

The University of Portsmouth ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 21 May 2018 Stage 2: 5 November 2018

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

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

# Inspection judgements

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Primary QTS** |
| **Overall effectiveness**  How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees? | 1 |
| **The outcomes for trainees** | 1 |
| **The quality of training across the partnership** | 1 |
| **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership** | 1 |

# The primary phase

## Information about the primary partnership

* The University of Portsmouth began offering a School Direct route to QTS with Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance (PTSA) in September 2017. This was the partnership’s first inspection.
* Initially, the partnership took on an existing programme for training teachers on the Isle of Wight. In 2018/19 it has expanded to offer a School Direct route to those wanting to train as a primary teacher in Portsmouth.
* In 2017/18 the partnership consisted of the university, PTSA and 12 schools on the Isle of Wight offering placements. In 2018/19, 18 schools across the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth are offering placements.
* Training is delivered through a service-level agreement by the PTSA. The lead school within the alliance is the Mary Rose Academy, a special school for pupils aged two to 19 years. It is also the lead school for the Solent Maths Hub and a specialist sports college. Trainees successfully completing the course are awarded QTS and a level 6 professional graduate certificate in education by the university.
* At stage 1 of the inspection, there were nine trainees: eight School Direct and one School Direct (salaried). Eight trainees began their training on the Isle of Wight in September 2018 and a further nine in Portsmouth schools.

## Information about the primary ITE inspection

* Inspectors visited five schools, observing three trainees and four newly qualified teachers (NQTs) over the two stages of the inspection. At stage 1, mentors, and in one case the tutor as well, observed trainees teach with the inspector and led the feedback to trainees. Two trainees were observed at both stages of the inspection.
* During stage 1 school visits, the inspector looked at evidence in trainees’ files to inform the evaluation of how well they were meeting the teachers’ standards and spoke with mentors, trainees and one headteacher. At stage 2 the inspector spoke with NQTs, headteachers and NQT mentors.
* Inspectors held a range of meetings at both stages to gather evidence. These included discussions with the director of ITT for PTSA, the Isle of Wight-based tutors, university leaders and members of Portsmouth Education Partnership.
* Across both stages of the inspection, inspectors reviewed documentation and records, including information about trainees’ achievements, the partnership’s evaluation of its work and improvement plans. They checked that the partnership was compliant with the criteria for ITE and statutory requirements, including

safeguarding. Inspectors also considered three responses to Ofsted’s trainee online questionnaire, which trainees completed in summer 2018.

## Inspection team

Ann Henderson HMI, overall lead inspector and phase lead inspector (stage 1) Alison Bradley HMI, lead inspector (stage 2)

# Overall effectiveness Grade: 1

## Key strengths of the primary partnership

* The partnership has already established an excellent local reputation because it is successfully accomplishing its mission to provide high-quality teachers for the local area. The director of ITT from the teaching school alliance provides strong leadership.
* The care taken in recruiting trainees who are both well suited to a career in teaching and resilient is repaid many times over. Very nearly all complete the course and all are highly employable.
* Trainees and NQTs are highly professional, committed to their chosen career and extremely grateful that they could access such high-quality training on the island.
* Trainees speak very highly of the island-based tutors. They are appreciative of

tutors’ experience and expertise, their willingness to go above and beyond in their support and the way they use their insight into trainees and schools to tailor placements.

* Training is enhanced by the wide range of expertise that can be accessed through the teaching school alliance. Notably, this manifests itself in strong subject knowledge and rightly placed confidence to teach across the primary curriculum.
* Well-trained, highly skilled mentors promote effective professional dialogue and form well-judged targets to support trainees’ development through training and into their NQT year.
* A relentless focus on pupils’ progress throughout training means trainees and NQTs think about pupils’ learning first and their own performance second.
* Complementary and rigorous layers of quality assurance ensure consistency in the quality of training and outcomes for trainees.

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

### The partnership should:

* + embed strategic leadership arrangements so that all partners are fully engaged and have the opportunity to influence future plans
  + refine evaluation and action planning in order to tighten accountability.

