

Buckinghamshire College Group

Oxford Road, Aylesbury HP21 8PD

Inspection dates

20 to 23 May 2024

Inspection judgements

Further education age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education and training

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

N/A

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

Leaders and managers provide exceptional support and high levels of individualised care and support for trainees. Workloads are very well managed, enabling trainees to progress in their course and careers. As a result, trainees remain in learning, develop their teaching skills and confidence, and are aspirational for their teaching careers.

Leaders and managers have effectively established an inclusive workplace ethos. Trainees benefit from leaders' overarching culture, encompassing diversity and equality of opportunity. High-quality training ensures that trainees develop a keen knowledge of safeguarding, equality, inclusion and mental health issues.

Trainees value the support and guidance of the course lead, managers and mentors greatly. Leaders introduce trainees to an exceptionally diverse range of research evidence, which they carefully consider and often successfully adapt into their own teaching. Trainees become increasingly competent in understanding and applying strategies to plan and support special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learners.

Trainees are wholly positive about their training, which they rightly describe as having a transformative impact on their teaching. They are supported extremely well to become reflective practitioners who build strong networks, including through professional associations. Staff who have joined from industry feel very well equipped to understand the professional roles and boundaries of teachers.

Information about this ITE provider

- At the time of the inspection, there were 22 trainees. All trainees are in the further education and skills phase.
- All trainees follow the Level 5 Certificate in Education route. This is delivered by Buckinghamshire College Group and validated by Buckinghamshire New University.
- The college predominantly delivers training for trainees employed by the college. It also works with one university technical college.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team was conducted by two of His Majesty's Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the principal, vice-principal curriculum and quality, director of learning innovation, quality manager and course lead. They also met with mentors and line managers. Inspectors met those responsible for teacher recruitment, safeguarding and student well-being.
- Inspectors spoke with 17 trainees from year one and two and eight former trainees.
- Inspectors conducted focused reviews in the following subjects: creative fashion and retail, creative graphics, creative games development, creative film and media, health and social care, and education and childcare.
- Inspectors visited two of the Buckinghamshire College Group campuses over the course of the inspection.

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

The ITE curriculum is carefully aligned to the college's mission, vision and values. Leaders have skilfully designed a highly ambitious, trainee-centred and well-focused curriculum which prepares trainees, often from industry, to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be successful in their teaching careers. Trainees play a full role in the life of the college, even helping students on other courses to succeed through the application of their developing expertise in teaching.

The ITE curriculum is designed to secure competence in appropriate teaching skills and is exceptionally well allied to the professional standards. Leaders, managers and staff plan and sequence the curriculum with considerable care to create a sensible and sustainable pathway of progression for trainees.

Leaders are highly ambitious for their trainees. They have ensured an effective cross college collegiate approach to the training. Trainees are fully integrated into their trainees' teaching posts and departments and many embrace the chance to take on additional responsibilities. They work collaboratively with their colleagues to plan their courses, share resources, strong practice and individual areas of responsibility.

Leaders review and evaluate the curriculum assiduously and make appropriate changes to ensure it is relevant to current teaching practice and trainees' needs. For example, they redesigned the 'understanding teaching, learning and assessment' unit to better support trainees' application of behaviour theory to their specific teaching practices. Consequently, trainees develop the pedagogical and vocational knowledge, skills and professional behaviours that they need quickly and securely.

Staff use high-quality and up-to-date resources and activities to teach trainees about the evolution of educational theories. Outdated theories are compared, contrasted and critiqued in relation to newer, more relevant and proven ideas and concepts. Staff provide very clear explanations as to why certain concepts and ideas are no longer credible. Consequently, trainees are fluent in their understanding and application of pertinent research in their academic writing, planning and teaching practice.

Trainees have a very secure understanding of the underpinning principles, policies and theories related to how learners with SEND learn. Staff ensure that inclusive learning is routinely and thoroughly discussed and reviewed in all areas of learning. For example, when discussing pedagogical theories and strategies, trainees learn how outmoded theories do not properly account for learners with SEND.

Leaders ensure that all mentors are carefully selected. They are well qualified and have relevant subject and, or pedagogical, expertise to help trainees learn. Leaders and managers work collaboratively with mentors and course leaders to monitor and standardise mentoring. They use an appropriate range of checks such as joint observations, 'J Pops', and thorough scrutiny of completed mentor documents. Consequently, trainees benefit from high-quality mentorship.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70167
Inspection number	10336345

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	ITE in FE
Phase provided	Further education and skills
Dates of previous inspection	20 May and 7 October 2015

Inspection team

Carolyn Brownsea, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Peter Cox	Senior His Majesty's inspector

Annex: colleges

Inspectors visited the following college campuses as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
Buckinghamshire College Group, Aylesbury	70167	FES
Buckinghamshire College Group, Amersham	70167	FES

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024