

**Academic Year:** 2021-2022  
**Name of External Examiner:** Pauline Treanor  
**From (name of institution):** Associated Merseyside Partnership SCITT  
**Review date:** March 2022

**Summary of findings**

**Confirmation of quality and standards**

**In my view as external examiner:**

The processes for assessment, examination and the decisions made regarding the award of qualified teacher status are sound and fairly conducted

**Yes** No

The internal processes support a consistent approach to assessment of trainees

**Yes** No

The standards of trainee performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar

**Yes** No

**Activities Undertaken**

All meetings took place on line, however this did allow the opportunity to meet a large group of Associate Teachers (trainees), Mentors and Professional Mentors over the moderation period. Interviews included;

- 36 + Associate Teachers (Trainees)
- 1 self-assessment only secondary trainee & mentor
- 3 ECTs
- 14 mentors
- 10 Professional Mentors
- 7 Subject area leads
- 5 Employing principles
- 3/2 QA team
- Director of Initial Teacher Training
- Assistant Director of Initial Teacher Training
- Chair of WMC Consortium

**Documentation reviewed include;**

- Observation forms from subjects
- Examples of ATs lesson plans and reflections
- Examples of Subject Knowledge Curriculum Maps
- ECT Transfer documents
- CEDP documents & copy of Teachers Standards review (end of course)
- Examples of Mentor meeting notes (Progress Review Meeting Form)
- Handbooks for all courses

- Previous External Examiner Report 2018/19
- Overview of Primary and Secondary EPI Programme
- Example of QA visit proforma (IKM)
- WCM Targets for development 2019/20
- Example of Subject Knowledge Audit
- Overview of Mentor training programme
- School placement list

The Consortium Programme became a provider in its own right in 1996. Originally working within the secondary sector with a PE focus, developing a Primary PE route and, in 2012 introduced a Primary 5-11 course. They now offer two versions of the School Direct programme, QTS (Training) and School Direct (Salaried), PGCE and Assessment-Only route. The PGCE element is delivered by Consortium staff and validated by Staffordshire University. The Consortium offers multiple routes into teaching: PGCE/QTS – Primary & Secondary (PE & Dance), SD salaried (QTS only) – variety of subjects, SD Training (QTS only - Primary & Secondary – variety of subjects), Assessment only (QTS – primary and secondary). Their partnership schools cover a wide geographical area from Shrewsbury to Birmingham and is centred around the Thomas Telford MAT.

Currently they have 44 trainees following teacher trainee programmes;

- 12 primary PGCE
- 4 Primary SD
- 18 PE & 3 dance PGCE
- 9 SD Secondary training or salaried (4 SDT and 5 SDS)
- 1 assessment only – secondary

### **1. What is it like to be a trainee in this partnership?**

- The trainees felt they were well cared for, supported and valued in their schools and issues were resolved quickly. The partnership is a close-knit community of schools and educators across which trainees, mentors and professional tutors build positive and productive working relationships. Communication across the partnership is a strength. Trainees feel supported from the moment they start the programme and that it is a 'doable' course and they 'want to have an impact on the children they teach'.
- This was reiterated further by the Subject Leads and Professional Mentors who stated that WMC was a structured, purposeful course which ensured trainees had a strong foundation to prepare them for teaching. They recognised that WMC 'deliberately and carefully matched trainee to their host school to ensure success' and that WMC developed 'reflective practitioners'.
- Furthermore, the employing Headteachers stated that WMC 'supports our succession planning – these trainees are the future for our schools'. They believe that the programme is 'continually developing in line with the Ofsted Framework, subject review developments and Core Content Framework.' Employing schools consistently state, 'This is the best ITT training in the area – it's well organised and is led by evidence informed research. It has challenge but there is support and guidance, with a strong network and community to ensure trainees have a work life balance to ensure they remain in the profession'.

### **2. Quality of education and training**

- The WMC leadership team have carefully planned a curriculum that is sequenced and coherent in which they have identified non-negotiables to secure consistency. The curriculum plans show what the trainees must know, understand and be able to do. They have considered the sequencing of the programme and trainees' needs and responded to changes in

circumstances quickly to secure the progress of all trainees. Secondary and Primary EPI have been cross-checked to ensure that they cover the ITT criteria and supporting advice and CCF.

