

# The King Edward's Consortium

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates 12 – 15 November 2012

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This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector in accordance with the *Framework for inspecting initial teacher education from September 2012*.

The inspection draws upon 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*

	<b>Employment -based routes</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	<b>1</b>
The outcomes for trainees	1
The quality of training across the partnership	1
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

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## **The employment-based route**

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

1. The King Edward's Consortium trains secondary teachers on employment-based routes in 19 secondary schools in the Birmingham area. The lead school is King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls. The headteacher of the school chairs the partnerships' strategy and management groups. The provider is currently planning for the challenging transition from the graduate teacher programme (GTP) to school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) in order to balance growth and financial viability while retaining the personalised approach of a small institution.
2. At the time of the inspection, 24 trainees were following a full-time programme, of these, four were self-funded. One trainee was part-time. Trainees' specialisms cover a wide range of subjects, with a strong focus on national priority areas, including separate sciences, English and mathematics. Other subjects include modern languages, geography, history, information and communication technology and computing, and classics.

### **Information about the employment-based ITE inspection**

3. Inspectors observed, jointly with school-based trainers, five trainees teaching and observed independently four newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and one recently qualified teacher (RQT) teaching. Inspectors also considered the outcomes of observations of NQTs in two partnership schools undergoing section 5 inspections during the same week as this inspection.
4. An inspector observed two central training sessions involving all trainees from the current cohort. One session was taught by the programme manager and the second by a guest speaker from a partnership school.
5. Inspectors held discussions, face-to-face and on the telephone, with individuals and groups of trainees, including three in-depth interviews with modern languages trainees; NQTs; trainers and senior leaders across the partnership.
6. Inspectors considered a wide range of documentary evidence including information related to recruitment and selection, statutory safeguarding and compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, tracking and assessment, trainees' teaching evidence, analysis of outcomes for trainees and groups of trainees, self-evaluation and improvement plans.

## **Inspection Team**

Christine Dick HMI: Lead inspector

Gwendoline Coates HMI: Assistant lead inspector

Elaine Taylor HMI: Subject inspector – thematic programme: modern languages

Jackie Pentlow: Team inspector (present for part of the inspection only)

## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 1**

### **The key strengths of the employment-based partnership are:**

- The consistently outstanding outcomes for trainees, by the end of the training, including high completion rates, high rates of progression to employment, and subsequently to posts of significant responsibility.
- The high proportion of NQTs retained in the teaching profession, over time, which is significantly higher than that seen in similar providers.
- The highly effective partnership of typically good and outstanding schools, combined with outstanding leadership and management, high quality school-based and central training, leading to the supply of a very high proportion of good and potentially outstanding teachers.
- The rigorous recruitment and selection of high calibre trainees with impressive pre-entry qualifications, at higher levels, and good prior experience in education settings, which helps them to succeed.
- The strong sense of learning community and the very effective communication, across the partnership, which ensures well-targeted intervention and secures high quality outcomes for all trainees.
- The very high quality placements, with a strong focus on subject knowledge development, which is effectively enhanced further through the central training.
- The extensive engagement of partnership schools in shaping the vision for excellence and steering the strategic direction and sustainability of this high quality partnership in the changing landscape of teacher education.

## **What does the employment-based partnership need to do to improve further?**

### **The partnership should:**

- Review the extent to which all leaders and managers base actions on a deep and accurate understanding of the partnership's performance and strengths, and in particular by:
  - sharpening individual schools' focus on their own contribution to trainees' outcomes across the partnership, to ensure that the very best practice is shared.