## Inspection judgements

1. An unwavering moral commitment underpins all aspects of the primary

partnership’s work. Leaders, tutors and partner headteachers are acutely aware that issues affecting national teacher recruitment are magnified by the water that separates the Isle of Wight from the mainland. They are determined to tackle this and provide high-quality teachers for a local area with its own particular challenges. Quite simply, the partnership is proving extremely successful in its mission.

1. The teaching school alliance and the university were diligent in their decision- making when setting up the partnership, despite a short lead-in time. Leaders were meticulous in assuring themselves of the quality of the existing provision and, drawing on their own expertise, identifying where they could improve it further. The result is a programme which is fully compliant with the criteria for ITE and statutory requirements and that prepares trainees very well for their first teaching posts. By the end of the course, all trainees meet the teachers’ standards at a good and often high level.
2. Even within this overall strong picture of NQTs’ teaching there are several notable features. They are skilled at establishing classroom routines and nurturing positive relationships with pupils. NQTs use behaviour management strategies which reinforce good behaviour well. Their subject knowledge is secure across the curriculum. They structure lessons well to build on what pupils already know and use other adults in their classroom to good effect. Above all, NQTs are constantly mindful of how well pupils are learning.
3. All trainees have been successful in gaining teaching posts on the Isle of Wight, mostly at their first interview. Employing headteachers are very complimentary about how they stand out at interview compared with others and are extremely pleased with the calibre of new teachers they receive. Indeed, as one headteacher commented, ‘sometimes it is easy to forget they are an NQT’.
4. Recruitment and selection processes are carefully thought out to thoroughly test both candidates’ potential and resilience for a career in teaching. Training does what it can to address workload issues, for example reducing the detail of planning over time. As a consequence, on the rare occasion a trainee defers for

a while, it is not because they are not cut out for teaching or the demands of the course.

1. The partnership sets out its high expectations of trainees’ behaviour from the word go, through the commitment charter trainees sign up to. So it is little wonder that schools find that trainees demonstrate good levels of personal and professional conduct from an early stage. By the time they are NQTs, they are already a credit to the profession. They settle well into staff teams, are confident working with parents and willingly make a positive contribution to wider school activities.
2. Trainees’ performance against Part 2 of the teachers’ standards is kept firmly and formally on the radar as part of the professional interview at the end of each phase of training. Meeting Part 2 at a high standard by the end of training is non-negotiable. NQTs have a strong sense of moral purpose and a secure understanding of the signs to be alert to and how to respond to safeguarding concerns.
3. Trainees benefit enormously from the well-deserved excellent reputation and local insight of the Isle of Wight-based tutors. Aside from the centre-based training they deliver, the tutors’ in-depth knowledge of the trainees is invaluable. They take great care to broker bespoke school placements which,

for example, complement previous experience or nurture an interest they have spotted. This is on top of providing contrast in the type of school, for example rural or urban schools, and including some that require improvement.

1. Tutors give very generously of their time, including encouraging those in whom they have spotted the potential to persevere with getting on the course. Should a trainee falter for some reason, support is swift and successful in quickly getting them back on track.
2. Trainees and NQTs are overwhelmingly positive about the training they receive. The coherence of the training programme is very well thought out, with the teachers’ standards and the impact of trainees’ teaching on pupils’ learning at its heart. Pre-course tasks and training days get trainees into the right mindset and ensure they are familiar with their main placement in order to hit the

ground running. School placements layer the development of trainees’ teaching skills from learning the craft of the classroom, through developing as a professional and on to becoming a critical professional.

1. Mentors are well trained to take trainees on this journey. They provide accurate feedback and ask probing questions to help trainees reflect on and consider how they can develop their practice. Although not always explicitly recorded as prompted on the partnership’s weekly review template, it is clear that this

professional dialogue has an ongoing focus on pupils’ progress. Unsurprisingly then, it is second nature for NQTs to critique their teaching with a focus on

pupils’ learning and to be striving to continue to improve their own practice and broaden their experience.

