

# University of Sussex

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates 10–13 March 2014

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This inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors in accordance with the *ITE Inspection Handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from January 2013.

The inspection draws upon evidence from each phase and separate programme 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*

	<b>Primary QTS</b>	<b>Secondary QTS</b>	<b>ITE for FE</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
The outcomes for trainees	1	2	2
The quality of training across the partnership	1	2	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1	2	2

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## **Overview of the ITE partnership**

The overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership is outstanding in primary; good in secondary; and good in further education.

This is because of the rigorous and very successful selection and recruitment procedures and the subsequently good and better training that is provided for trainees, which result in very nearly all primary trainees completing the course and employment rates that are at least above sector norms for all groups of trainees.

### **Key findings**

- Most trainees are highly committed and become good and outstanding practitioners by the end of their courses.
- Support for trainees is highly flexible and closely tailored to meet the training needs of all individuals. Consequently, almost all trainees are successful in gaining employment quickly at the end of their training.
- All those involved in the partnership show strong engagement with a shared vision of providing high-quality professional development and training opportunities to schools and to the wider local learning community.

### **To improve, the ITE partnership should:**

- ensure that all trainees are encouraged to achieve their best by setting them developmental targets that are clear, precise and aspirational, and ensure that trainees' progress towards meeting these targets is subsequently monitored carefully by all mentors
- ensure that the rigorous and well-embedded quality assurance system used by the University enables trainers to provide consistently high quality written feedback to all trainees
- Align more closely the formative assessment model used to support trainees' progress with the grading of their teaching against the Teachers' Standards, to give trainees, mentors and leaders across the partnership a clear, coherent view of trainees' progress at different assessment points throughout their training

### **Information about this ITE partnership**

- The University of Sussex has a very long history as a provider of initial teacher education (ITE). The partnership offers training in the primary- and secondary-age phases, including the 7 to 14 age range, each leading to a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) with qualified

teacher status (QTS). The primary phase and the secondary phase both include some trainees on a core programme and others on a School Direct training or salaried programme.

- The University also works in partnership, largely in the role of validating body, with two general further education colleges in providing teacher training for those working in post-16 education and training. At the time of inspection, 23 trainees were working towards the diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector (DTLLS). The training takes place at the colleges. The University has decided to discontinue its involvement in training for further education teachers from the summer of 2014.

## **The primary phase**

### **Information about the primary partnership**

- The University's School of Education and Social Work is a small provider of primary ITE offering a distinct one-year PGCE and a primary School Direct training option. School Direct training is closely linked to PGCE provision, sharing teaching and management staff. Successful completion of training leads to an academic award at master's level and QTS, with the skills to teach children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, with enhancement opportunities in Early Years (pre-school). There are 41 trainees on the primary course.
- The School of Education has close relationships with a wide range and type of schools, including special schools. Trainees may opt to specialise during their professional practice in teaching the age ranges 3–9 or 5–11.

### **Information about the primary ITE inspection**

- Inspectors observed eight lessons taught by current trainees and one lesson taught by a newly qualified teacher (NQT) in a total of eight schools.
- Inspectors held discussions with trainees and former trainees in partnership schools, a group of trainees at the University and trainers, leaders and managers, and headteachers from partnership schools.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including: the provider's evaluations of its performance; course handbooks; trainees' achievement, completion and employment data; and reports by external examiners and improvement plans.
- Inspectors reviewed the provider's website.

### **Inspection team**

David Edwards	Her Majesty's Inspector, primary phase lead inspector
Jane Neech	Her Majesty's Inspector, assistant primary phase lead inspector

**The key strengths of the primary partnership**

- The rigorous and very successful selection and recruitment procedures which result in high completion and employment rates for all groups of trainees.
- The highly reflective, self-motivated and confident trainees who are well prepared to teach the full range of the primary curriculum.
- The professional dialogue promoted and sustained by the University that ensures all trainees receive effective oral feedback.
- The excellent university-based training that is responsive to trainees' emerging individual needs and ensures an appropriate balance between academic knowledge and practical teaching experiences.
- Training that ensures trainees are kept fully up-to-date with changing national requirements and priorities.
- The comprehensive and robust assessment process which is effectively used to evaluate trainees' progress and development; all trainees regularly receive personalised targets for further improvement along with the necessary additional support and experiences to become confident practitioners.
- The highly responsive communication channels between the University and partnership schools which ensure all stakeholders are kept well informed about school experience placements.
- The partnership's success in sharing its vision for excellence by providing high quality professional development and training opportunities to schools and the wider learning community; this shows there is strong capacity to continue to improve.

