

# King's College London

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Inspection Dates Stage 1: 18/05/2015 Stage 2: 28/09/2015

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This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors, in accordance with the *Initial teacher education inspection handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from April 2015.

The inspection draws upon evidence from 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*

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

## The secondary phase

### Information about the secondary partnership

- King's College London provides initial teacher training to 223 trainees in the secondary phase, which is slightly more than at the time of the last inspection.
- The partnership offers three routes to qualified teacher status (QTS) for graduate trainees who wish to teach students in the 11–18 age range.
- Most trainees follow a provider-led core programme aimed at achieving QTS alongside masters-level assignments leading to a post-graduate certificate of education (PGCE).
- A small number, 17 trainees in 2014/15, follow a school direct non-salaried route, which has the same programme content as the core PGCE route but where a partner school has responsibility for the trainee's recruitment and teaching placements.
- An equally small number of trainees follow a school direct salaried route. On this route, the trainee is recruited and paid by a partner school, which takes the main responsibility for training in both subject knowledge and pedagogy. King's involvement in this route is focused on providing support to the nominated school-based tutor for each trainee, though trainees attend some college-based training sessions either on weekends or in half-term holidays.
- The subject specialisms offered for training are: English, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, physics with mathematics, classics, Latin with classics, computer science, modern foreign languages, and religious education.
- As a provider, King's works in partnership with many schools widely spread across London, and in a few cases beyond.
- King's has a well-established reputation for educational research, and also offers professional and academic development programmes to masters and doctorate levels for practising teachers and school leaders.

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

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by trainees, and 12 lessons taught by newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in 24 schools. All observations of trainees were undertaken jointly with mentors or school-based partnership representatives.
- Inspectors also held discussions with a further 17 trainees and 10 NQTs; partnership visiting tutors; leaders, managers and headteachers; and school-based staff, including mentors and partnership representatives.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence including information related to recruitment and selection, statutory compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, tracking and assessment, trainees' teaching evidence and assignments, analysis of outcomes for trainees, evaluations and improvement plans, external examiner reports, and surveys of the views of trainees and newly qualified teachers.

## **Inspection team**

Ian Hodgkinson, Her Majesty's Inspector: lead inspector (Stages 1 and 2)  
Denah Jones, Her Majesty's Inspector: team inspector (Stage 1), assistant lead inspector (Stage 2)

Debbie Clinton, Her Majesty's Inspector: assistant lead inspector (Stage 1)

Ramesh Kapadia, additional inspector: team inspector (Stage 1)

John Lucas, Her Majesty's Inspector: team inspector (Stage 2)

David Storrie, Her Majesty's Inspector: team inspector (Stage 2)

## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 1**

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

- Outstanding leadership at all levels, that has been highly successful in continually raising standards through effective improvement planning

based on a broad and detailed evaluation of performance.

- The clear and ambitious vision of programme leaders, widely shared across the partnership, for provision that trains teachers to base their practice firmly on the latest research in their subjects and a comprehensive understanding of educational theory.
- Rising attainment since the last inspection, and consistently high employment rates, reflecting well on the partnership's work in training effective teachers in shortage subjects.
- Rigorous procedures to recruit and select trainees of a high calibre, and high expectations that ensure that trainees' subject knowledge and skills are well developed prior to starting the course, and further enhanced thereafter.
- A coherent training programme that ensures that, across all routes, trainees have a well-developed professional studies programme and exceptionally broadly balanced experiences across different types of schools and settings.
- Trainees who manage the learning and behaviour of their classes confidently, often with innovative approaches, and who evaluate the success of their teaching carefully in terms of its impact on students' progress.
- Trainees who are intellectually stimulated by the academic rigour of their programme, and whose mature reflections on their own performance are informed by their well-rounded understanding of theory and best practice.
- Well-developed communication between the provider and partner schools, which enables a quick response in the few instances where trainees' progress is a cause for concern and which contributes to rising completion rates that are well above average.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- Secure even greater accuracy in ongoing assessments of trainees' performance and their setting of targets for improvement by:
  - ensuring that the partnership's recently introduced common assessment criteria are used systematically in every partner school, and that subject mentors' judgements are fully moderated by professional coordinating mentors
  - sharing best practice between the provider's subject departments in respect of expectations for the evidence trainees need to collect to demonstrate they fully meet the standards.
- Further develop school direct salaried partnerships to enable trainees to make their views heard about their training.

## **Inspection Judgements**

1. Programme leaders at King's have been determined and clear-sighted in ensuring that the training it provides remains of the highest quality. There has been no resting on laurels or reputation since the last inspection. Leaders use a broad range of outcomes, survey and review information to engage in detailed and incisive self-evaluation. Clear, succinct action plans are then formulated to drive improvement, and their impact regularly assessed.
2. As a result of well-focused actions, outcomes have continued to improve strongly since the previous inspection. Nearly all trainees who complete the course are assessed as good or better. The proportion

graded outstanding has risen steadily to over two thirds in each of the last two years. There are no significant persistent differences in attainment between subjects over time.

