Consultation outcome

Initial teacher education framework: a report on the responses to the consultation

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Consultation question

Strongly agree	40
Agree	36
Neither agree nor disagree	10
Disagree	8
Strongly disagree	3
Don't know	2

What we will do in response to the consultation findings for question 5

Given the positive response to this proposal, the vast majority of ITE inspections will be scheduled to take place in the spring and summer terms, from September 2020.

During our research fieldwork and piloting process, we received consistent feedback regarding the difficulties of forming valid inspection judgements during the autumn term. Given the consensus from respondents on this proposal, we are reassured that this will be a positive change for the sector and Ofsted.

Respondents who agreed with this proposal noted that trainees completing a one-year training programme will have had the opportunity to settle into the ITE programme before an Ofsted inspection takes place. This will allow them to discuss their experiences with a better understanding and with more confidence.

At the same time, we recognise that in many partnerships, the autumn term is when much of the centre-based training takes place. Some are concerned that inspectors will not be able to observe this teaching. However, the partnership representative and inspector will discuss in the educationally focused conversation the planned curriculum covered through the autumn term. Inspectors can also consider the implementation and impact of the curriculum through other inspection activities, such as discussions with trainees and mentors.

Recurring themes in responses

In addition to the 5 questions about the specific proposals set out in the consultation, respondents were also given the opportunity to submit free-text comments on the draft ITE framework and handbook. We also received many responses from association and representative groups from the ITE sector via email.

These reflected general agreement with the specific proposals but went on to provide feedback on the draft handbook content more generally. We have considered these carefully and identified a number of themes that recurred in many responses.

Mentor quality and arrangements in ITE

Many respondents raised concerns about the fact that our new criteria place a great deal of responsibility on the ITE partnership to ensure that mentoring in placement settings is of a high quality.

Respondents have told us that this is a concern due to the limited control ITE partnerships have over mentor selection and arrangements, which are predominantly determined by leaders within placement settings. The view presented to us is that this may be outside the ITE partnerships' control and this could have an impact on their ability to obtain a 'good' or better grading in the 2 key judgement areas.

It is important to clarify that the purpose of our criteria, in relation to mentoring, is to establish whether leaders have consistently ensured the application of effective policies and procedures across the partnership, so that trainees receive their entitlement to high-quality mentoring. We will evaluate the effectiveness of the systems and procedures that ITE leaders have in place to ensure and assure the quality of the mentors who work with trainee teachers. Inspectors will look to establish how any issues are dealt with by the partnership leadership team and the actions they have taken to mitigate any inconsistencies.

Systematic synthetic phonics

We have made clear within the handbook that in early years and primary phase inspections, the inspection team will always include a focused review of early reading, including phonics. We have also set out within the criteria that to be judged as good or better, training must ensure that trainees learn to teach early reading using SSP. This is based on the understanding that learning to decode using SSP is a necessary but not sufficient condition for learning to read. Trainees must not be taught to use competing approaches to SSP when teaching reading.

Some respondents raised concerns that this focus on SSP is restrictive and may undermine the academic freedoms and integrity of ITE partnerships. Others suggested that the language in the handbook relating to SSP may lead to a disproportionate focus among ITE partnerships on solely teaching their trainees SSP. Some believe that this will prevent trainees from being introduced to other evidence or effective methods for teaching reading and language development.

We have considered this view and want to clarify our stance on SSP. The new ITE framework is intended to enable Ofsted to be a force for improvement by ensuring that all trainee teachers have equal access to high-quality education and training while on their ITE programme. Given the short amount of time trainees have to become qualified teachers, it is vital that trainees become competent in the method of teaching reading that they will be expected to use within early years and school settings.

Teaching SSP is a requirement of the primary national curriculum and the teachers' standards. It is also a feature of the government's compulsory ITT core content framework. SSP is what NQTs will be expected to teach in schools. All of this does not mean that trainees cannot be made critically aware that other methods for teaching reading exist. However, the clear expectation in the ITE inspection handbook is that partnerships will train trainees to teach SSP in line with government expectations.