**What does the primary partnership need to do to improve further?****The partnership should:**

- ensure the rigorous and well-embedded quality assurance system used by the University, enables trainers to provide succinct written feedback that matches the consistently high quality oral feedback given regularly to trainees

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are outstanding**

1. In the two years since the training programme was established, a strong upward trend of high quality outcomes for trainees confirms their performance to be outstanding. At the time of the inspection, the proportion of current trainees who were on track to attain at an outstanding level by the end of their training had also increased when compared to the same time in the previous year. The proportion of trainees whose attainment in relation to the Teachers' Standards is outstanding is well above the sector average and there are no significant differences in the outcomes achieved by different groups of trainees. Data also show the high completion rates of trainees in both years; all trainees successfully secured a teaching post in 2013.
2. Inspectors found that trainees have a well-deserved reputation within the partnership schools of being highly reflective practitioners who listen, act and respond quickly to advice offered by their mentors in order to improve their teaching skills. This attitude allows trainees to make rapid progress in becoming at least good and often outstanding teachers.
3. Trainees demonstrate a very secure understanding of the changes associated with the revised 2014 National Curriculum for primary and programmes of study in English, mathematics, science, computing and religious education. Trainees make highly effective use of teaching aids, technology and support staff in their lessons to stimulate and engage pupils in exciting learning experiences. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, a group of pupils used laptop computers to very good effect to create visually stimulating word-banks that could then be used by the whole class to enhance and improve their writing skills.
4. Current trainees are making excellent progress towards attaining the Teachers' Standards. Similarly, NQTs sustain very high standards. Both trainees and NQTs are particularly well informed and experienced in the use of assessment strategies to secure pupils' progress and to decide the next steps in their learning. By giving regular oral feedback and maintaining accurate marking of pupils' books, trainees and NQTs provide pupils with exceptionally helpful guidance on ways to improve their work further. For example, when teaching children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, an NQT provided an excellent range of teacher-led and child-initiated activities that promoted the children's curiosity and independence exceptionally well.
5. Trainees demonstrate calm confidence in responding to and managing pupils' behaviour in lessons. They plan in detail and provide very well for

the needs of more-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They are able to draw upon an extensive range of behaviour management strategies gained during their training. As a result, trainees become expert in weaving a range of highly effective behaviour management strategies seamlessly through their teaching. This ensures that trainees maintain pupils' very good attitudes to learning in lessons.

6. Trainees possess the essential knowledge and understanding of the diversity and equalities issues within schools which they use to inform their lesson planning and provide for the learning needs of all pupils. They deploy teaching assistants and other adults very effectively to ensure groups of pupils, including the most able and those who have disabilities and special educational needs, are provided with the right kind of support and challenge to make good progress. Headteachers and mentors also praise the high standards of professional conduct exhibited by trainees and their willingness to become involved in the wider life of the schools when they are on placement.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is outstanding**

7. All training across the partnership establishes an exceptionally strong link between theory and practical pedagogy, and this means that trainees are developing an extremely clear and practical understanding of how different pupils learn. Training placements provide trainees with a comprehensive range of teaching experiences. Course and programme leaders have fully embraced the planned changes to the National Curriculum that are due to be introduced later this year. Schools and trainees say that they value highly the six-month-long first teaching placement as it allows trainees to engage meaningfully with parents and carers. In particular, it allows trainees to monitor the progress of pupils over an extended period of time and provides them with a well-informed overview of progression in reading.
8. All of the trainees who met with inspectors spoke very highly about the quality of training and support they have received from the university-based tutors and their mentors in school. For example, trainees and NQTs speak highly of the training they have received in mathematics. They say that it is taught systematically, links theory with lots of practical ideas and is 'inspiring'. Similar comments were also made relating to the teaching of reading and phonics. Inspectors found these views to be confirmed by the extremely positive results from surveys completed by trainees. The University has clear systems to ensure consistency of training experience is maintained in all partnership schools. The weekly lesson observations of trainees that are carried out by mentors are accurately used to assess trainees' progress in meeting the Teachers' Standards. Inspectors observed the feedback offered on



these occasions by mentors and confirm that it was evaluative and remained appropriately focused on pupils' learning. Mentors use this high quality feedback to encourage trainees to think deeply about how they might improve their teaching. It also allows trainees to understand how well they are progressing in developing their teaching skills and to agree with the targets for further improvement suggested by mentors.

