

York St John University

Initial Teacher Education, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, North Yorkshire YO31 7EX

Inspection dates

21 to 24 March 2022

Inspection judgements

	Primary age-phase	Secondary age-phase
Overall effectiveness	Good	Good
The quality of education and training	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good	Good

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

'There is something special about York St John trainees. They are diligent, kind, caring and self-reflective.' This comment, from a headteacher who offers placements for trainees, is typical of those made to inspectors. Leaders' vision is for trainees to be 'citizens not tourists' of York St John University. This is exactly what trainees experience. The vast majority feel well supported both at university and when on placements. Any issues or concerns are swiftly resolved by leaders. Communication between trainees, tutors, leaders and mentors is strong.

Trainees are well prepared for a career in teaching by York St John University. They learn to manage their own workload effectively. Trainees gain the skills and confidence to manage pupils' behaviour well. They understand their role in safeguarding pupils. Trainees are particularly well prepared for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All trainees visit specialist settings to help them to understand the principles of adaptive teaching.

The curriculum for trainees is well considered and logical. It is delivered effectively and with passion by experts. Trainees develop subject knowledge and subject-specific pedagogy linked to their specialism and chosen age-range well. In the primary phase, the curriculum

ensures that trainees have the knowledge that they need to help pupils to learn to read with confidence and fluency.

Leaders run a genuine partnership between schools and the university. The 'continuum', which assesses trainees' strengths and areas for development as they develop as teachers, was a joint venture. It is used effectively both through the course and as trainees move into their teaching career. Transition into employment as an early career teacher (ECT) is particularly strong.

Information about this ITE partnership

- The partnership has 485 trainees in total. The partnership operates over the primary and secondary phases.
- In the primary phase, three training routes are available: the undergraduate Bachelor of Arts with Qualified Teacher Status (BA QTS) route; the university-centred Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) route; and the PGCE School Direct fee-paid route. Trainees on the BA QTS route opt for either the 3–7 primary age-phase or the 5–11 primary age-phase. The university-centred PGCE route can be taken full- or part time.
- All secondary-phase trainees follow the PGCE School Direct fee-paid route. The partnership offers the following subject specialisms: biology, chemistry, drama, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education (PE), physics and religious education.
- In the primary phase, the partnership works with 480 schools in 20 local authorities.
- In the secondary phase, the partnership works with 52 schools in six local authorities.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by seven of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the deputy head of the school of education, language and psychology, the associate head of school (education), the senior admissions officer, the placements manager, and the head of student systems and records. They also spoke with the four programme leads, subject and curriculum leads, initial teacher education (ITE) tutors, the school's partnership lead and the ECT lead. The lead inspector spoke with the vice-chancellor and the head of school.
- Inspectors also held conversations with: ECTs; the head of placements; partnership mentors; professional mentors/tutors; and university link tutors.
- Inspectors met with alliance leads, and spoke with headteachers from schools hosting trainees and from schools employing ECTs from the partnership. An inspector spoke with the external examiner.
- Inspectors looked at trainees' e-portfolios and visited some university and School Direct teaching sessions (online and in person). An inspector visited a specialist setting that hosts an enrichment placement for trainees as part of their training in SEND.
- Inspectors sampled a wide range of documentation relating to the ITE training programmes. This included subject and phase curriculum plans, trainees' assignments and trainees' records of target-setting and mentoring.
- Inspectors also reviewed a wide range of information relating to the leadership and management of the partnership. These documents included leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning documents. Information relating to Department for Education (DfE) ITE criteria and supporting advice was also considered.

- Inspectors considered 136 responses to Ofsted's online survey for trainees and 32 responses to its online survey for staff.
- In the primary phase, inspectors visited or communicated with 13 placement schools and spoke with 25 trainees. They conducted focused reviews of early reading, mathematics and science. As part of the focused review of the foundation subjects, inspectors looked closely at art and music.
- In the secondary phase, inspectors visited or communicated with seven placement schools and spoke with 22 trainees. They conducted focused reviews of English, geography, history, mathematics and PE.

