

University of Bristol

School of Education, 35 Berkely Square, Bristol BS8 1JA

Inspection dates

10 to 13 June 2024

Inspection judgements

Secondary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

The University of Bristol has a strong reputation for training subject experts who are confident to teach across the secondary phase, including in post-16 provision. A rigorous approach to assessment identifies any gaps in trainees' subject knowledge. Expectations are high that trainees will strengthen their knowledge, and they take pride in doing so.

Knowledgeable and experienced tutors within the university's School of Education provide trainees with personalised support. These professionals are readily available to support trainees with any difficulties. Programme leaders adjust the course requirements to keep workload manageable. The university offers specialist support for trainees' mental health and well-being.

Great care is taken to match trainees to their placement schools and the 'associate tutors' who provide mentoring. This helps to ensure that trainees have the opportunities and expert support they need to be successful. Communication between the centre and partner schools is strong. Trainee experiences in placement schools are consistently positive.

Trainees learn how to teach engaging lessons and promote good behaviour. Some trainees deepen their understanding of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and behaviour management by undertaking a short placement in a specialist setting. This is often a highly motivating experience which shapes trainees' future career plans.

Information about this ITE provider

- The University of Bristol provides teacher training for the secondary phase (11 to 18). All trainees gain experience teaching students in post-16 provision.
- There are 122 trainees enrolled in the academic year 2023/24. This includes a core group of 112 trainees who were recruited by the provider and a further 10 trainees recruited by schools as part of the School Direct (fee-paying) route. There are two School Direct partners: North Somerset Teaching Alliance and Cathedral Schools Trust.
- All trainees complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Education alongside the programmes leading to the award of qualified teacher status.
- The provider works with 46 partnership schools in the Bristol area and some further afield. In their most recent Ofsted inspection, most partner schools were judged good or outstanding. A small number were judged requires improvement or inadequate. Some schools are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team included four of His Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector.
- Inspectors met with programme and curriculum leaders from the university, as well as managers responsible for administering and running the programme. The lead inspector met with the head of the school of education and two members of the partnership board. These parties are responsible for governance.
- Inspectors spoke with headteachers, professional tutors and 'associate tutors' (mentors) from partner schools.
- Focused reviews were carried out in each of the subjects offered. This included science, English, history, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious education.
- Inspectors visited 11 partner schools and conducted focused review activities with one school remotely. Inspectors also spoke with school-based staff who were attending conferences and training events at the university.
- Inspectors spoke with 30 trainees and 21 early career teachers. Inspection activities considered the experiences of trainees in School Direct partner schools as well as trainees following the core programme.
- Inspectors spoke with three providers who host placements in specialist settings during the 'extension' phase of the programme.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including information about governance, safeguarding arrangements, trainee placements, the ITE curriculum, training resources and materials. Inspectors considered the responses to the surveys for trainees and staff.

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

Trainees benefit from the university's strong research tradition. For example, the School of Education contributes to the research field on how children learn and shares insights with trainees as part of the curriculum. Subject tutors are active researchers, giving trainees access to new and developing ideas, which they assimilate confidently.

All trainees gain substantial experience of teaching students in post-16. This helps to deepen their subject knowledge. Trainees are well prepared to teach GCSE and A-level qualifications and understand how assessment works in their subject. Trainees also consider what pupils learn in the primary phase. This helps them to appreciate the full scope of their subject and how children build up knowledge and skills over time.

The curriculum is designed so that trainees cover and revisit learning from the core content framework. They begin the course considering the role of classroom routines in promoting good behaviour and then build on their behaviour management skills through classroom practice. The provider enriches the curriculum by including projects on issues such as representation and education for sustainability. Trainees appreciate the currency of these themes and consider the implications for their subjects.

Trainees gain knowledge of inclusion and approaches to support disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND. Those who undertake specialist placements gain particularly deep insights. However, more widely, trainees do not apply their learning in this area as skilfully as they could. They understand how to present new information clearly and accessibly, but do not routinely refine their approaches with individual pupils.

The provider maintains high expectations of trainees by challenging them to meet 'moving targets' as they progress through the course. The provider recruits, trains and supports an effective team of mentors. These 'associate tutors' play a key role in assessing trainees and helping them to meet expectations. Graduates from the programme flourish, with some undertaking leadership roles. They are well prepared for the role of a teacher, including their safeguarding responsibilities.

The work of schools to raise aspiration and widen participation in higher education is enhanced by the provider. It acts as a hub through which local teachers access professional development. During an 'extension phase', trainees practise being curriculum designers, adding to curriculums in their placement schools. All of this helps to secure the strong reputation of the provider in Bristol.

There is a well-established culture of listening to and acting on the views of trainees. As a result, the provider has a good understanding of the trainee experience and uses this to improve the programme. Nonetheless, the information gathered from quality assurance activities does not always help to ensure that a full and accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision is held at the strategic level.

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

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Trainees are well prepared to make learning accessible to a broad range of pupils, but they do not often refine their approach for individuals where it is appropriate to do so. The provider should support trainees to adapt their teaching more precisely to help pupils overcome any barriers to their learning.
- Leaders at the strategic level do not hold a sharp picture of the quality of provision. The provider should ensure that quality assurance processes reliably identify the key aspects of the provision to focus on improving.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70006
Inspection number	10307530

This inspection was carried out in accordance with the [initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook](#), which sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2020.

Type of ITE provider	Higher education institution
Phases provided	Secondary
Date of previous inspection	30 April and 12 November 2018

Inspection team

Lydia Pride, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Emily Henry	Ofsted Inspector
Kelly Olive	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Hesketh	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Aykin	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools and colleges

Inspectors visited the following schools and colleges as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
Backwell School	132005	Secondary
Bristol Cathedral Choir School	109368	Secondary
Bristol Free School	136822	Secondary
Bristol Grammar School	109369	Secondary
Churchill Academy & Sixth Form	137000	Secondary
Clifton College	109334	Secondary
Cotham School	137440	Secondary
Fairfield High School	141705	Secondary
Montpelier High School	135581	Secondary
Richard Huish College	130808	Secondary
St Bernadette Catholic Secondary School	109331	Secondary
Wellsway School	137523	Secondary

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