9. University-based teaching effectively extends the critical-thinking skills of trainees. Trainees are expected, when on placement, to read academic literature to support their developing knowledge and experiences. Trainers are expert in their field and possess a proven track record of working in partnership schools and with other education experts. The course ensures trainees have regular opportunities to reflect on their developing teaching skills and engage with each other through sharing ideas in practical tasks, case studies and assignments. Trainees' strengthening knowledge and experiences are recorded within reflective journals and sketchbooks. These are of high quality and enable trainees to set and record their subject knowledge, experience and research within a meaningful context. This complements the balance of high quality theoretical learning with the regular opportunities trainees have to practise newly acquired skills.
10. The partnership is highly effective in the use of technology to support the monitoring of trainees' progress and in gathering evidence against the Teachers' Standards. This provides the partnership with a rich source of information for its on-going self-evaluation. Reviews of the effectiveness of training are carried out in a culture of professional openness that successfully promotes and sustains excellence. Trainees' feedback is carefully analysed and used to improve training further. Consequently, all trainees are very well supported to overcome any barriers they may face and so make rapid progress to become good and outstanding teachers. Trainees are also able to demonstrate the application of their training and up-to-date knowledge through written assignments. These are marked effectively with constructive feedback to trainees that is designed to help them improve further and develop a holistic understanding of the primary curriculum. However, the written feedback given to trainees is sometimes overly descriptive and occasionally lacks the succinct clarity of the oral feedback that is regularly offered to trainees.
11. Headteachers of partnership schools identify the many additional benefits they gain from being involved in the training of new teachers. For example, they say trainees bring with them up-to-date subject knowledge and understanding of current national initiatives and this enhances the quality of teaching throughout their schools generally. Similarly, school leaders confirm NQTs are often able to make an immediate and very positive contribution in teaching and the leadership

of the schools when they take up their first posts. School leaders also value the long first placement for trainees that enables them to not only hone their skills in teaching mathematics and systematic synthetic phonics to a very high standard, but also to participate fully in the life of the school. Trainees also agreed the long placement allowed them to gain a more meaningful and accurate understanding of the progress pupils were making and this allowed them to adapt their lesson plans to better provide for the developing needs of their pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs. The exceptionally incisive oral feedback from highly skilled mentors makes a key contribution in challenging trainees to become outstanding practitioners.

### **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding**

12. Leadership within the partnership anticipates and responds to changes within education extremely well. For example, it has welcomed and absorbed the inclusion of School Direct trainees on the training programme and audits have been changed to reflect the new 2014 National Curriculum content. Trainees are made acutely aware of the increase in expectations. As a relatively small provider the University is able to respond quickly to the needs of individual schools as well as trainees. The programme leader uses her in-depth knowledge and experience of the region most effectively to match trainees' skills and experience with schools. This has quickly led to the development of a strong partnership with schools across the region that confidently share the same values and philosophy on pupils' learning.
13. Great care has been taken in the design of the training. The long first school experience placement has been designed to provide trainees with the best opportunity of experiencing pupils making progress over time. To maintain and strengthen this provision, the University offers subject-specific training for school staff with additional support for those schools that may require it. Teachers within partnership schools are encouraged to become teacher educators and work closely together with the University. They provide excellent opportunities for trainees to hone their skills, particularly in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance the learning of their pupils across the ability range. As a result, the partnership is highly successful in promoting research-led, innovative teacher training.
14. The rigorous selection and recruitment process reflects the University's high expectations; successful candidates, for example, are provided with tailored pre-course work to ensure that they make the best possible start to their training. The interview process is conducted within schools and draws upon a range of interviews and written tests. For example,

candidates are required to make a presentation based on a current educational issue and read with a small group of pupils. The process is designed not only to probe candidates' subject knowledge and communication skills but also to test their resilience and their ability to reflect on their practice.

