific aspects.
91. Comprehensive systems are in place to assess and track trainees' progress and to ensure that assessments are accurate. Individual training plans are informed by pre-training audits and completed during the induction programme to ensure that training is personalised to meet trainees' needs. Trainees maintain a careful record of their progress through the record of trainee's assessment. University-based tutors visit their trainees regularly and observe them jointly with school-based tutors to agree assessments and points for improvement. Such visits inform half-term reviews of trainees' progress which, where appropriate, revise training programmes and medium-term targets. The subject knowledge audit, completed prior to training, continues to be actively monitored throughout training.
92. The second school placement is usually well tailored to broaden the experience of trainees, enabling them to experience work in different contexts, or with pupils of different backgrounds or needs. For some, the minimum placement period of three weeks is too short to get the most out of their new surroundings. However, in many instances the placement is lengthened to suit the needs of the trainee.

### **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

93. The leaders of the employment-based provision have promoted very effective collaboration across the partnership to share good practice and assure good quality of provision. Programme managers, subject leaders and university-based tutors share high expectations and the ambition to

improve. Through detailed research and continual review, they keep ahead of changes in the national education landscape in their phases and subjects. They play a leading role in disseminating new ideas and innovative practices across schools in the partnership, so that schools increasingly draw on the partnership for support and advice beyond that related to initial teacher training. Leaders and managers have responded positively to changes in national priorities and programmes. The development of the School Direct programme for organising and funding employment-based provision has presented challenges in maintaining schools in the partnership. It has, however, been used by leaders and managers to strengthen aspects of provision, for example by encouraging much closer collaboration between schools and university to ensure the recruitment of trainees with the best potential.

94. Communication is effective across the partnership. Programme managers and school- and university-based tutors are readily available to offer advice, guidance and support to trainees. School and university tutors keep in regular contact to monitor trainees' progress, and generally intervene swiftly to adjust placements or training programmes to keep trainees on track. Heightened expectations for partnership schools to report early those trainees causing concern have contributed to a reduction in withdrawal rates from the programmes for the year to date, although there is still some evidence that not all mentors take sufficiently urgent action. Since the last inspection, the partnership has explicitly required the professional tutor in secondary schools to play a role in assuring the quality of the training programmes and signing off assessments of trainees' progress; this has strengthened further the support provided for school-based subject mentors.
95. The self-evaluation of the training programmes is broad ranging, but it does not always compare programme performance incisively enough with national data or other benchmarks to identify key areas for improvement and help to formulate strategies. Development planning articulates ambitions to improve provision and outcomes in a number of key areas, but the criteria offered as evidence of the success of the actions taken are not always precisely measurable. In some cases, targets for improvement, for example in completion rates, are too low to act as effective benchmarks of performance or drivers of success. Nonetheless, improvements have been made in key areas since the last inspection, as evident in the impressive rise in trainees' attainment in the secondary phase. The willingness of phase programme managers to collaborate and share best practice demonstrates the capacity of leaders to improve the provision and outcomes still further.
96. Comprehensive measures are in place to assure the quality of training, the accuracy of the assessment of trainees, and full compliance with employment-based initial teacher training criteria. Assessments of trainees are moderated thoroughly through verification checks involving university- and school-based trainers as well as the trainee. External examiners

effectively scrutinise the provision and its outcomes, and their recommendations are acted upon decisively. The new assessment-only route to qualified teacher status fully complies with requirements; robust procedures are in place to check on the suitability of applicants and the accuracy of assessment.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

George Salter Academy  
Streetly Academy  
St Peter's Catholic School, Solihull  
St Michael's CE High School  
Great Barr School  
Ashlawn School, Rugby  
South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy  
Wednesfield High School  
Frederick Bird Primary School  
Spon Gate Primary School  
Joseph Turner Primary School

# **Initial teacher education for the further education system**

## **Information about the FE in ITE partnership**

1. The University of Wolverhampton works in partnership with six further education colleges in the West Midlands and RAF Cosford, with a further college expected to formally join the partnership in the next academic year. The partnership offers full-time pre-service and part-time in-service courses, leading to a Certificate in Education or a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education for the in-service course, or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education for the pre-service course. A small number of trainees are following a specialist route for teachers of literacy or numeracy. All routes incorporate the requirements of the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector.
2. Pre-service trainees carry out placements both in the partner colleges and in a number of other colleges in the region. Most in-service trainees are employed by the partner colleges, although a small number work for external providers. At the time of the inspection, 84 trainees were enrolled on the pre-service route, with around 230 on the in-service course.

