

United Teaching National School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)

Paddington Academy, 50 Marylands Road, London W9 2DR

Inspection dates

16 to 19 January 2023

Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education and training

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

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

Trainees receive the highest standards of training and education. All trainees, whatever route they follow, primary or secondary, apprenticeship or School Direct, experience the same ambitious programme. They are exceptionally well prepared for the rewards and challenges of the teaching profession. This is because the curriculum enables trainees to acquire and apply extensive knowledge of how to teach their subject or phase.

Well-being is right at the top of leaders' priorities and is woven into the training programme seamlessly. Trainees know that everyone, from subject and professional mentors to senior leaders, takes great care to support them to be successful. Many trainees said that their mentors 'are amazing'.

The training programme is extremely well structured. Trainees are taken through a logical sequence of ideas and tasks that link theory with classroom practice very effectively. They learn about the theory of teaching and build on this progressively over time to hone their practice in the classroom. Behaviour management and safeguarding are key components of the programme, as is early reading for primary-phase trainees.

Trainees develop their teaching expertise in their phase or subject with great alacrity. This is because the programme provides lots of time for trainees to practise their craft. Trainees successfully learn how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Information about this ITE provider

- The United Teaching National SCITT currently has 39 primary-phase trainees and 130 secondary-phase trainees.
- The SCITT provides programmes for the School Direct (salaried and non-salaried) route, the Post Graduate Certificate of Education route and the Post Graduate Teaching Apprentice route.
- The provider has 15 partnership schools in the primary phase and 51 in the secondary phase.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by three of His Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector.
- Inspectors met with the provider's leaders, including the accounting officer, leaders of the primary and secondary phases and the leadership development board.
- Inspectors met with two groups of headteachers from schools that work with the provider. Inspectors held meetings with trainees, school-based mentors, professional mentors, visiting professional mentors and early career teachers (ECTs).
- Inspectors scrutinised the provider's documents related to improvement planning and curriculum content.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to the trainee survey and staff survey. They spoke to 11 primary-phase trainees, 27 secondary-phase trainees and 23 ECTs.
- In the primary phase, focused reviews were conducted in early reading, mathematics and geography. Three schools were visited. In the secondary phase, focused reviews were conducted in English, mathematics, combined science (comprising physics, biology and chemistry), history and music. Seven schools were visited. Other aspects of the ITE curriculum in each phase were considered as part of this inspection.

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

The United Teaching National SCITT offers the highest quality of education and training to its trainees. Leaders' vision, attention to detail and expertise all ensure that the curriculum offer is translated into an ambitious, rigorous and extremely successful training programme.

The clarity of leaders' vision sets the tone of the SCITT. The SCITT's excellence is underpinned by high expectations and a coherent programme, with trainees' readiness to teach their subject or phase developed in aspirational but manageable steps. From the very start of a trainee's journey to becoming a successful teacher, leaders ensure that their vision of 'The best in everyone' is a central tenet. For example, the rigorous recruitment process ensures that trainees start their course with their eyes open about the demands of the training and the expectations of teaching.

This rigorous approach continues throughout the training programme. The carefully constructed curriculum ensures that trainees learn about pedagogical theory and the research that lies behind it. Each week, they take their theoretical learning into the classroom, where expert guidance and support enable trainees to apply what they have been taught to their practice and subject diligently. The link between the centre-based and school-based training is methodical. Important ideas are revisited and followed up thoroughly, for example about the use of formative assessment and its impact on pupils' learning.

Leaders ensure that the Department for Education (DfE) core content framework is complied with fully. This is used purposefully to anchor the training and the support that trainees receive. Assessment is used effectively by SCITT leaders and tutors to check that trainees are learning the intended curriculum. If there are times when the programme needs refining to meet trainees' needs, SCITT leaders and tutors step in and act effectively. This includes bespoke programmes for individual trainees when needed.

Clear and timely communication between SCITT leaders, school-based staff and trainees contributes significantly to how well the programme is working in practice. For example, weekly e-bulletins help to ensure that everyone understands the detail of the centre-based training and the focus for the coming week's school-based activities. While there is flexibility for school-based mentors to adapt this focus to meet trainees' needs, this is always within clear parameters set at the centre.

Primary-phase trainees are provided with a carefully thought-out programme to develop their expertise in teaching early reading effectively. Trainees become increasingly skilled and knowledgeable about how to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, become fluent and accurate readers. Whether they teach in early years, key stage 1 or in Years 3 to 6, all trainees become confident in teaching systematic synthetic phonics to teach pupils to read.

The ITE curriculum places a strong focus on subject expertise and subject pedagogy. In developing, refining and delivering the ITE curriculum, leaders draw astutely on expertise from subject advisers within the United Learning multi-academy trust. For example, subject advisers regularly design and lead subject-specific training. This ensures that trainees receive expert training based on up-to-date research. Leaders make sure that the delivery of subject-specific content builds effectively on trainees' existing knowledge.

Leaders' processes to assure the quality of the training are rigorous and effective. Visiting professional mentors play a pivotal role in checking on the quality of mentoring and overseeing mentors' work. This is supported by a rigorous training programme for school mentors that focuses on ensuring that mentors are fully equipped to support trainees' successful progression through the curriculum. As a result, trainees receive high-quality, developmental feedback from their mentors that lines up closely with the messages of school- and centre-based training. This has a positive impact on trainees' practice and confidence, including in their readiness to teach their subject or phase.

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

- The United Teaching National SCITT meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Do apprenticeships in the ITE provider's primary and secondary phase satisfy the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision?

- The provider meets the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision in the primary and secondary phase.

The apprenticeship programme enables trainees to be exceptionally well prepared to contribute to their workplace. Every aspect of the apprenticeship is planned carefully and implemented consistently well. From the initial assessment onwards, leaders, trainers and mentors provide expert support and guidance. The needs of both trainees and employers shape the training programme purposefully. This helps to ensure that all trainees build up and deepen their knowledge, skills and behaviours in a progressive manner.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70333
Inspection number	10254565

This inspection was carried out 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 provider	School-centred initial teacher training
Phases provided	Primary Secondary
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2017 and 20 November 2017

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Colenso	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Rawstorne	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Smith	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)
Bacon's College	145313	Secondary
The Elms Academy	134815	Secondary
Paddington Academy	130912	Secondary
The Hurlingham Academy	141617	Secondary
The John Roan School	147439	Secondary
Sedgehill Academy	148003	Secondary
Walthamstow Academy	132727	Secondary
Langford Primary	141685	Primary
Wilberforce Primary School	139824	Primary

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