15. The partnership sets the highest of expectations, preparing trainees extremely well to be good and outstanding teachers. Well-trained mentors work closely with trainees and meet each week with trainees to plan lessons, discuss their progress and agree targets for further improvement. Trainees are required to take full responsibility for maintaining a detailed record of their progress and achievement. This process is closely monitored by the University and used most effectively to ensure all trainees remain appropriately focused on pupils' learning and evidence their growing confidence in achieving the Teachers' Standards.
16. A strong sense of teamwork exists across the partnership as all those with a stake in its continuing success and expansion strive for further improvements. Schools are highly influential and involved, not just in the recruitment and selection of trainees, but also in the strategic shaping and future direction of the partnership. Partnership representatives who spoke with inspectors say communication channels with the University are excellent and support its efficient running.
17. Mentors say they value the training they receive in making judgements on the quality of trainees' teaching. The documentation provided by the University is comprehensive and effective in guiding mentors and trainees in making accurate assessment judgements. Senior leaders are constantly reviewing the effectiveness of systems and documentation designed to support mentors and headteachers. They acknowledge that the way trainees' progress is measured and recorded needs simplifying, so that all involved in the assessment of trainees have a clearer understanding of the good and excellent progress trainees are making.
18. Self-evaluation is honest and rigorous, and excellent quality assurance procedures are firmly embedded within the partnership. This means that leaders are able to identify quickly any weaknesses in trainees' progress and put in place additional support; for example, the introduction of additional twilight sessions to strengthen trainees' skills in teaching science and ICT. As a result of the rapid response demonstrated by the leadership team to the exceptionally detailed tracking and analysis of trainees' progress and outcomes, the partnership is very well placed to continue to improve.
19. All relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements and criteria are fully met.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Bonnars C of E Primary School, Maresfield

Manor Field Primary, Burgess Hill

Newick C of E Primary, Lewes

Saltdean Primary School, Saltdean

Warden Park Primary Academy, Haywards Heath

West Hove Junior School, Hove

## **The secondary phase**

### **Information about the secondary partnership**

- Secondary training provides two routes into teaching. Each focuses on training for the 11–16 age range. The one-year, full-time postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) in secondary course provides both an academic award at master's level and qualified teacher status (QTS).
- On this core programme there are 113 secondary phase trainees, including those specialising in the 7–14 age range. Subjects offered include English, drama, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and science (with specialisms in biology, chemistry and physics).
- The University works in partnership with over 75 schools, colleges and academies across Sussex to deliver the programme.
- The second route is the School Direct programme. The PGCE secondary programme is offered as a distinct route to QTS. School Direct trainees in partnership schools follow the same course and receive the same award. The School Direct (salaried) programme is a distinct employment-based training route and the PGCE is an option.
- The partnership works with 18 lead schools to provide training in the following subjects: biology, chemistry, drama, English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education (PE), physics and psychology. At the time of the inspection, 42 trainees were registered on the School Direct training route and 20 on School Direct (salaried).

### **Information about the secondary ITE inspection**

- Inspectors observed the teaching of five newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and 18 trainees. Joint observations of the trainees' teaching were carried out with subject mentors. Inspectors had discussions with a further 40 trainees and 22 NQTs.
- Inspectors held meetings with the partnership's leaders, including representatives of the partnership's steering committee, school-based ITE coordinators and subject mentors, to seek their views on their involvement with the partnership.
- Telephone conversations were held with the headteachers of four partnership schools, in addition to brief informal contact with headteachers in the schools visited by inspectors.

- Inspectors also considered a wide range of evidence, including trainees' teaching files, work set by trainees and NQTs for pupils observed in schools, and other records of trainees' and NQTs' progress.
- Inspectors scrutinised other relevant documentation provided by the partnership's leaders, for example, improvement plans and other evidence of the partnership's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors took account of responses to recent NQT surveys (36 responses) and to Ofsted's online questionnaire completed by 116 secondary trainees. Inspectors also took account of the partnership's own trainee evaluations of the programmes.
- Inspectors reviewed the partnership's website.