Primary phase report

What works well in the primary phase and what needs to be done better?

Leaders are highly ambitious that trainees be well prepared for the world of teaching. The strong curriculum and assessment systems that leaders have put in place support this. The partnership makes a valuable contribution to meeting local and national need for the supply of knowledgeable, resilient and confident teachers. School leaders regard York St John ECTs as having 'something special'.

Positive relationships across the partnership, and a clearly collegiate vision, underpin success. Leaders have created a culture in which partners feel valued and listened to. Decisions that leaders make are rooted in consistently high expectations. Leaders' constant self-evaluation helps them to swiftly respond to any aspect of provision that does not meet their high bar. Leaders are decisive, effective and strive for excellence. They have a track record of improvement.

Strategic partners in the university and in schools have strong curriculum knowledge. Centre-based staff undertake continuous research to support their decisions and show trainees how to do the same. Leaders have ensured that the core content framework (CCF) weaves effectively through the intended curriculum. In many instances, the curriculum exceeds the requirements of the CCF in all course routes.

The importance of early reading and systematic synthetic phonics is very well understood. A progressive sequence of research, training, observation and additional sessions from partners ensures that trainees know how to teach pupils to read well.

The curriculum to ensure that trainees know how to meet the different needs of pupils, and to adapt their teaching, is exceptional. The great attention the partnership has given to this area in recent years has paid off. Meeting the needs of pupils with SEND is a thread that runs through all subject training and placements. Trainees are well prepared to support pupils well.

The assessment of trainees is purposeful. Trainees are self-reflective and have the ability to review, assess and make well-informed choices because of the high value that leaders place on these attributes. Trainees' workload is carefully considered. Leaders encourage trainees to 'improve not prove' throughout a continuum of assessments that help trainees to further explore and embed the principles they are taught.

Mentors provide trainees with effective guidance because of the strong training and support given by the partnership. Link tutors robustly check on the quality of mentorship across all training routes. Leaders quickly spot and address where support and direction are needed, for mentors and for trainees. Trainees feel very well supported in their academic and personal needs. Leaders have identified that further precision is needed to ensure that school placements give all trainees the opportunity to test out their training in some of the wider curriculum subjects, such as modern foreign languages and art. Although training for

these aspects is thorough and ambitious, trainees have not always had the chance to test this knowledge out in school.

What does the ITE partnership need to do to improve the primary phase?

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, there is a difference in the opportunities trainees have in school to apply the knowledge that they have learned in the centre and in School Direct sessions. This means that occasionally, trainees feel less well equipped to teach these areas of the curriculum successfully. They have fewer opportunities to observe and teach these subjects and to discuss them with their mentor. Although leaders do ensure that aspects of training compensate when this occurs, they should continue to work with partners to ensure that trainees consistently have the opportunity to apply what they have learned across the curriculum.

Does the ITE partnership primary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Secondary phase report

What works well in the secondary phase and what needs to be done better?

Leaders have designed an ambitious and distinctive curriculum. Leaders provide trainees with considered insight into educational research. Trainees are encouraged to discuss the links between educational theory and professional practice. This helps trainees to become highly reflective practitioners. Leaders make sure that centre-based training is reinforced in placement schools.

Leaders ensure that trainees acquire subject knowledge from many sources. University training, school experience and academic assignments are interwoven to build this knowledge. Tutors and mentors use subject knowledge audits to customise training for individual trainees. In some subjects, however, the subject knowledge that leaders want trainees to know is not mapped out clearly. Nonetheless, overall, trainees are well equipped to teach their subjects. Alliance leaders from partnership schools are involved in the design and evaluation of the ITE curriculum. This enables them to plan training that complements the university programme.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that anticipates what trainees will need for their future career. It often goes beyond the requirements of the CCF. Trainees discover how to introduce knowledge to pupils in steps over time. Trainees learn how to use different types of assessment well. Trainees' understanding and use of questioning are particularly insightful. Leaders provide trainees with a thorough understanding of safeguarding and pupil well-being. The ITE programme foregrounds the importance of professional behaviours. Many trainees become actively involved in the wider life of their placement schools. They lead clubs, join trips and attend parents' evenings.

