

The OAKS ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 25 April 2016

Stage 2: 26 September 2016

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

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

Inspection judgements

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

	Secondary QTS
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	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 secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The OAKS (Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy and Keele SCITT) provides school-centred initial teaching training in the secondary phase. The partnership operates across five local authorities: Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Shropshire and Birmingham. There are currently 22 schools in the partnership, with Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy (OSSMA) the lead school. The range of schools includes outstanding and good schools, those requiring improvement, schools causing concern and those in challenging socio-economic circumstances. The partnership recruited its first trainees for the academic year 2014/15.
- The OAKS is a provider of both School Direct and core postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) training routes. Of the 62 trainees at the time of stage 1 of the inspection, 56 trainees were on the School Direct route with six on the core route. Training programmes for trainees on the School Direct and core routes are identical except for the application process and the organisation of secondary placements. All trainees follow a programme to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) and all have the opportunity to be certified by Keele University with a PGCE qualification. This can be at professional level or postgraduate level with 60 Masters credits awarded. Three trainees in 2015/16 gained QTS via the assessment only route.
- Training focuses on the 11 to 16 age range. Subjects offered include biology, chemistry, computer science, drama, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages, music, physical education, physics, religious education and social science.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Over the two stages of the inspection, inspectors observed eight trainees, eight newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and four former trainees in their second year of teaching. They met with headteachers, school-based teacher training coordinators and induction tutors, subject mentors, trainees, NQTs and former trainees in nine partnership schools and one employing school.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the partnership's executive and strategic boards as well as with staff, trainees and NQTs from schools that were not visited during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the partnership's self-evaluation and external examiner's report. They scrutinised evidence relating to training and the assessment of trainees, together with a wide range of partnership documentation. They analysed trainees' responses to Ofsted's online survey for the last two years.

Inspection team

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Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- The outstanding outcomes for trainees, including their achievement of the teachers' standards at a high level, the quality of their teaching over time and their high completion and employment rates.
- The strongly coherent and highly integrative structure and content of the training programme, which produces confident teachers, very well equipped to contribute immediately to their schools.
- The highly effective approach to assessing the teachers' standards that emphasises the importance of trainees' ability to promote good progress for the pupils they teach.
- The highly personalised, nurturing support provided by the OAKS for schools and for trainees, which contributes significantly to the quality of training provided and the quality of outcomes achieved.
- The rigour of the recruitment and selection process and the consistency with which it is implemented across partner schools. This reflects the partner schools' commitment to recruiting and training high-quality teachers for schools in the partnership, the region and nationally.
- The excellent approach to quality assurance, review and evaluation that has been embedded from the start of the partnership's operation and ensures that training and support are of the highest quality and trainee outcomes are well above average.
- The collaborative nature of the partnership, which engenders high levels of trust between partner schools, and provides opportunities for all schools to contribute to training the next generation of teachers to teach exceptionally well.
- The strategic board's vision for excellence and the strategic direction it provides, which ensure that the partnership focuses on recruiting trainees of the highest quality and training them to become at least good teachers in schools in challenging circumstances.
- The model of school-led teacher training supported by higher education provision that ensures trainees have the opportunity to develop excellent teaching skills in an intellectually rigorous context.

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

The partnership should:

- Ensure all trainees make effective use of information about pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to plan appropriate teaching and learning activities that enable them to make good progress.
- Ensure all trainees have the same level of opportunity to gain experience of teaching at key stage 5 as part of their enrichment.

Inspection judgements

1. Outcomes for trainees in the first two years of the OAKS operations have been outstanding, with no significant differences between groups of trainees or between subjects. Trainees demonstrate excellent practice in a majority of the teachers' standards, including those related to personal and professional conduct. Completion and employment rates in both years of operation were well above the national average. Approximately three quarters of trainees gained employment in the five local authorities that the partnership serves and almost two thirds gained positions in partnership schools.
2. Senior leaders in employing schools say that the OAKS's NQTs are very well prepared for their teaching posts, demonstrating particularly strong behaviour management skills. They report that the NQTs are very well organised, skilled in deploying good teaching and learning strategies, and have a comprehensive knowledge of assessment. These attributes ensure that the OAKS's NQTs adapt easily to the requirements and expectations of their schools.
3. Trainees, NQTs and former trainees have high expectations about the behaviour of pupils in their lessons. They demonstrate a sophisticated range of behaviour management techniques and deal quickly with low-level disruption. This is the result of very effective training by the partnership.
4. Trainees have very secure subject knowledge and are keenly aware of the need to continue to develop and maintain their professional expertise over the course of their careers. They demonstrate very good understanding of the requirements of the national curriculum for their subjects and of relevant examination specifications at key stages 4 and 5. For example, the focus on mastery, fluency and problem solving in mathematics that has been a key focus of training has meant that mathematics NQTs felt very well prepared when they started their jobs. Trainees and NQTs regularly and successfully develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through their teaching.
5. Trainees assess pupils' learning confidently and accurately. They use assessment information well to plan learning activities that meet the individual needs of pupils with different abilities and starting points. NQTs said that the

training they received meant that they were already confident about new accountability measures, such as Progress 8, when they took up their teaching posts.