## **Inspection Judgements**

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

7. Completion rates are high. The proportion of trainees progressing to employment, and who are retained in the teaching profession for more than three years, is significantly above that seen in similar providers. Around 90% of the trainees who completed their training in 2009 are still in teaching, with more than one third of them in positions of significant responsibility. The incidence of trainees withdrawing from the programme is very rare.
8. Many NQTs go on to teach in partnership schools. The value these new teachers add to their schools, and to the progress students make in their lessons, underpins the outstanding reputation the partnership holds. For example, in one improving school, a recently qualified teacher, who is also a subject leader in the partnership, has been a key player in the school's journey out of special measures. In another school, judged outstanding in 2011, the NQT has been successful in engaging boys who were reluctant readers in the school book club. As a result of the NQT's very effective teaching, these students are now much closer to achieving a good result in GCSE English at the end of the year.
9. Trainees are highly competent and confident teachers. By the end of the training, most of their teaching is consistently good with much that is outstanding. There is little difference in the performance of different groups of trainees across the partnership. All trainees maintain a very strong focus on how teaching impacts on learning and the promotion of students' good progress in lessons. They have exceptional enthusiasm for teaching their subject. The modern language trainees stand out particularly. This is because of their ability to make highly effective use of the target language in their teaching and to motivate learning in modern languages.

10. Careful planning ensures trainees teach well-structured lessons. In a few cases, at this early stage, trainees planned to do too much in the time available. As reflective practitioners, they were clear about what they needed to do next time to improve. They are confident in their subjects and familiar with the assessment requirements of the courses they teach. For example, in a lesson for middle to low ability students, the NQT made excellent use of assessment and a range of teaching and learning strategies. This ensured that every student made at least good progress. All students were fully engaged for the whole of the two hours of the teaching session. They took responsibility for their own learning and were fully aware of their target grades as they practised writing answers that demonstrated they were working at or above them. Self- and peer-assessment encouraged students to reflect on and identify their own areas for improvement in a most impressive way.

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

11. High quality central training and the training in schools across the partnership combine very effectively to secure consistently high quality outcomes by the end of the programme. Trainees have excellent opportunities to learn from experienced practitioners in good and outstanding schools. They are prepared to teach very well and this is reflected in the highly positive responses to the Teaching Agency's NQT survey (February 2012) and the exit survey for trainees who completed in June 2012. In order to ensure trainees make the best possible progress during their training year, the partnership has committed to retain trainees' supernumerary status in almost all cases. This is to ensure trainees are not overloaded with teaching during the formative stages of their career, even though this is no longer a requirement for salaried trainees on employment-based routes into teaching.
12. The very effective collaboration across the partnership and well-targeted interventions, brokered by the excellent response of the partnership manager, ensures trainees' individual needs are met. As one trainee said, 'nothing you say ever gets lost, everything is followed up. There is a seamless transition between central and school-based training'. Trainees' second school experience is carefully selected to complement their experience in the employing school. The range of schools in the partnership, and the well-chosen placement combinations, ensure that all trainees have at least good opportunities to learn how to respond to the needs of individual and different groups of students in their lessons.
13. In modern languages, excellent subject training is tightly linked to professional studies and so trainees are skilful in creating an extremely positive climate for learning. In lessons, trainees make extensive use of the target language. They take full advantage of opportunities for

humour to engage and promote strong relationships. Excellent use of visual material and modelling expectations helps students to start their work quickly, whilst developing their listening skills and their ability to deduce meaning from context. The modern languages subject knowledge audit is exemplary. It includes an assessment of trainees' knowledge and understanding of current cultural influences. This helps trainees to develop their own students' inter-cultural understanding more effectively.

14. Trainees in all subjects start with good subject knowledge from the outset. This is developed further through the central training and in schools. The central training sessions model excellent teaching and provide high quality opportunities to discuss issues across subjects or, using the virtual learning environment, to join in discussions with past trainees. All trainers demonstrate a huge commitment to the course and make a significant contribution to both the subject specific and generic aspects of the programme.
15. Trainees gain valuable experience of working with teaching assistants in their lessons. They know how to make sure that teaching assistants are effective in supporting students who need extra help. The training prepares them well to adapt their teaching to respond to the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and higher and lower attaining students. Trainees following the modern languages route have a notably strong understanding of the challenges and benefits of modern language learning for pupils with English as an additional language.
16. Trainees develop excellent skills in promoting good behaviour. This is a particular feature of their lessons and contributes to the good learning that takes place. One NQT, whose main placement was in a special school where he is now employed, spoke highly of this aspect of the central training. He explained how his subject trainer had helped him to make it relevant to the context of the special school. As a trainee, he was able to make a rich contribution to developing the understanding about behaviour management of other trainees during the central training sessions. Trainees use information and communication technology well to make their lessons interesting and relevant.
17. The importance of improving the literacy and mathematical skills of their students, regardless of the subjects they teach, is given high priority by trainees. An NQT working in a partnership school demonstrated particularly effective skills in using phonics (the sounds that letters make) to improve the reading skills of students who needed extra help. A recently qualified teacher of music spoke enthusiastically about the

