

Ripley ITT

Ripley St Thomas CE Academy, Ashton Road, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 4RS

Inspection dates

26 to 29 June 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

Outstanding

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

Trainees experience a first-class ITE curriculum at Ripley ITT. As a result, all trainees, including teacher apprentices, are exceptionally well prepared to assume their role as early career teachers (ECTs). Candidates who access the assessment-only route are rigorously selected and extremely well supported.

The training programme is meticulously designed and implemented to reflect trainees' individual needs. Primary trainees develop a deep understanding of how to teach early reading, including systematic synthetic phonics (SSP). They develop the rich body of subject knowledge required to teach the full primary national curriculum. Secondary trainees are immersed in the distinctiveness of their chosen subject specialisms.

Trainees learn from expert tutors about how to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with additional needs. Trainees are empowered to become highly reflective practitioners. They discuss and debate the merits of educational research with fervour. For example, trainees adeptly apply their knowledge of current educational theories on behaviour management to establish a purposeful learning environment. Trainees also gain a firm grounding in the wider professional responsibilities of a teacher, including how to safeguard pupils and themselves.

Trainees flourish. They were unequivocally positive about the extensive care, guidance and support that they receive from the partnership. Trainees successfully learn how to manage their workload and protect their well-being. Communication between leaders, trainees and mentors is incredibly strong. Mentors are unswerving in their commitment to

enable trainees to excel. Trainees become influential and innovative practitioners, who are soon ready to take up leadership responsibilities.

Information about this ITE provider

- The Ripley school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnership was established in 2015. It began providing secondary initial teacher education (ITE) in September 2015 and it introduced primary ITE training programmes in September 2019. The partnership became an approved apprenticeship training provider in October 2021. Since 2019 for secondary, and 2021 for primary, the SCITT has offered a School Direct fee-paying route in partnership with South Cumbria School Direct. The partnership also offers an assessment-only route to qualified teacher status (QTS).
- The SCITT is based at Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy. The SCITT is part of the Bay Learning Trust.
- In the 2022/23 academic year, there were 60 trainees enrolled on the partnership's ITE programmes. There were 32 primary and 28 secondary age-phase trainees. Included in these numbers were seven primary- and four secondary-age trainees who were following a level 6 teacher apprenticeship, seven primary- and four secondary trainees who were on the School Direct fee-paying route and two trainees who were completing the assessment-only route to QTS.
- Trainees who follow the primary programme are trained to teach the three to seven or five to 11 age-phases. Trainees on secondary programmes are trained to teach the 11 to 16 or 14 to 19 age-phases.
- In 2022/23, secondary trainees chose from the following subject specialisms: chemistry, design and technology, drama, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music or psychology.
- All trainees gain QTS. Since September 2016, the SCITT has been working in partnership with Leeds Beckett University for trainees who wish to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).
- The partnership includes one nursery school, 42 primary schools, 18 secondary schools, one college and one all-through school. These settings span three local authorities.
- There are seven schools in the partnership which are rated as requires improvement by Ofsted. All other schools in the partnership are graded either good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by four of His Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the director of the SCITT and the accounting officer. The lead inspector met with representatives of the executive steering group, including the chair of the executive steering group.

- An inspector met with a representative of Leeds Beckett University to discuss the PGCE element of the training programme.
- An inspector observed a training session in secondary science that was attended by four trainees, and a training session in primary mathematics, which was attended by seven trainees.
- Inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading, English, history, mathematics, chemistry and primary foundation subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with 37 trainees individually or in small groups to discuss their experiences of the training programme. They also spoke with 27 mentors.
- Inspectors met with three early career teachers who had previously completed their teacher training with the provider.
- Inspectors visited six schools as part of the inspection. On school visits, inspectors spoke with professional mentors, trainees, subject mentors and several headteachers.
- Inspectors sampled a wide range of documentation relating to the ITE training programmes. These documents included: subject and phase curriculum plans; trainees' assignments and their records of target-setting and mentoring; and information relating to the Department for Education's (DfE's) ITE criteria and supporting advice.
- Inspectors also reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to the leadership and management of the partnership. This information included leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning documents.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for trainees and staff.

