

Colchester Teacher Training Consortium

Colchester County High School for Girls, Norman Way, Colchester CO3 3US

Inspection dates

4 to 7 March 2024

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

Outstanding

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

Trainees attending Colchester Teacher Training Consortium are prepared superbly well to be teachers of tomorrow. Inspirational guidance and support ensure that they are ready to educate the next generation of pupils. Trainees value immensely the first-class experience they receive, preparing them exceptionally well to take on their first teaching role.

Centre-based training provides trainees with rich and deep information on key aspects of teaching, such as behaviour management, safeguarding and how best to help pupils learn to read using systematic synthetic phonics. This readies trainees to apply their new learning in school-based tasks, which they do with diligence and enthusiasm. The 'trainee assessment profile' provides a precise connection between centre-based and school-based training. This means trainees are skilfully supported by their mentors to apply their newfound learning to their specific subject or phase. Trainees are prepared extremely well to teach pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Communication between course leaders, mentors and trainees is crystal clear. All involved know what is required of them. High-quality, regular training for mentors means they have the tools required to ensure trainees develop the confidence and competencies they need to be effective teachers. Supportive instructional coaching means trainees accurately identify their strengths and any identified areas for development.

Information about this ITE provider

- This school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) is based at Colchester County High School for Girls, where most of the centre-based training takes place in the bespoke training centre.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 71 full-time trainees. Thirty on the primary course and 41 on the secondary course.
- The provider works with 107 schools across both primary and secondary phases. Trainees complete their school-based training in these schools.
- There are 12 schools in the partnership which are rated as requires improvement or inadequate. All other schools in the partnership are graded as either good or outstanding.
- For trainees to achieve qualified teacher status, the provider offers both the School Direct non-salaried and salaried route into teaching. The majority of trainees complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) via the University of Suffolk. The PGCE is integrated into the course and complements trainees' classroom practice. A small number of trainees undertake the assessment-only route.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team included two of His Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the director, assistant directors and nine members of the steering group.
- Inspectors held discussions with 43 trainees, either at their placement school or at the centre-based training. Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's trainee survey.
- In the primary phase, inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading, mathematics and history. Focused reviews in English and science were carried out in the secondary phase.
- As part of the focused reviews, inspectors met with leaders, facilitators and lead mentors; reviewed curriculum and trainee documentation; and visited six placement schools. During these visits, inspectors met with school leaders and mentors, observed 10 trainees teaching, observed feedback meetings between mentors and trainees and held discussions with trainees. Inspectors also visited subject studies sessions held in the training centre.
- In addition to visiting six placement schools, inspectors communicated remotely with mentors from 12 other placement schools. The lead inspector met with seven lead mentors and five PGCE tutors. Inspectors held discussions with seven early career teachers who trained with the provider.
- Over the course of the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of the provider's documentation, such as handbooks, improvement planning and minutes from

meetings. Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

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

The provider works with steely determination to develop highly skilled teachers of tomorrow. Leaders, working collaboratively with members of the steering group, provide a strong, clear vision for excellence which is borne out in practice. Leaders identify, and recruit, high-calibre lead mentors and trainers to ensure trainees benefit from the highest quality training and support.

Trainees learn a well-crafted curriculum. Leaders pay full regard to the core content framework and often go well beyond these requirements. They have set about designing a curriculum that builds expertly over time, focusing on fundamental themes such as 'professional identity', 'adaptive teaching and assessment' and 'how pupils learn'.

Trainees develop high levels of confidence and competence in teaching phonics, as part of early reading. This is because centre-based training is purposefully integrated into trainees' school-based learning. Trainees are very well versed in teaching early reading more widely because their centre-based training focuses on widening phonics into language comprehension, the love of reading and reading more widely across the curriculum. Trainees in the secondary phase receive regular opportunities to deepen their subject-specialism knowledge with their peers. They are provided with high-quality opportunities to reflect on their growing pedagogical knowledge. Trainees then consider how this can be applied skilfully within their own individual subject specialisms.

Trainees benefit from leaders' laser-sharp focus on mentoring. School-based mentors receive comprehensive and precisely focused training and support. While the initial training is extremely thorough, the ongoing programme of moderation, support from lead mentors and continuous online support mean that school-based mentors are fully equipped to support trainees exceptionally well. Lead mentors meet frequently with school-based mentors to provide support, along with using these meetings to further quality assure the mentoring arrangements.

Course leaders build highly effective relationships with partner schools. Headteachers have chosen to work with the partnership, through recommendations and reputation. Care is taken to ensure workload is manageable, not just for trainees, but for mentors and tutors too. Leaders also ensure that partner schools are fully engaged with the provider and contribute to the success of its ongoing work.

High-quality systems underpin the assessment of trainees. Lesson observation templates, for example, change across the course of the year as trainees develop their competencies. Mentors are guided to focus on elements for which trainees recently received centre-based training, alongside any short-term targets specific to individual training needs. The target setting and reflection process shows clearly that trainees can apply what they have learned. Trainees develop a rich and detailed knowledge of the ITE curriculum they undertake.

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

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70156
Inspection number	10313369

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

Type of ITE provider	School-centred initial teacher training
Phases provided	Primary and secondary combined
Date of previous inspection	26 June and 15 November 2017

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Rockey	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Shadbolt	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
Lakelands Primary School, Colchester	147844	Primary
Springfield Infant and Nursery School, Ipswich	144213	Primary
St Luke's Church of England Primary School, Tiptree	115082	Primary
St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Colchester	138164	Primary
St Helena School, Colchester	137944	Secondary
The Gilbert School, Colchester	137926	Secondary

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