## **Information about the FE in ITE inspection**

3. During the inspection, inspectors visited five of the associated colleges, and another college where pre-service trainees were on placement and former trainees employed. Inspectors also conducted a small number of observations in external settings. Inspectors observed 19 trainees teach, including a sample from all the different routes offered. Several of these were joint observations with the trainee's mentor or university tutor. Inspectors also observed seven recently qualified teachers from the partnership.
4. Inspectors interviewed a wide range of trainees, mentors and former trainees during the inspection. They also held extensive discussions with course leaders at the university, and with relevant staff at the partner colleges. Inspectors scrutinised course documentation, training resources, and a range of supporting evidence provided by the university. They also studied in detail trainees' work and records of their progress throughout the training, including the electronic portfolios that are used to store much of this evidence. Data on trainees' outcomes, self-evaluation documentation and improvement plans were considered in detail.

## **Inspection team**

Alan Hinchliffe HMI: lead inspector

Pauline Dixey, additional inspector: assistant lead inspector

Julie Ashton HMI: team inspector

Kathleen Brown, additional inspector: team inspector

John Homewood, additional inspector: team inspector

Zena Thewlis, additional inspector: team inspector

Eunice Wheeler, additional inspector: team inspector

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **The key strengths of the FE partnership**

- The university's unwavering commitment to be a strong regional presence in further education, through working with a range of partners to train high-quality further education teachers recruited from, and committed to, the communities served by the partnership.
- The good progress made by the vast majority of trainees, who by the end of their training have developed a broad repertoire of teaching skills and are thoughtful and self-critical practitioners.
- The high quality of training both at the partner colleges and, in most instances, at the university, which encourages trainees to be creative in their thinking about teaching as a craft, and enables them to link theory to practice.
- The very good support given to trainees by all those in the partnership, which is particularly beneficial for those trainees who have to overcome complex personal barriers in order to complete the training.
- The high-quality mentoring, which benefits most trainees in the development of their subject-specific pedagogical understanding and skills.
- The commitment of the university to sharing good practice across the partnership through the development of scholarly activity and discussion, and through the use of new technologies to share and develop resources.

### **What does the FE partnership need to do to improve further?**

#### **The partnership should:**

- raise timely completion rates further by reviewing the effectiveness and consistency of recruitment and selection procedures, and by intervening

more swiftly where trainees are struggling to complete the training in the allotted time.

- ensure that all trainees, but especially those who are weaker, have a realistic view of their attainment and progress, and are clear about precisely what they need to do to improve and how this will be measured.
- sharpen self-evaluation by ensuring that it is more self-critical, makes better use of the available data, and draws more on insights from within the partner colleges.
- develop more rigorous methods of gauging trainees' progress so that the partnership can evaluate the progress and attainment of trainees over time and judge confidently the value that is being added by the training.

## **Inspection judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

5. The proportion of trainees who complete their training successfully is consistently high on the pre-service route, although a minority of trainees need more than one year to be successful. University regulations allow trainees to spend up to three years to complete the training, although this is not always in the best interest of the small number of trainees who face insurmountable barriers and would benefit from withdrawing from the training. Successful completion rates are particularly high on the specialist route in literacy. Completion rates on the in-service route are less consistent, both over time and between partner colleges. This is largely, but not only, because of financial and other pressures in further education in recent years which have led to some trainees having to leave the course because they have lost their teaching hours.
6. The vast majority of trainees who complete the course secure employment in further education, although in most cases this is as part-time lecturers in the first instance. Pre-service trainees report that they would value receiving more advice and guidance during the course on applying for jobs. Both the partner colleges, and other regional colleges, value highly the opportunity to recruit teachers from the pre-service course. The university attracts a diverse range of trainees to the training; there are no significant variations in attainment between different social groups.
7. By the end of their training, the vast majority of trainees have acquired the characteristics of good teachers as a consequence of the high-quality training they receive, and are meeting or exceeding the professional standards for teachers in the lifelong learning sector. A small proportion display the characteristics of outstanding teachers; however, a very small number are performing at a level that is no better than satisfactory.