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

Trainees experience an exceptional centre-based training curriculum, which seamlessly dovetails with the school-based training that they receive in partner schools. The training programme is deliberately designed to ensure that trainees gradually build up their skills and knowledge to become highly confident and proficient teachers in their subject and age-phase specialisms. For example, secondary trainees develop a deep and rich understanding of the subject knowledge required to teach their subject specialisms. Primary trainees are fully exposed to the breadth of the foundation national curriculum subjects in equal measure. All trainees are exceptionally well prepared to embark on the profession.

The ITE curriculum goes well beyond the minimum expectations of the DfE's core content framework. For example, trainees are quick to build up a depth of knowledge about adaptive teaching, including for disadvantaged pupils. This training on adaptive teaching leads to a well-thought-out practice-based research project, in which trainees explore the impact of their support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in their

second placement. Leaders' approach to curriculum design enables trainees to excel in all aspects of the ITE programme.

Leaders have a clear focus on the teaching of early reading and SSP. Trainees on the primary programme are well prepared to teach the range of phonics programmes used in partner schools. Secondary trainees go into the profession with a strong understanding of how to develop pupils' knowledge of reading and literacy in their chosen subject specialism. All trainees complete a research project which deepens their appreciation of the range of strategies available to them to promote pupils' reading knowledge.

Trainees benefit from consistently high-quality mentoring. Leaders have a very effective and systematic approach to ensure that all mentors receive exceptionally well-designed training. Leaders have devised a creative and supportive research-based guide, which mentors said helps them to provide trainees with incremental and clear targets for improvement. The feedback that mentors give to trainees, and the targets that they set for trainees, are fully aligned with the ITE curriculum. Consequently, trainees are supported exceptionally well. Trainees value the extensive help that they receive from mentors and their tutors to understand and develop their subject-specific pedagogy.

The partnership is highly valued in the local area and beyond. Leaders have created excellent links with a wide range of local schools to ensure that they provide contrasting placement experiences for trainees. Trainees are extremely complimentary about their school-based placements. They benefit greatly from learning from experts in their fields.

Leaders have been innovative in their approach to developing the partnership by offering established teachers additional wider ongoing training and support. This includes additional training for mentors. This enables leaders to fulfil their vision to provide not only high-quality ITE training but ongoing professional development for teachers and ECTs. This is helping to secure improvements in the quality of education for pupils across the wider partnership.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have utter clarity about the strengths of the partnership and the priorities for future development. They have an extensive range of quality assurance systems in place, which enable leaders to act quickly on any areas of the ITE curriculum that require further development. Leaders have also carefully built up a range of opportunities for trainees and mentors to provide feedback on the ITE curriculum. Leaders value stakeholder feedback and act on it quickly.

Leaders are committed to equality of opportunity. For example, leaders have ensured that there is a range of accessible routes for trainees to access a career in teaching, including through the assessment-only route. They also have well-designed recruitment and selection procedures in place.

Leaders at the Ripley ITT have a caring and supportive approach to their trainees, with excellent communication and wraparound pastoral care. They are highly ambitious for their trainees, while always keeping trainees' well-being and workload in mind. Trainees cannot speak highly enough of the support that they receive.

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

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

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

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

Leaders carefully check what apprentices already know and can do at the start of their apprenticeship. They ensure that the training curriculum allows apprentices to develop incrementally essential knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices complete an ambitious ITE curriculum that goes well beyond the apprenticeship standard.

Leaders carefully review the progress that apprentices make. Apprentices gain the necessary skills and confidence to work across two key stages. Mentors provide apprentices with high-quality support, advice and guidance. Leaders and mentors set trainees effective and ambitious targets with clear actions to help them to improve.

Apprentices contribute positively to the work of their employing schools. They are highly valued by school leaders and staff.

Leaders ensure that the apprenticeship programme meets the principles and requirements for apprenticeships. This means, for example, that apprentices have the necessary time to complete their studies, as well as their teaching roles. Apprentices are extremely confident, articulate and well placed to succeed in the teaching profession.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70307
Inspection number	10277286

This inspection was carried out in accordance with the 'Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook'.

This framework and handbook 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	2 May and 25 September 2017

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jackie Stillings	His Majesty's Inspector
Louise McArdle	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Goodwin	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phases
Ashton Community College	119707	Secondary
Hope High School	119898	Secondary
Kirkland and Catterall St Helen's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	119361	Primary
Lancaster Girls Grammar School	136381	Secondary
Lancaster Royal Grammar School	136742	Secondary
Lytham Park Hall Primary School	119315	Primary
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	149541	Primary

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