### **Inspection Team**

Susan Wareing	Her Majesty's Inspector, overall and secondary phase lead inspector
Andrew Maher	Additional inspector, assistant phase lead inspector
Nicola Munro	Additional inspector, team inspector
Terry Russell	Additional inspector, team inspector

### **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

#### **The key strengths of the secondary partnership**

- The partnership's very flexible and highly effective support, which is closely tailored to the needs of all trainees, leads to good overall attainment and at least good quality teaching for almost all trainees.
- The partnership's rigorous recruitment and selection of trainees, results in trainees who show great commitment to becoming good and outstanding teachers by the end of their course.
- The partnership's work to secure completion rates that are above sector norms, and employment rates that are well above them, for almost all trainees.
- The strong commitment of all those involved in the partnership to ensure high-quality training for trainees that leads to their good outcomes.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- ensure that success criteria for all actions to improve outcomes for trainees are always equally sharp
- ensure that feedback and target setting for trainees' progress provided by all mentors is as detailed and helpful as the best practice across the partnership, in terms of improving trainees' subject-specific knowledge as well as their practical teaching skills
- align the formative mode of assessment used to support trainees' progress and reflection more closely with the grading of their teaching against the Teachers' Standards, to provide trainees and their mentors with a clearer, more coherent view of how well they are progressing at the different assessment points in the year

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

20. Trainees' attainment is good because training is closely matched to their individual needs right from the start of the course and sometimes before it. Subject enhancement courses are well regarded by trainees. Trainees achieve well across the range of the Teachers' Standards and university staff are quick to adjust provision where there are any lapses in confidence or progress in meeting any of the Teachers' Standards.
21. Completion rates are above sector norms and employment rates are well above them. The attainment of trainees from different groups, for example, gender, ethnicity and age, is similar to sector norms.
22. Trainees are highly motivated to become good or better teachers. Most of them bring to their training significant previous experience of working with young people, for example, as teaching assistants. Their files, reflective journals and lesson evaluations show them to be well able to reflect critically on their own practice and how to improve it.
23. Most teaching seen during the inspection, and evidenced in trainees' files and their pupils' work, was good. A few examples of outstanding teaching were seen as well as two examples of teaching that required improvement. In the classroom, the best trainees demonstrate high expectations of their pupils and of themselves. Their subject knowledge is secure for the age range and specialist subjects that they teach.

24. Trainees quickly establish very positive relationships with their pupils from a very early stage. This, together with the wide range of strategies they have learned to deploy, contributes to their good management of pupils' behaviour. They model courtesy and respect for their pupils, demonstrating the impact of high quality central and school-based training.
25. Evidence from trainees' files and from pupils' work seen in schools shows that most trainees can plan lessons effectively and make good use of technology to enthuse pupils and enhance their learning. The ability to plan work that closely matches the needs of different groups of pupils is already a strength of some trainees, and in their classrooms pupils progress particularly well. However, other trainees are less confident, especially in meeting the learning needs of the most-able pupils. Trainee and NQT evaluations confirm that most trainees feel better prepared than the sector norm, by central and subject training sessions, to teach disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
26. At the time of the inspection, there was little evidence, in classrooms or files, of trainees' ability to assess pupils' progress and mark their work accurately. In weaker teaching, planning was less secure and checks on pupils' learning were not made often enough with appropriately challenging questioning techniques to deepen pupils' thinking.
27. Observations of NQTs' teaching, scrutiny of their files and discussions with them and with senior staff during the inspection suggest that their teaching is at least good. Senior leaders value their NQTs and say that they make a positive difference to their schools.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

28. Trainees are positive about the quality of training and, in particular, the support that they receive. School-based trainers appreciate the prompt action of university staff and their rapid support, for example, in the event of trainees' progress causing concern.
29. The partnership goes to great lengths to adapt the programme to suit the needs of individual trainees and has added various options to the main course, including a placement in a special school. Extensive use is made of expert staff from partnership schools, who contribute regularly to central subject training and other sessions.
30. The high quality of most training provided centrally, and in schools, leads to most trainees becoming good and outstanding teachers by the end of their course. Most trainees perceive central sessions as useful and well-integrated with follow-up events in schools. Mentors are strong



subject specialists and are very enthusiastic about their role. They are skilled in questioning and coaching styles that invite trainees to reflect deeply on their professional learning. Trainees say that mentors are generous with their time and advice. Records of meetings between trainees and mentors show that discussions are regularly held and appropriate targets are set for trainees' future development.