8. Trainees have high expectations of their learners, and the training equips them with a range of techniques designed to meet the needs of individual learners. Trainees plan their lessons meticulously, often using detailed class profiles to tailor their teaching to the abilities of individuals within the group. The common lesson plan used by all trainees covers all key aspects comprehensively, and contains very useful prompts to guide trainees in their considerations. Although completing this plan is time consuming, it prepares trainees very well by inculcating in them good habits from the start of the training.
9. In most cases, trainees recognise the importance of ensuring that lessons proceed at a good pace, and that learners usually benefit from undertaking a range of activities or tasks within the lesson. Many trainees use new technologies confidently to heighten learners' interest and to access a wider range of resources in the classroom. Most trainees are willing to experiment with different techniques, and their well-honed skills of self-reflection enable them to evaluate well the success, or otherwise, of such innovations. A very small number of trainees have not yet acquired the skills to deal with low-level disruption from their learners. In a few instances, the activities set for learners, or the questions that they are asked, are not sufficiently demanding for the level of the course that the trainee is teaching.
10. Trainees are prepared well to recognise and cater for the diversity of learners that they teach. They demonstrate an astute understanding of the complex biographies of their learners, and are sensitive to the cultural differences that characterise most groups. Trainees are aware of the importance of helping their learners to improve their English and mathematics in all contexts that they teach, and often do this well. However, in a very small number of instances, trainees' own weaknesses with literacy make it difficult for them to reinforce good practice with their learners.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

11. The quality of training across the partnership is good, with some outstanding aspects, and has a direct impact on improving trainees' outcomes. In-service trainees in the partner colleges benefit from highly committed teacher educators who model good practice consistently. Most of the training at the university is of very high quality, although trainees report that a small minority is dull. In all the training, the focus on linking theory to practice is strong, as is the emphasis on trainees developing the self-reflective skills that are the key to becoming accomplished classroom practitioners. The links between the different aspects of the training provide a coherent approach to improving trainees' practice.
12. Teacher trainers provide high-quality support to trainees throughout the partnership. The partnership's inclusive approach to recruitment means that a significant number of trainees have complex personal or financial barriers to overcome if they are to succeed. Trainers show considerable

resolve and determination in helping trainees to overcome such barriers by recognising fully each trainee's personal needs, and in most cases such intervention is successful.

13. Arrangements to monitor trainees' progress are comprehensive, and encourage trainees to evaluate their own progress thoroughly in dialogue with their tutor. Underpinning the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation is a shared belief that the focus should be developmental rather than judgemental; the partnership does not grade trainees' work, or lessons, beyond making a judgement on whether the activity has passed the relevant criteria. While this works well for most trainees, a small number of weaker trainees have an unrealistic view of their own progress and attainment. As a consequence, such trainees are not sufficiently clear about precisely what they need to do to improve.
14. The university has developed a sophisticated electronic portfolio to record most aspects of a trainee's progress, although this is not always fully accessible in the partner colleges. The portfolio enables trainees to record a detailed evaluation of every aspect of their training, and includes a blog which is used to engage in high-quality dialogue with their university tutor. In some instances, trainees' plans for improvement do not identify with sufficient precision what they need to do to improve, or by when. Feedback from tutors on trainees' written assignments is usually rich and detailed, giving clear guidance on what could be done to improve the quality and depth of work. Both teacher trainers and mentors provide accurate evaluations of trainees' teaching, although the developmental feedback sometimes does not identify key areas for improvement clearly enough for trainees.
15. The training places appropriate emphasis on ensuring that trainees have the skills to help their learners improve their English and mathematics. However, although trainees with weaker literacy skills are identified during the recruitment process, arrangements for ensuring that they receive appropriate support to improve are not sufficiently rigorous. A focus on effective classroom management is evident both in the training and in the evaluation of trainees' progress, although a small number of pre-service trainees are yet to secure the necessary skills to ensure that all their learners pay constant attention in lessons. Trainees show a good understanding of the needs of learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although the training includes appropriate reference to the policy backdrop of the lifelong learning sector, trainees interviewed during the inspection did not display a good grasp of current roles and responsibilities within the sector.
16. The vast majority of trainees benefit from high-quality mentoring that helps them to develop and refine their specialist skills in teaching their subject. Pre-service trainees' placements are chosen carefully to ensure that trainees will receive good mentoring. In-service trainees receive strong support both from their mentors and, in most cases, from the departments in which they work. Many mentors are enthusiastic and