References to 'up-to-date evidence'

The criteria in our handbook set out that inspectors will consider whether the ITE curriculum is designed to ensure that trainees:

- engage with up-to-date research
- are taught how to apply principles from scholarship that are relevant to their subject and phase when making professional decisions

Respondents questioned the meaning of the term 'up-to-date evidence'. To clarify our stance on this particular issue, we have amended the wording in our handbook (see research criteria under the good grade descriptor in particular) to refer to 'up-to-date and pertinent research'.

Some respondents also raised concerns that 'up-to-date evidence' might be interpreted to mean that the research references within the government's ITT core content framework should be embedded within the ITE programme in an uncritical and inflexible way, and that this is how it may be interpreted by the inspector workforce. In primary phase inspections, this was raised in reference to the reading test available within the core content framework.

Our position on this is clarified within the handbook itself:

> Trainees learn how to assess the appropriateness and value of new approaches that they might encounter in future by considering the validity and reliability of any research on which the approach depends; considering its context in existing community debates (for example, subject, phase, SEND, psychology); and by relating it to their professional experience.

Approaches to trainee assessment

Some respondents raised concerns about the expectations around trainee assessment within our draft handbook. They were concerned about the appropriate use of the teachers' standards for assessing trainees.

The handbook states that inspectors will consider the quality of the assessment process for trainees as part of the implementation of the ITE curriculum. A degree of clarity can be obtained by distinguishing between formative and summative assessment.

These considerations of the quality of assessment include:

- evaluation of the quality of summative assessment
- whether the partnership makes accurate and rigorous final assessments for the award of QTS in relation to the teachers' standards for primary and secondary trainees, and the award of EYTS for early years trainees

Inspectors will also consider the quality of ongoing formative assessment of trainees. This assessment should be used to check that trainees are gaining, applying and refining the knowledge and skills set out in the ITE curriculum.

The teachers' standards:

- provide an end-point assessment for QTS in the primary and secondary phases
- are not a curriculum and so cannot be used as a means of formative assessment of the curriculum learned
- are statements of high-level outcomes for trainees and do not cover the specific curriculum content that trainees need to learn

Therefore, partnerships should avoid the premature use of these summative assessments for formative purposes.

To provide further clarity, we have amended the handbook so that we make distinctly separate references to formative and summative assessment.

Subject specialism among Ofsted inspector workforce

Although we received many positive and encouraging responses about the focus on the ITE curriculum and emphasis on subject specialism under the new framework, respondents raised concerns about how our inspector workforce will carry out focused reviews when they may lack subject specialisms. Respondents asked that we take into account that effective pedagogical practice can vary significantly by different subjects.

We have listened to these views. Our inspection workforce is experienced and highly trained in order to carry out ITE inspections. The focused reviews in individual subjects are not subject inspections. They provide evidence that, when brought together, allows inspection teams to identify what is systemic across the relevant phase(s) within the partnership. This approach ensures that we can make reliable and valid judgments about the quality of education and training.

Teacher education versus training

The introduction of the new 'quality of education and training' judgement was positively received. Respondents agreed that this will be beneficial for the sector and ITE more generally.

However, a number of responses to our consultation asked for clarity around the meaning of and difference between teacher education and training. We are aware that different areas of the sector refer to initial teacher 'education' or initial teacher 'training'. We have attempted to amalgamate both references. For some partnerships, the teacher 'education' happens during the centre-based input and the 'training' happens while trainees are on placement. In others, it is a combination of both.

Research summary

Before launching the ITE framework consultation, we published:

- a research commentary by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
- a report on the ITE curriculum

The findings set out in these documents informed the development of the new ITE inspection framework. The intention of this research was to develop and test a research model that assessed the quality of an ITE programme's curriculum. We expected the research to identify valid components of the ITE curriculum quality, which could then be refined and used to inform the development of the new inspection framework.