Mentors benefit from thorough training. Trainees are highly appreciative of the weekly reflection meetings with mentors. Leaders have systems in place to check on the quality of mentoring. Despite this, there is some variance in the quality of improvement targets that trainees receive; the impact of leaders' quality assurance systems is variable in relation to this.

Leaders have designed an assessment continuum that is used well to assess trainees' progression. Mentors and link tutors contribute to these ongoing reviews of trainee practice. Members of the steering group, along with external examiners, provide further assurance on the accuracy of the process.

Leaders have built the expertise of the secondary-phase team. Trainees access high levels of scholarship and expertise. They receive extremely effective training on identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.

The ITE secondary phase at York St John University is well led. Course leaders demonstrate moral purpose. They have extended the reach of the partnership to support schools in areas in which teacher recruitment has been more difficult. They are building subject hubs to spread expertise across and beyond the current partnership. Course leaders are valued by trainees and partnership staff. Leaders provided sensitive and considered support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders are attentive to the social and emotional needs of trainees and their colleagues. Trainees described how leaders had adapted the course in response to their health needs and family commitments. Course leaders and alliance leaders work together to pick the right trainees for the partnership and the profession. They have ensured that trainees achieve successful outcomes. Headteachers are highly appreciative of the professional attributes and the personal integrity of the trainees they have employed from York St John University.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, university-led subject training is less focused than in others. Here, the subject knowledge that leaders want trainees to know is not mapped out clearly. Leaders should further refine subject training to ensure that key knowledge is outlined equally well across all subjects.
- The impact of leaders' quality assurance systems is variable in relation to trainees' improvement targets. In some cases, targets set by mentors do not outline the steps trainees should take to improve their teaching clearly enough. Leaders should take further action to check that target-setting is consistently effective for all trainees.

Does the ITE partnership secondary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70118
Inspection number	10214491

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty’s Inspectors and Ofsted Inspectors in accordance with the ‘Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook’.

This framework and handbook set out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2020.

Type of ITE partnership	Higher education institution
Phases provided	Primary Secondary
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 May 2017 16 to 18 October 2017

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Overall lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Malcolm Kirtley, Phase lead inspector (secondary phase)	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Kate Rowley, Phase lead inspector (primary phase)	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Alison Aitchison	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Adrian Fearn	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Knox	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Marcus Newby	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Lynne Selkirk	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Vellensworth	Her Majesty’s Inspector

Annex: Provider settings, schools and colleges

Inspectors visited trainees and staff at the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase	Date joined	Current Ofsted grade
Ackworth Howard Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School	130977	Primary	January 2008	Requires improvement
All Saints Roman Catholic High School	121720	Secondary	September 2012	Outstanding
Barnby Dun Primary Academy	138163	Primary	April 2016	Good
Bugthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	118000	Primary	January 2009	Good
Clifton Green Primary School	121283	Primary	January 2008	Requires improvement
Egglescliffe School	143063	Secondary	September 2019	Not previously inspected
Green Lane Primary Academy	140722	Primary	November 2007	Good
Grimes Dyke Primary School	107924	Primary	January 2010	Good
Hob Moor Oaks Academy	144709	Primary	March 2008	Not previously inspected
King James's School	121687	Secondary	January 2014	Good
Norton Community Primary School	121456	Primary	January 2010	Good
Park End Primary School	111632	Primary	November 2011	Good
Riccall Community Primary School	121457	Primary	January 2009	Good
Sherburn High School	145819	Secondary	September 2015	Not previously inspected
The Vale Primary Academy	138332	Primary	December 2021	Outstanding
Thirsk School & Sixth Form College	121666	Secondary	January 2008	Good
Trinity Catholic College	142382	Secondary	January 2011	Requires improvement
Vale of York Academy	143864	Secondary	January 2014	Good

Wilberfoss Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	117998	Primary	January 2009	Good
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