31. In the great majority of joint lesson observations carried out by inspectors and mentors, their judgements coincided, showing the accuracy of the assessment of trainees' progress. Nevertheless, training is not outstanding because, while most training seen by inspectors was at least good, inspectors observed some variation in the quality of oral and written feedback given to trainees and this limited the rate of progress of some.
32. The targets set for some trainees are too broad, short-term and focused too closely on teaching methods at the expense of deep engagement with the development of trainees' subject knowledge or the progress of their pupils. Also, the mixture of more formative modes of assessment used to assess trainees' progress in reflection, with the grading of their teaching against the Teachers' Standards, does not present a clear and coherent view of overall progress for some trainees and mentors.
33. The quality of placements is assured by the schools' own self-evaluation, trainees' evaluations of their placements and visits by link tutors. Nevertheless, these procedures are not tight enough to ensure a high degree of consistency in mentoring, particularly in the setting and monitoring of trainees' targets. As a result, not all trainees make rapid progress.
34. Good-quality input as part of the Professional Knowledge for Schools programme develops trainees' understanding of issues involved in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language. This is followed up by visits to nearby schools whose staff are good practitioners in this aspect of teaching. Trainees also benefit from visits to more diverse settings such as Tower Hamlets and other appropriate London boroughs. Nevertheless, some trainees say they would welcome actual practical teaching experience in a more diverse community.
35. Trainees provide a good model of Standard English for their pupils. Most trainees recognise their responsibilities for the development of their pupils' literacy skills and reinforce pupils' knowledge, use and spelling of subject-specific vocabulary, through classroom displays and a range of tasks and activities. Opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects are less evident in trainees' planning and teaching.

36. All placements prepare trainees well to teach across the 11–16 age range. Most trainees also have an opportunity to observe post-16 teaching. Some trainees have experience in teaching in a post-16 setting by the end of their course. All trainees have observed teaching and learning in a primary setting in order to focus on transition issues in their subject. Careful thought is invested in the selection of placements that will broaden trainees' experience, but some trainees feel that their placements have not been sufficiently contrasting.
37. Trainees' understanding of the National Curriculum and its implementation in 2014 is very strong. All trainees have attended central seminars on this subject and mentors are clear about how they will need to support and guide trainees in their respective curriculum areas.

**The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

38. Programme and curriculum leaders provide effective leadership and show commitment to improving the provision further within the changing landscape of initial teacher education. Leaders are outward looking and have developed a wide range of local partnerships to make best use of opportunities presented by School Direct, in line with the partnership's vision for its contribution to the improvement of education in its wider community. The partnership is also quick to respond to external evaluations of its practice and to the views of trainees and other members of the partnership.
39. Since the last inspection, good outcomes for trainees have been sustained and improved year on year. According to the partnership's robust tracking systems, these improvements are set to continue for the 2013-14 cohort, including a more significant increase than in previous years in the proportions of outstanding outcomes. Recommendations from the last inspection have been, for the most part, effectively tackled. Nevertheless, there is scope to refine the monitoring of mentors' target setting and feedback to trainees to ensure greater consistency of mentoring across the partnership and therefore improved outcomes for trainees. This variation, completion rates that are above sector norms and employment rates that are well above them rather than high, prevent leadership and management from being judged outstanding. Nevertheless, the partnership shows good capacity for further improvement.
40. Processes for the recruitment and selection of trainees are very rigorous and effective. Schools appreciate their involvement in the process, with all subjects holding part of the interview process in partnership schools. Interview tasks are comprehensive and help to ensure the selection of

resilient trainees who will go on to be good or better teachers in local schools.

41. The partnership's self-evaluation is honest and correctly identifies where weaker trainee outcomes, against particular Teachers' Standards, for example, need to be tackled. Improvement plans are effective in documenting the partnership's priorities for improvement and necessary actions to be taken to achieve them. However, the success criteria for these actions are not always sharp enough.
42. The partnership takes very seriously its responsibilities for removing barriers to learning. Trainees' individual needs are carefully considered from the point of interview and appropriate support is planned accordingly. No discrimination of any kind was observed or reported to inspectors during the inspection.
43. Very robust safeguarding and qualification checks are made and the partnership complies with all statutory requirements.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Hove  
Hove Park School, Hove  
St Paul's Catholic College, Burgess Hill  
Dorothy Stringer High School, Brighton  
Cavendish School, Eastbourne  
Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College, Hove  
The Weald Community and Sixth Form College, Billingshurst  
Uckfield Community Technology College, Uckfield  
Steyning Grammar School, Steyning  
Longhill High School, Rottingdean, Brighton  
Heathfield Community College, Heathfield

## **Initial teacher education for the further education system**

### **Information about the FE in ITE partnership**

- The University works in partnership, largely in the role of validating body, with two general further education colleges in providing teacher training for those working in post-16 education and training. At the time of inspection, 23 trainees were working towards the diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector (DTLLS). All the trainees are in-service and in the second year of the course. Around two thirds of the trainees work in the colleges; the remainder work in a variety of external settings. The training takes place at the colleges. The university has made a strategic decision to discontinue its involvement in training for further education teachers from the summer of 2014.