6. Very strong personal and professional attributes are reflected in trainees', NQTs' and former trainees' excellent relations with pupils, their high expectations of how pupils should behave and what they might achieve, and their positive contributions to wider school life.
7. As a result of their excellent training and the confidence in the skills it has helped them develop, NQTs and former trainees are prepared to take risks. They plan exciting and inspiring lessons with ambitious learning objectives and high expectations for pupils' learning and progress. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson about irregular polygons, the NQT ensured that pupils were totally engaged by her delivery. She created a terrific excitement among pupils as a result of the group learning activities she organised. These encouraged quick thinking, accurate recall and collaborative learning.
8. Training is highly coherent, comprehensive and underpinned by strong academic, pastoral and professional support. The intellectual development and rigour provided by the PGCE element of the programme, which almost all trainees achieve, are seen by partnership schools as vital for the professional development of the teachers they train.
9. Very good integration of theory and practice, and of generic and subject-specific themes, is a consistently strong feature of the programme. For example, a senior leader from a school within the partnership contributes to the training on stretch and challenge for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. The content of this training is then built on in subject-specific sessions and in trainees' teaching practice. As a result, trainees and former trainees teach lessons that challenge pupils well, including the most able pupils.
10. Strong subject support from the OAKS staff allows the partnership to offer a broad and changing range of subjects, each of which is supported by experienced and skilled subject mentors and by subject experts, who are either OAKS- or school-based tutors. Much of the subject-based pedagogical and practical training takes place within partner schools, enabling the effective modelling of good teaching practice in classrooms, workshops, gyms and laboratories. This provides trainees with very good examples to try to emulate.
11. As well as experience in appropriately contrasting secondary school settings and in primary schools and sixth forms, a distinctive feature of the programme is the valuable opportunities it provides for trainees to experience a range of other educational settings. These include special schools, pupil referral units,

schools with high proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language, residential visits that focus on outdoor learning, and a range of multi-agency work placements, including with educational welfare officers and children's centres. Discussions with trainees indicate that these opportunities help them gain a strong understanding of the barriers faced by different groups of pupils and how they might incorporate this knowledge into their teaching and support for pupils.

12. Most trainees ensure that their teaching meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. This is the result of good-quality training, including through sessions delivered by specialist practitioners and good placement opportunities. As a result of this strong provision, four trainees from the 2015/16 cohort gained employment in special schools. However, not all trainees or NQTs have the confidence or expertise in teaching pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; some do not take information about the individual needs of these pupils sufficiently well into account in planning and delivering lessons to enable them to make really good progress. While the application of training about differentiation according to ability is well established in lessons, attention to these more personal individual needs is less firmly established.
13. As this is an 11 to 16 programme, the inclusion of opportunities to gain experience in the sixth form is a form of enrichment and most trainees benefit hugely from this. In this context, the provider has specific requirements so that trainees have opportunities to gain an equitable level of experience in their placement schools. However, although these requirements are met, the quality and depth of experience is not equivalent for all trainees. Thus while some trainees have opportunities to teach a series of lessons or engage in small-group work or team teaching, others only have observation experience. This may have longer-term consequences for trainees' future employment opportunities.
14. The well-planned primary school experience has a very strong impact on building trainees' understanding of the standards that pupils entering Year 7 are expected to have achieved. NQTs spoke confidently to inspectors about the primary school curriculum and were able to articulate how this knowledge informed their teaching.
15. As a result of highly effective central and school-based training, trainees and NQTs demonstrate a confident knowledge of equality and safeguarding issues, including the 'Prevent' duty. They understand their responsibilities and know what actions to take if they have any concerns about their pupils. They also have a good understanding of how fundamental British values might have an impact on their teaching and were able to provide examples of where they have specifically incorporated this in their lessons.