- The trainees' perception of the quality of training ensured that they are prepared to teach their subject/curriculum in the appropriate phases. The EPI training is updated regularly, ensuring that National Agendas are reviewed and understood. The Consortium uses their networks, shared resources and expertise to enhance their programme and react quickly to local needs.
- The Primary & Secondary PE and Dance teams have clearly developed activities to ensure trainees can apply their learning; examples included deconstruction and reconstruction of lessons and collaborative development of the sequence of learning, resources and moderation.
- The strong communication between WMC and schools through handbooks, documents and PRMs mean that the Professional Mentor and Mentor is fully aware of the EPI sessions and can integrate this in to their own training sessions to reinforce trainee learning.
- The employing Headteachers felt strongly that the trainees were having a positive impact on the learning and progress of their pupils and that WMC was 'raising the professional standards in their schools', one stating that, having employed WMC trainees over the last 5 years, they had become 'the backbone of their school' and this was shown through the track record of results. They identified that many were quickly promoted to TLR positions because they had been 'prepared well in their training year'. Clearly the engagement and employment within schools is a strength in this Consortium. There is a high demand for their ECTs from across the partnership and beyond.
- The trainees are confident in their use of assessment evidence to inform and adapt future planning to impact on pupil learning and progress over time and, through discussions, stated that this was due to training linked to relevant research, regular research links and subject training moderation exercises with the school mentor/staff support.
- The mentors and Consortium Leads review trainees' planning regularly and give feedback to enhance this quality. Trainees felt that this supports their understanding and, in particular, ensured that they planned for misconceptions. The EPI training provides understanding to further support planning and the trainees were strong in their questioning and use of retrieval practices to secure learning.
- Although I was unable to visit classrooms, it was clear through observed lesson observation forms and trainee interviews that behaviour management is effectively established through clear expectations and positive discipline procedures in line with their school policies.
- The trainees are able to adapt their teaching to ensure that the needs of learners with different needs and abilities are met. This was evidenced in lesson plans, lesson feedback sheets and, in discussion, trainees could give examples of how they had adapted for children with SEND and EAL.
- The Consortium and schools have high expectations regarding Personal and Professional conduct and trainees are fully immersed in school life, including form tutor, pastoral understanding, department CPD and intervention strategies, whole staff CPD and extra-curricular opportunities. They are confident to engage with parents, both formally and informally, to support the progress of the pupil.
- The commitment to the SCITT shown by the Professional mentors, mentors and subject leads has resulted in a drive to deliver high quality training. They are identified as outstanding practitioners within their own setting and engage in current research to ensure that they provide the most up-to-date knowledge and understanding to their trainees.
- The trainees have two placements in contrasting schools. The Consortium Lead identifies appropriate schools to challenge, yet support, the trainees.
- Selected discretionary appropriate NASBTT Learn courses and NASBTT subject focused training have been identified for trainees to support their development. Trainees are

encouraged to join subject Associations to ensure engagement in up-to-date developments. However, not all could share how they have used these to support subject knowledge development.

### 3. Quality of subject training in Primary & secondary.

- The subject leads (Primary & Secondary PE/Dance) have the skills, experience and knowledge and allocated designated time and availability to ensure the design and delivery of high quality training in their subjects. They have delivered effectively across a range of subjects, allowing the trainees to develop subject supportive communities, sharing planning and resources.
- Trainees put their EPI training into practice. The subject training is clearly linked to the EPI and ensures that trainees are able to use a range of appropriate teaching and learning strategies for their subject. This was evidenced through discussions with subject leads and targeted questioning around the ITT Core Content Framework (CCF). This is very effective when subject leaders (PE, Dance and Primary) routinely model subject-specific pedagogy. The communication with mentors results in the mentors following up trainees' curriculum knowledge and helping their subject knowledge development.
- The subject training shows cohesive planning with a chronological approach with a clear rationale regarding decisions about which elements of the curriculum to deliver and which to signpost to resources/additional training (NASBTT) and Subject Association CPD.
- The PGCE strand, again, reinforced relevant research and provided trainees with the opportunity to embed their understanding with a subject-specific focus.
- The secondary SD trainees (QTS only) rely on their mentors to support their Subject knowledge development. There is not a curriculum overview for these subject areas and, consequently, there is some variation and trainees may develop subject knowledge based only on their school curriculum. Some trainees in this situation have been guided to use Subject Associations to enhance their knowledge. Some trainees did not have a degree in their subject area and had attended SKE if available.
- There has been a focus on phonics training for all phases and this has supported trainees' understanding and their ability to enhance opportunities for pupils. The secondary trainees spoke confidently about their role to support children in phonics development and with regards to the role of numeracy in their subjects.
- Trainees have gained much from opportunities to teach personal, social and health education (PSHE) and support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Trainees show strong awareness of how the Equality Act 2010 and fundamental British values may be applied to their teaching. Trainees take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. They know the risks pupils face and how and when to report concerns.
- Guided observation of expert colleagues in partnership schools, school based mentor observation feedback, department training, weekly meeting discussions and practical application and self-reflection all further support the development of subject and pedagogy.
- The Consortium Lead knows the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership well. As a result, they have improved the curriculum, for example, embedding the understanding of phonics across secondary courses. Leaders are clear about the essential knowledge and skills that they want trainees to develop. Throughout the year, trainees revisit and practise this essential learning. For example, trainees develop a strong understanding of adaptive teaching and the importance of memory in pupils' learning. Trainees talk about these principles confidently and apply them in their professional practice.
- Regular 'professional learning conversations' review the gaps identified by trainees in their subject knowledge audit and both the Leads and the mentor support or signpost trainees to develop these areas. In some cases, training has been modified to meet these gaps. In the PGCE route (PE and Dance), leaders signpost trainees to additional training in their curriculum