### **Information about the FE in ITE inspection**

- During the inspection, inspectors visited the two partner colleges and observed seven current trainees teach. They also observed three former trainees teach. Inspectors held discussions with the trainees and with several of the trainees' mentors.
- Inspectors held discussions with those responsible for the provision at the University, and with programme leaders and other key staff at each of the colleges. Inspectors scrutinised course documentation, training resources, and a range of supporting evidence provided by the University and the colleges. They also studied in detail trainees' work and records of their progress throughout the training.

### **Inspection Team**

Alan Hinchliffe      Her Majesty's Inspector, FE phase lead inspector  
John Homewood      Additional Inspector, FE phase assistant lead inspector

## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **The key strengths of the FE partnership**

- The good progress made by nearly all trainees in developing the skills and attributes to become accomplished practitioners.

- Trainees' excellent subject knowledge and vocational expertise, which they use effectively to establish credibility with their students and prepare them well for the world of work.
- The good training, good personal support and highly effective mentoring that benefit all trainees.
- The impact of the training in helping trainees to experiment confidently with a range of teaching techniques, including effective use of new technologies.
- Highly effective leadership and management of the programme at the colleges, with increasingly good support from the partnership tutor at the University.

### **What does the FE partnership need to do to improve further?**

#### **The partnership should:**

- ensure that the evaluation of trainees' teaching, by trainers and mentors, reports not just on the mechanics of teaching but also promotes dialogue with trainees on assessing the impact of their teaching on students' progress and standards of work
- develop the training further to improve trainees' depth of reflection both on their teaching practice and on their learning on the course, particularly for the minority of trainees who struggle to see the relevance of the theoretical aspects of the training to their teaching
- ensure that trainees are encouraged to achieve their best by setting developmental targets, both for their teaching and their academic work, that are clear, precise and aspirational; and ensure that progress towards meeting these targets is monitored carefully in subsequent assessments

### **Inspection Judgements**

#### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

44. The proportion of trainees who complete the training successfully is high, and has risen over the last three years. The reasons for the small number of withdrawals or deferrals are well documented and are indicative of both the precarious nature of employment in further education and the complex personal situations of many of the trainees. Trainees are of varying ages and social, cultural and educational

backgrounds, and there are no differences in their progress by social group.

45. All the trainees are, or have the potential to become, good or outstanding practitioners. Nearly all have made good progress in improving their practice and meeting the professional standards for further education teachers as a consequence of the training. The extent to which trainees secure their desired employment at the end of the course is variable between the colleges, but most trainees succeed in gaining full-time employment in the lifelong learning sector. The majority of trainees benefit from a good range of teaching experience and are immersed in the life of the college or other provider at which they work. However, a small number of trainees teach on too narrow a range of courses and would benefit from wider practical experience of the diverse provision within further education and training.
46. Trainees understand, and implement in their practice, the fundamentals of good teaching. They display good classroom management techniques and have a keen awareness of the varying aptitudes and motivation levels of the students that they teach. In most instances, trainees' knowledge of their students' individual needs and abilities informs both their planning and their execution of teaching strategies. Trainees exploit their expertise and credibility in their vocational area well to ensure that their students benefit from learning that is current and highly relevant to their future prospects of employment. Trainees make particularly adept use of a range of technologies, including interactive whiteboards, tablets and mobile telephones, to enliven their lessons and help students to learn. In most lessons, trainees question their students with considerable skill, both to check their understanding and extend their knowledge.
47. Trainees show strong awareness of the current imperative to help their students to improve their English and mathematics skills, and are particularly good at exploiting opportunities to strengthen their students' literacy skills in lessons. Trainees' written work is of an appropriate standard, although more-able trainees are not always directed to a sufficient breadth of academic literature to deepen their understanding or to raise the standard of their work further.
48. The strong emphasis on providing equality of opportunity for all students shines through most trainees' teaching, although in a small number of instances trainees' expectations of their students' capabilities are not high enough. Most trainees take full account of the social and cultural diversity of the students they teach, and promote respect and tolerance for others' views and lifestyles.