3. Completion rates have increased particularly sharply, from broadly average three years ago to well above average for the last two years. Sharp and sustained reductions in the number of withdrawals from the programme, and of deferrals of assessments, reflect well on the swift action taken by the provider to intervene when a trainee's progress makes them vulnerable to non-completion. Partner schools consistently praise King's rapid response to trainees identified as causing concern, and the general speed and quality of communication with King's staff. Trainees note the value of the seven or more personal tutorials with their university tutor in addressing concerns and keeping the trainees on track. These occur throughout the year, including while trainees are in schools.
4. Employment rates in teaching are also well above average. This is a notable success in a city where competition from other sectors for well-qualified graduates in shortage subjects such as mathematics, physics and computing is intense. Such a high rate of employment is testament to the rigour of the recruitment and selection process in selecting those with a passion for teaching as well as good qualifications. On entry, King's trainees are more highly qualified than the sector norms, and this underpins the strong and confident subject knowledge they bring to their teaching. The partnership is determined to maintain the high calibre of its trainees, including where vacant places go unfilled.
5. There are no significant differences in outcomes by training route. The small size of the school direct cohorts has contributed to some

variations in relative attainment over the two years of their operation. However, withdrawals from school direct routes remain low. All who have completed this route have been graded good or better, with at least a majority, and in some cases three-quarters, outstanding.

6. The provider monitors outcomes for different groups of trainees closely to secure equality of opportunity. Weaker outcomes for male trainees over time was identified as an improvement priority across the partnership in 2014/15 and has been addressed with some success, although it remains a focus in the 2015/16 action plan. Investigations have been conducted, at programme and subject levels, to identify the causes of the gap. Although no common strands were found, a heightened awareness of the issue across the partnership, with a strengthened focus on supporting the achievement of men, narrowed gaps markedly for the most recent cohort. Completion rates were almost identical for men and women, and the gap in the proportions achieving outstanding grades almost halved between 2013/14 and 2014/15.
7. Trainees demonstrate considerable strengths in performance against the teachers' standards. The large majority of those trainees and NQTS observed during this inspection managed the learning and behaviour of their classes with the same degree of confidence as well-established teachers. Lessons taught by trainees and NQTs are often innovative in their organisation and presentation, with a clear emphasis on engaging students in learning and developing students' abilities to apply their knowledge and think critically. Trainees and NQTs know their students well; they have a well-developed understanding of the importance of assessing students' progress when reflecting on the success of their approaches. They have the confidence to adapt their methods mid-lesson where they identify the need to accelerate the progress of individuals or groups. Trainees

unfailingly demonstrate high standards of professional conduct, and contribute well to the wider life of the school.

8. Strengths in trainees' and NQTs' teaching are firmly founded on an exceptionally well-organised and well-balanced training programme. At the heart of the training is King's emphasis on ensuring that a trainee's teaching practice is supported by a comprehensive understanding of pedagogical theory and research into how students learn and behave. King's College is internationally renowned and rated very highly for the quality of its educational research. Trainees are energised by the academic rigour that runs through their programme and assignment work. This equips them with many of the tools and strategies to be highly effective classroom practitioners and enables them to reflect on, and refine, their own practice. The use of school experiences and subject knowledge audits before they start, ensures that trainees are well prepared to begin the course. Trainees on the core PGCE and school direct non-salaried routes in particular place great value on the high-quality subject and professional studies training they receive, including from recognised experts in their field. This high-quality training is sustained during their first placement. Trainees acquire a well-developed understanding of new assessment and curriculum requirements. They receive comprehensive training on their required duties as a teacher before starting their placements, and aspects of this, including safeguarding and keeping students safe from all forms of bullying, are well developed in their placement schools. Trainees' understanding of the new Prevent duty to protect students from extremism and radicalisation, is however, more variable, and depends on the priority given to this in their school settings.
9. The size and breadth of the partnership offers trainees an exceptional diversity of school placements across a wide range of contexts and types of settings, including in maintained and independent sectors.

Placements are very well managed to ensure that trainees have a well-balanced set of experiences, including in schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances and, in a few cases, schools judged to be less than good by Ofsted. The use of schools that have been judged as requiring improvement or have been in special measures deepens the experience of trainees and supports the wider professional development of staff in those schools. Programme leaders are aware, however, that some trainees may need enhanced support in these settings. A particular strength of the secondary programme is in ensuring that trainees have appropriate experience in teaching in all phases, including in the sixth form. The training includes a week with a focus on primary education, so that trainees are well equipped with an understanding of how students are prepared to enter the secondary phase. Trainees understand well the importance of continuing to develop students' literacy skills through their teaching in all subjects, and this is consistently evident in their lesson planning. Although resources are made available to trainees to promote students' numeracy across subjects, this is less consistently evident in their planning and teaching.

10. The diversity of the placements, and of the backgrounds of the students they teach, gives trainees very good opportunities to successfully apply their well-developed understanding of methods for overcoming barriers to learning. Through effective training and assignment work, trainees develop a refined understanding of the needs of key groups, including those who are disadvantaged, more able, those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language.