subject (level 1 & 2 courses). This approach is effective in deepening trainees' subject knowledge.

- Leaders check trainees' progression through the programme. The information gathered for each trainee is extensive. It is used well by leaders to adapt the training as well as provide ongoing, focused support for trainees. On the few occasions when trainees are at risk of falling behind, WMC Leads quickly provide a monitored Enhanced Support Procedure working in partnership with the mentor
- Leaders and mentors routinely prioritise trainees' mental health and well-being. Partnership schools align well with the centrally delivered training and are kept continually informed of new research to ensure that this is woven into their own and the trainees' practice. This typically helps trainees to make strong connections between theory and practice. Mentors are carefully chosen and trained well by WMC Leaders through a training programme and 1-1 support and QA visits.

#### **4. The Quality Assurance processes are consistent across the partnership**

- Consortium Leads are focusing on tracking the impact of the curriculum through applied tasks. This is reviewed and feedback provided to the trainees. Collation of evidence against the Teachers' Standards is reviewed at final assessment and the Associate Teachers are questioned using a viva style approach regarding their pedagogical knowledge and understanding in line with the requirements of the ITT Core Content Framework.
- The fortnightly Progress Review Meeting Form (PRM) ensures that all parties are aware of the trainees' well-being, teacher/subject development or need for support. This is completed by the trainee and viewed by Consortium Leads, Mentors and Professional Mentors.
- The QA team are allocated one (or two) trainees and they monitor their progress all year, working with the school to ensure that the trainee develops and makes progress. Joint observations occur with the Professional Mentor/Consortium Leads/QA team and mentor/class teacher and this ensures consistency regarding expectations. This occurs 6 times in a year. The observation proforma used presently is linked to CCF and Teachers' Standards. This information is centrally collated. The QA is in regular communication with Professional Mentors. This visit includes lesson observations, discussions regarding the progress of trainees and celebration of achievements in addition to targeting any key actions for trainees or areas of concern. Where possible, the Consortium tries to have a subject specialist leading the QA.
- Additionally, a Performance Review Point is written by the school mentor each term in which the progress of the trainee is reviewed against the Teachers' Standards, Core Content and WMC Curriculum and is monitored with a view to either career stage progression or the award of QTS
- All mentors attend WMC training sessions and are provided with a partnership handbook, made aware of expectations and lesson planning. They are aware of the content of the central training and the Professional Mentor training in their own schools. The regular emails outline curriculum focus (linked to CCF) and suggests tasks and evidence based enquiry or talking points for their weekly meetings. A strength is that the health and well-being of the trainee is at the foremost of meetings.
- When a cause for concern is identified regarding either the quality of the school-based training or the progress of the trainee, the consortium leads or QA team works closely with the school, setting monitoring targets with an Enhanced Support procedure and open communication between the school, trainee and the Consortium. They are quick to respond to trainee or staff concerns to ensure they remain on course and meet expectations. Adaptions are made on the course as required to support personal needs of trainees, this includes timetable reductions, team planning and additional lead meetings.

- A conscious effort has been made to ensure trainees are fully aware of different strategies, equality and diversity and make a conscious effort to embrace this in their teaching and through reflection – trainees consider these strategies within their own subject.
- The Partnership does fulfil all of the DfE compliance criteria for the assessment-only route in the secondary phase. They provide regular research updates and ensure awareness of key strategies. They have a robust assessment and moderation arrangements in place for candidates for the award of QTS.

### Summary

It is very clear that all members of the West Midlands Consortium feel a shared responsibility for the development of new teachers and there is a strong cohesive education philosophy that underlies the training programme. There are effective relationships between ATs, school colleagues and WMC Lead which results in open, honest discussions creating reflective practitioners. ATs are excited to learn more and the course is scaffolded to achieve this. The leadership team are ambitious to continually develop their curriculum, expand and support local schools to provide equality of education for all learners.

It has been a pleasure to lead the External Moderation for West Midlands Consortium for the first time. I look forward to seeing them continue and thrive in their delivery of ITT programmes for Primary and secondary.

**P. Treanor 31/3/22**