## **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

49. Trainees benefit from consistently good and coherent training in both of the colleges. They value highly the quality of the taught sessions and the unwavering personal and academic support they receive from their trainers and mentors. A small number of trainees are less positive about the parts of the training that focus on theoretical aspects of teaching and learning, because they do not recognise fully the application of much educational theory to their classroom practice. Such trainees are not encouraged sufficiently to reflect more deeply on their practice to see the relevance of the training. Although all trainees are encouraged to reflect on their teaching practice and on the impact of the training, scope remains for making such reflections more frequent, systematic and self-critical.
50. Mentors are selected carefully, are good or better practitioners themselves, and provide high-quality support to trainees. Trainees appreciate the very regular contacts with their mentors, and discussions often focus well on the trainee's specialist subject and the range of resources and techniques available to improve the teaching of specific aspects of that subject. Mentors' judgements on trainees' teaching are broadly accurate and focus well on the process of teaching, but they do not always use their subject expertise to focus sufficiently on the progress that trainees' students make or the standards that they achieve as a result of the teaching. This is also an area for improvement in lesson observations by other trainers.
51. Assessment of trainees' written work, and of their teaching, is both fair and accurate. Trainers often write a detailed commentary in response to trainees' written assignments, with helpful notes on how the work could be improved. In a minority of instances, however, marking is more perfunctory, with insufficient detail about how trainees could improve their work through researching, for example, a wider range of literature. On occasions, trainers do not highlight rudimentary errors of language in trainees' work. Following lesson observations, and the marking of assignments, the developmental targets set for trainees are often too broad, lack clarity and do not inspire trainees with ambitious challenges for their future work or practice. Additionally, it is not always clear in subsequent evaluations whether the targets that are set have been achieved.
52. Trainees' understanding of the policy environment in the further education sector is underdeveloped, largely because they are yet to study a module that focuses on contextual matters. In one college, trainees who are teaching students aged 16 to 19 show some understanding of the Study Programme initiative; for example, they are aware of the injunction to focus strongly on improving their students'

English, mathematics and employability skills. Unsurprisingly, trainees in external providers, and those teaching on higher education courses, are less familiar with these aspects.

### **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

53. The leadership and management of the provision at the two colleges is good. The partnership between the colleges and the University has been increasingly fruitful as a consequence of the university link tutor's effective involvement in key aspects of the provision. Having made the decision to end its validation of the provision in the summer of 2014, university leaders have handled the winding-down process with sensitivity and a determination to ensure that the last cohort of trainees receives good provision.
54. The partnership attracts a diverse range of in-service trainees, and ensures through effective initial assessment that they are suited to the programme. The colleges make a valuable contribution to training teachers who reflect the diversity of the communities they serve and the diversity of further education provision. For example, current trainees include three who are teaching young people with epilepsy, and another who is training police officers.
55. Programme leaders ensure that trainees' progress is evaluated carefully, and they make secure judgements on trainees' current attainment. Each partner college evaluates the programme carefully, although there is no overall evaluation of the partnership. The college self-evaluations are comprehensive and provide a reflective narrative on the provision, but they are not especially sharply focused on the key aspects that have an impact on trainees' outcomes. Improvement plans arising from self-evaluation include sensible priorities for improvement.
56. Trainees value highly the fact that their teaching awards are validated by the University. Efforts have been made to bring together trainees and tutors from the colleges at events organised by the University, but these have met with limited success. Although the colleges recognise the benefits of the links with the university, and value the support from the University link tutor, the provision is largely self-contained within each college. As a consequence, neither trainees nor trainers benefit significantly from the academic expertise or research knowledge at the University.



## **Annex: Partnership colleges**

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Central Sussex College

University Centre Croydon, Croydon College

## ITE partnership details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70071
<b>Inspection number</b>	428994
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–13 March 2014
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Susan Wareing HMI
<b>Type of ITE partnership</b>	HEI
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary/Secondary/FE
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10–14 May 2010
<b>Previous inspection report</b>	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70071"><u>http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70071</u></a>
<b>Provider address</b>	University of Sussex Falmer Brighton BN1 9RH