11. Trainee survey information and discussions with inspectors show that trainees rate the quality of training highly. The areas in the survey in which a higher proportion than trainees nationally were less positive

were in the quality of the placements, and specifically in the clarity of the targets set for them by their mentors. There are instances where the subject mentor does not systematically use the common assessment criteria that partnership leaders have introduced in order to promote consistency; in such circumstances it is difficult for the trainee to understand how well they are doing and to have a clear idea about how to improve. This is compounded where the professional coordinating mentor does not fully carry out their responsibilities for monitoring and moderating the subject mentor's assessment in line with the partnership agreement. There are some wide variations between subjects in relation to the expectations for trainees to present evidence to support their assessments at the end of their training; this also contributes to some confusion for a few trainees. There were a very few occasions where inspectors judged that the partnership's ongoing assessment of a trainee's progress in a school setting was over-optimistic. A thorough and multilayered approach to the moderation of final assessments, however, including cross-subject internal checks and scrutiny of 'borderline' decisions by external examiners, ensures that final assessments are well supported by evidence.

12. The quality of mentoring across the partnership is generally high, and the targets trainees are given, both during and at the end of their placements, are mostly helpful and precise. Mentoring is supported by regular and highly rated training for subject and professional mentors through the year and regular visits to trainees and mentors by the trainees' personal tutors. Systems for summatively recording trainees' performance in each of the teachers' standards at the end of each phase of their training are thorough, and help to generate precise targets for further improvement at the next phase. This promotes very good continuity in trainees' professional development. The induction targets which NQTs carry into their teaching career are valued and

have been well used by the majority of employing schools to frame sharply focused induction plans for their new teachers.

13. The small number of school direct (salaried) trainees were positive about the overall quality of their training, but some expressed concern that they could not readily make their views known about aspects of their training. A few felt they were not well prepared in their settings to meet the needs of all learners. These findings were identified at Stage 1 of the inspection process, and the provider has been quick to set in place an action plan for improvement. There is already an improvement in formal mechanisms for communication through the appointment of two trainee representatives for current trainees, who will meet with the programme leader to review the course. Concerns identified in the provider's school experience survey, for example about trainees' timetables, have been acted upon within the first two weeks of term. This represents a marked improvement because such concerns would not previously have been identified until the end of term. While the full impact of improvements is not yet fully evident, programme leaders have demonstrated urgency in improving provision.

14. The partnership has a widely shared vision for high-quality training based on strong subject knowledge and professional development. Communication across the partnership is supported by an excellent open website with comprehensive course documentation which sets out very precisely the structure of courses, along with roles and responsibilities. The provider has well-developed systems to develop and grow the partnership while maintaining quality of provision. It has developed school direct provision to almost exactly mirror its highly regarded PGCE programme, while giving schools more direct involvement in recruitment and selection decisions. It offers a successful and well-organised twilight professional development

programme for those schools, especially independent and selective schools, that wish to be involved but do not have the capacity to provide professional mentoring.

15. The partnership management committee, membership of which is open to all partner schools, is very involved in shaping the strategic direction of the partnership. Members feel that their voices are heard and acted on. Management committee representatives stress the very significant benefits accruing to schools from being members of the King's partnership. Notably, mentor development, access to higher professional study and involvement in research projects of direct benefit to their schools were all cited as benefits. Through such broad engagement, and the supply of high-quality teachers in shortage subjects to schools across the region, the partnership makes a substantial contribution to improving the quality of education in London and beyond.
16. The partnership complies fully with regulations for initial teacher education, including through safeguarding students by thorough checks on the background and qualifications of trainees.
17. That programme leaders responded swiftly to the findings of stage 1 of this inspection, with action plans that begin to address the few emerging areas for development identified, is a mark of their determination to sustain their provision at the highest level. A track record of sustained improvement since the last inspection, comprehensive monitoring of outcomes and rigorous development planning show that the partnership has an outstanding capacity to improve.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and newly qualified teachers' (NQTs) teaching:

London Nautical School, Southwark  
City of London Academy, Islington  
Graveney School, Wandsworth  
Ricard's Lodge High School, Merton  
Morpeth School, Tower Hamlets  
St Mary Magdalene Academy, Islington  
Prendergast Vale School, Lewisham  
St Saviour's and St Olave's Church of England School, Southwark  
Beal High School, Ilford  
Archbishop Lanfranc Academy, Croydon  
Harris Academy, Bromley  
Westminster City School, Westminster  
Grey Coat Hospital School, Westminster  
George Abbot School, Guildford  
City of London Academy, Southwark  
Ernest Bevin School, Merton  
Camden School for Girls, Camden  
St George's Catholic School, Westminster  
Brampton Manor Academy, Newham  
Forest School, Redbridge  
Highgate School, Islington  
Queen's Park Community School, Brent  
St Paul's Way Trust School, Tower Hamlets  
Mossbourne Community Academy, Hackney