opportunities to introduce mathematics in her lessons and to develop the speaking and listening skills of her students through music.

18. Trainees play an active part in the life of their placement schools. They are highly effective role models for their students and assume their wider professional responsibilities, such as communicating with parents, effectively and with confidence. They are aware of the need to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning through their teaching. In a lesson taught by an NQT, Year 11 media studies students were evaluating a popular television series. Their learning enabled them to analyse the appeal of the series and provided them with a more selective and critical approach to television viewing. In a biology lesson taught by an NQT, students were studying the ethics of stem cell research and evaluating a range of case studies linked to personal and religious viewpoints.

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

19. Outstanding leadership and management have resulted in outstanding training and outcomes for trainees. There are significant improvements in the quality of training since the last inspection. The partnership management group oversees the operational running of the programme. A smaller strategic group is steering new developments. Its main focus is to secure the sustainability of this highly regarded partnership in the changing landscape of initial teacher education. Both groups promote high expectations and the partnership's vision for excellence in teaching and learning. The highly effective partnership manager is a key member of each group. Meetings are well attended. The groups are well supported by head teachers from the partnership schools. Decisions are grounded in the best interests of trainees, with a determination to maintain and improve outcomes for the students who are taught in schools across the partnership. As a result, the partnership has outstanding capacity to improve.
20. The outstanding reputation of the partnership means that other schools are eager to be involved. Careful consideration is given to any proposal to expand the number of schools offering placements. This ensures trainees' outstanding outcomes are sustained. Applications from prospective candidates far outweigh the number of places available. Rigorous selection procedures, involving school staff, secure high calibre trainees who become successful teachers. A much greater proportion of trainees have higher level degrees than in similar providers and many have extensive pre-entry experience in education settings. Increasingly, trainees are recruited specifically to meet the need for high quality teachers in partnership schools. The partnership receives far more

enquiries from schools about the availability of NQTs than the number of trainees it takes on each year.

21. Regular monitoring and tracking of trainees' progress supports trainees' good progress and outstanding outcomes very effectively. Self-evaluation is accurate. Partnership schools make a significant contribution to the process. The identification of relative weaknesses is swift with highly effective intervention to secure rapid improvement. Quality assurance systems are rigorous and well embedded. External examiners and moderators confirm that trainers' judgements about the quality of training and trainees' performance are secure. Continuous checking and planning for further improvement makes a real difference to outcomes for trainees. Reviews are informed very well by a wide range of evidence, including internal and external satisfaction surveys.
22. The partnership is not complacent. It has positioned itself carefully to meet the challenges ahead in the transition from employment-based initial teacher training (EBITT) to SCITT. Leaders and managers recognise the need to continue to sharpen the detail and focus of the partnership's written improvement plan and to develop individual schools' focus on their own contribution to provision across the partnership. In particular, leaders recognise the need for all placement schools to monitor and evaluate the contribution their trainers make when working with trainees in their own schools and in other schools, in order to secure further improvement and ensure that very best practice is shared.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Colmers School and Sixth Form College  
King Edward VI Fiveways School  
King Edward VI Handsworth School  
Hall Green School  
Swanshurst School  
Blue Coat Church of England Academy  
King Edward VI Aston School  
Old Swinford Hospital  
King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys  
King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls

## **ITE partnership details**

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<b>Lead inspector</b>	Christine Dick HMI
<b>Type of ITE partnership</b>	EBITT
<b>Phases provided</b>	Secondary GTP
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	05-08 May 2009
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