devote considerable time to supporting their trainees; trainees value this highly. All trainees benefit from having a number of their lessons observed jointly by their mentor and their tutor, following which a productive three-way dialogue leads to a rich evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement of the lesson observed. University link tutors provide an increasingly valuable link between the university and each of the partner colleges, both in respect of supporting individual trainees and in securing a good overview of the specific circumstances of each college.

### **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

17. The leadership and management of the partnership, both at the university and in the partner colleges, are good, and provide a sound basis for further sustained improvement. Since the last inspection, the strengths of the provision have been maintained and good progress has been made in tackling inspectors' recommendations for improvement.
18. The university has a long history of being an important regional and national provider of further education teacher training, and university leaders work relentlessly to secure and advance the provision's status in a challenging external environment. The partnership between the universities and the colleges is strong, and most of the partner colleges show an unwavering commitment at leadership level to strengthen the partnership further.
19. The partnership plays a highly valuable role in the region in identifying and training potential teachers for colleges and other providers in, and beyond, the West Midlands. The approach to recruitment is highly inclusive, and the partnership does much to attract trainees from previously under-represented groups. Such trainees are nurtured well and in the vast majority of cases develop the capacity to become good or better practitioners. However, in a very small number of cases the university takes too long to advise trainees who are unlikely to be successful.
20. A key strength of the partnership lies in the desire to create a genuine community of practice amongst all those involved in teacher education, including the trainees themselves. University staff have a strong research profile and considerable involvement in a range of local and national projects. This expertise and engagement is deployed for the benefit of the partnership as a whole, and increasingly staff from the partner colleges are engaging in work stemming from the university's wider interests. The use of web-based technologies to stimulate debate across the partnership is developing well. The establishment of university link tutors for each of the colleges has strengthened the dialogue between the different parts of the partnership. Link tutors provide high-quality support both to individual trainees and to the partner college as a whole, although there is scope for developing further their role in quality assurance by balancing the support offered with appropriate challenge where areas for improvement are identified.

21. The partnership uses a variety of mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision, including listening to trainees' views. Leaders and managers throughout the partnership have a realistic view of its many strengths and remaining weaknesses, although the latter are not always well recorded in formal documentation. The self-evaluation document produced by the partnership has a propensity for description at the expense of evaluation, and as such does not present a sufficiently sharp critique of the provision or articulate precise and measurable targets for improvement. The partnership is yet to resolve the dilemma of how to use data to evaluate trainees' progress and attainment accurately. Based on a careful consideration of the best way to support trainees' progress through developmental feedback, the partnership does not grade trainees on a measurable scale. This does make it difficult to measure trainees' progress from year to year, or to measure the value that the training adds within each cohort and the partnership should consider how this could be done. Although successful completion rates are used to monitor trends in achievement, these are not a sufficient indicator of performance because of the external factors, independent of the quality of training, that can have an impact on them. The recent introduction of a 'traffic light' grid to evaluate trainees' progress may have the potential to be developed into a quantifiable measure that can be used to inform self-evaluation.
22. Self-assessment within the partnership colleges is comprehensive and evaluative. Although the partner colleges are involved in the self-evaluation of the partnership, not enough use is currently made of the colleges' own assessments to inform the overall critique of the partnership's provision.

## **Annex: Partnership colleges**

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Birmingham Metropolitan College  
City of Wolverhampton College  
Dudley College  
Sandwell College  
Stourbridge College  
Walsall College  
RAF Cosford

## ITE partnership details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70084
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<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary/Secondary/GTP/FE (PCE)
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14-18 June 2010
<b>Previous inspection report</b>	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70084">http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70084</a>
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