16. Support for trainees who need additional help is well established and procedures are well understood across the partnership. When necessary, leaders ensure that trainees receive bespoke support and counselling. This contributes to the high completion rates.
17. The very positive responses to the 2016 Ofsted trainee online questionnaire about the quality of training at the OAKS partnership exemplify the very high-quality training provided. Trainees regard all aspects of their training very highly. NQTs report very positively about how well the training has prepared them for their current posts and how confident they felt on taking up their posts. One NQT talked about the 'seamless transition from training to employment'.
18. The high quality of mentor feedback and target setting, together with the very good support from subject experts and personal tutors, ensures that trainees are given excellent guidance to develop their teaching skills. Assessment of trainees against the teachers' standards is rigorous, thorough and accurate. It gives due emphasis to all the teachers' standards, with additional weighting to those that have a key impact on promoting good progress in pupils' learning. Highly effective monitoring and support continues into the NQT year, particularly for those in partnership schools. The assessment only route involves a rigorous and very comprehensive assessment model.
19. As the external examiner noted, the partnership models the government's vision for school-led initial teacher training with appropriate support from a higher education institution in a very effective manner.
20. Strong leadership and excellent capacity to sustain and continue to improve the partnership are characteristics of the OAKS. The strategic board, which is made up of senior leaders of partnership schools and representatives from other groups of staff, trainees and NQTs, has a clear vision for excellence and provides strong strategic direction and oversight of the programme. The relationship between the OAKS staff, the lead school and other schools in the partnership provides an excellent balance between expertise in initial teacher education and effective school-based practice. The OAKS staff, in particular, provide a very distinctive and strongly nurturing approach to what they see as a family of partner schools and trainees. This has a very positive impact on the whole provision and its outcomes for trainees. The small but very effective OAKS administrative team, based at Keele University, establishes and maintains close day-to-day relationships with, and between, partner schools and trainees.
21. The partnership is very responsive to internal and external review and is thoroughly committed to ongoing improvement. A comprehensive, joined-up programme of quality assurance, review and evaluation supports continuous improvement exceptionally well. The provider's willingness and ability to be

flexible and respond to any emerging issues rapidly means that trainees quickly benefit from the improvements made. Evaluations of the central programme by the partnership schools are, without reservation, highly positive. They note, routinely, the excellent and personalised communication between the OAKS and their schools, the promptness of responses to any queries and the clear guidance on policies and procedures. Partnership schools say they feel valued and that their opinions matter. The large majority of schools in the partnership say that the OAKS is their preferred provider. Some have decided to allocate all of their teacher training placements to the OAKS partnership.

22. Highly effective moderation arrangements ensure accurate and consistent assessment. Regular visits from tutors ensure consistency in lesson observation judgements by mentors and professional tutors in different schools. Cross-school moderation between first and second placement subject mentors reinforces this high level of consistency. Mentors and trainees are very positive about the process of cross-school moderation. In addition to assuring the accuracy of judgements, this process provides opportunities for trainees to meet new mentors and for mentors to check how well new trainees are teaching and for them to respond to their development needs. In addition, the experience that mentors get from visiting each other's schools develops their own expertise.
23. Partner schools recognise fully the benefits of the partnership for the professional development opportunities it gives their staff as a result of the highly effective training provided for subject mentors and professional tutors. Partnership schools are keen to involve more of their staff because of the strong impact that this training has on developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.
24. This very strong and highly collaborative partnership engenders high levels of trust between partnership schools that are entirely committed to the development of the next generation of teachers. This is the result of open and honest professional relationships that have been skilfully forged with this relatively small number of regional secondary schools.
25. Recruitment procedures are extremely rigorous. The consistent approach to recruitment across the partnership ensures that partnership schools know that trainees will be of high calibre. All recruitment interviews are conducted in partner schools. This allows prospective trainees to see a typical training/working environment at first hand and enables the use of more imaginative interview tasks and activities, all involving input from pupils. Assessment of trainee potential at the selection stage is accurately reflected in the final grades following the training programme, indicating the rigour of the assessment process and the expertise of staff involved in the process. Effective recruitment and training ensures that the partnership is helping to

meet recruitment needs in the region as well as developing leadership capacity within schools.

26. A good proportion of schools in the partnership provide education in schools in challenging socio-economic situations. This ensures that the partnership meets its stated aim of preparing trainees to teach effectively in schools in potentially challenging circumstances.

27. The partnership complies fully with all requirements for ITE and has robust systems in place to check and verify this. Safeguarding requirements are fully met. Equality of opportunity is threaded through all areas of provision, including in terms of recruitment and selection, support for trainees, the focus of training, and ensuring that trainees understand the importance of this in their own practice.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

Alsager School, Alsager

Brine Leas School, Nantwich

Chesterton Community Sports College, Chesterton

Haywood Academy, Stoke-on-Trent

Ormiston Horizon Academy, Stoke-on-Trent

Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy, Stoke-on-Trent

Shavington Academy, Shavington

Sir Graham Balfour High School, Stafford

Walton High School, Stafford

Wolstanton High School, Wolstanton

ITE partnership details

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Provider address	The OAKS, Chancellor’s Building, Keele University, Staffordshire ST5 5BG



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