We received minimal feedback relating to the research document during the consultation. This feedback included concerns about the validity of lesson observations and the accuracy of inspection judgments made by non-specialists or subject-specific inspectors. Respondents referred to our report on lesson observations and work scrutiny in school inspections.

We want to clarify that the research referred to in these instances is separate to the research findings that have informed the ITE framework development.

In addition to this, it may be helpful to clarify the following: our lesson observation research identified that inspectors were much more reliable than non-inspectors when using a generic observation rubric across different subjects. There were no subject-specific criteria used in the process, as the indicators in the research highlight:

Lesson observation is only one inspection activity that contributes to the evidence base. On this basis, a team of well-trained inspectors applying a standardised framework across multiple focused reviews will still be able to identify the systemic strengths and weaknesses of the training provision to produce a reliable judgement on the quality of education. Also, inspectors will not make subject judgements. This is not the purpose of the focused review methodology.

Issues out of scope or outside Ofsted's remit

A number of issues were raised in consultation responses that fall outside the scope of the consultation or raised concerns about topics that are outside Ofsted's remit.

For example, respondents raised concerns about the research references within the government's ITT core content framework, as well as concerns regarding the requirement for the core content framework to become mandatory from September 2020, and the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector as a whole.

Where a significant number of concerns have been raised in relation to the core content framework, we have shared these with the DfE for consideration.

However, we want to emphasise a misconception that has been referenced in some consultation responses. A concern raised with us is that the requirements for ITE partnerships to embed the minimum entitlement set out in the core content framework limits the focus of the ITE curriculum to that framework. We want to reassure the sector that we acknowledge the emphasis of the core content framework as a minimum requirement and expect that partnerships will strive to provide a high-quality ITE curriculum beyond the expectations in that framework.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

As part of the ITE framework consultation, we published a draft equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) statement. Through the consultation process, we received feedback on the content of the EDI statement as well as on the aspects of the handbook that relate to EDI.

We have carefully considered this feedback and reviewed every response and free-text comment relating to EDI concerns. We have published a revised EDI statement alongside the consultation outcome report and the framework and handbook document.

Overall, respondents were positive about the specific references to EDI within the inspection handbook, which aims to establish the extent to which trainee teachers are prepared to be able to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

A small number of respondents requested further references regarding trainees teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). We have considered these requests and checked that there is appropriate reference to this in the handbook. For example, during the reflective, educationally focused conversation, there is an expectation that programme leaders will be able to articulate:

> How trainees are taught to promote pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes, and how their practice in meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SENDS) is developed throughout the ITE curriculum offered.

Others raised queries about the new inspection methodology and wanted clarity about whether SEND would be an area of focused review during an ITE inspection. We have clarified within our EDI statement that SEND will be a consideration of all focused reviews, regardless of the subject being discussed. This is exemplified in the criteria for good under the 'quality of education and training' judgement, which states:

> Inclusion and teaching pupils with SEND are meaningfully integrated into all aspects of the training programme.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that trainee teachers are taught how to recognise whether pupils have SEND and can support their learning. This is reflected in the fact that a criterion for being inadequate under the 'quality of education and training' judgement is:

> The ITE curriculum does not teach trainees how to promote inclusion. Trainees are not taught to recognise signs that may indicate SEND and know how to help pupils overcome barriers to learning.

We received some specific feedback relating to the wording in the draft handbook, and we carefully considered whether the proposed amendments were appropriate. Where the request to be more explicit regarding SEND was appropriate and did not change the meaning of the intended wording and criteria, we have added the relevant references. An example of this is the fourth bullet under 'Intent' under the outstanding grade descriptor in the 'quality of education and training' judgement. We have added 'to all pupils, including those with SEND' to provide further clarity:

> Designed to consistently give trainees necessary expertise in the subject(s) they teach to all pupils, including those with SEND and those who speak EAL.

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