1. Centre-based training and tasks, including input from partnership schools, complement school placements well, so that NQTs are well prepared to teach across the primary curriculum and meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Their subject knowledge in the core subjects is strong, for example with a thorough grounding in phonics evident in very precise teaching of early reading and writing skills.
2. Termly audits in English, mathematics and science keep a careful check on the development of trainees’ subject knowledge. Outside of taught sessions, in their marking of written tasks, tutors are fastidious in picking up on and insisting trainees address any errors in written English and grammar to avert inaccuracies in their teaching.
3. Training is undoubtedly enhanced by the programme being under the wing of the PTSA, giving trainees access to a wide range of expertise. The impact of this can be seen in particular in the way NQTs’ strong mathematics subject knowledge and pedagogy shine through, how they are well-informed about meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and their confidence in teaching physical education (PE). Their understanding of the content and importance of foundation subjects is enhanced by research tasks which all benefit from by presenting their findings to the group.
4. The island-based tutors also benefit from now being employed by the teaching school alliance. There is a clear intent that they make the most of training and development opportunities on offer through PTSA, to keep themselves up-to- date and maintain a perspective beyond the island. Similarly, leaders are clear that, while they set out to meet a local need, NQTs must be capable of teaching in other contexts. Although most, if not all, NQTs have no immediate plans to leave the island, they are right to feel confident that their training has given them sufficient grounding to teach elsewhere.
5. For example, during their training NQTs visited a culturally diverse school on the mainland and had input on teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). They are applying what they learned to the small numbers of EAL pupils in their classes now. Nevertheless, leaders responded to the recommendation made at stage 1 of the inspection and have put plans in place for current trainees to actually experience teaching in culturally diverse schools.
6. Trainees’ progress is carefully monitored, ensuring that any gaps are plugged or support that is needed is provided so that, by the end of their training, they are more than ready to take on their first class. Mentors are skilled at setting short- term targets that support trainees’ development from week to week. Formal

targets set at the end of each school placement, complemented by mentor handover, ensure there is no loss of momentum at transition points. The same is true of the targets that trainees set with their mentors and tutors at the end of their training, which provide a well-judged basis for their ongoing professional development as NQTs.

1. The different layers of quality assurance are effective in ensuring accuracy and consistency in assessments of trainees, without being too onerous. Tutors quality assure and moderate the work of mentors first hand and, in turn, their work is appraised by the director of ITT for the PTSA. The link university tutor provides an additional objective view through sampling observations and assessments of trainees. A new electronic tracking system introduced this academic year is enabling tutors to monitor weekly reviews remotely and track trainees’ progress. There are plans for the university’s partnership manager to quality assure placement arrangements, but these have not yet started.
2. On an ongoing, practical basis, the director and tutors have a very good understanding of what is working well and what could be even better. The nature of the way they work is that they are constantly reflecting on the programme. They take feedback from training, mentors and headteachers very seriously and make adjustments as they go along, always with a view to securing the best outcomes for trainees. What the director and tutors refer to as their ‘just get on and do it’ approach has undoubtedly been successful, looking at what was achieved in 2017/18.
3. The director of ITT at PTSA and her counterpart in the university have taken a similar approach to capitalising on the success of the first year of operation. As such, they were able to expand the partnership to include the opportunity to train in Portsmouth from September 2018 and, in doing so, double the number of trainees across the two hubs.
4. There is no question that leaders at all levels, including headteachers, are steadfastly ambitious for the partnership and committed to addressing the local need to recruit and retain high-quality teachers. There is very good capacity for further improvement. The director of ITT for the PTSA, in her role which spans other phases, routes and partnerships, has an excellent understanding of local and national priorities in education and in particular in teacher training.
5. However, the strategic leadership of the partnership is still at an early stage. The newly formed strategic programme board has yet to formally engage school partners. On the face of it, the formal self-evaluation and improvement plan suggests that analysis is not quite as detailed, or forward planning as precise, as they need to be to improve provision further. While actions taken belie this, the lack of a clear line of sight and clarity about intended impact may hinder the board and university in holding leaders to account.

## Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees’ and NQTs’ teaching: Brading Church of England Primary, Brading

Carisbrooke Church of England Primary School, Newport Medina House School, Newport

Oakfield Church of England Aided Primary School, Ryde Queensgate Foundation Primary, Ryde

# ITE partnership details

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| --- | --- |
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