



Guidance

Initial teacher education (ITE) inspection framework and handbook

Updated 15 December 2021

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Introduction

1. This document sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2020. It sets out the principles that apply to inspection and the evaluation criteria that inspectors use to make their judgements, and on which they report, when carrying out ITE inspections. It reflects the expectations of different pathways to becoming a qualified teacher for early years (EY), primary and secondary schools and further education (FE) and skills. Inspectors will inspect provider phases for which they have appropriate expertise and training.

2. This document describes the main activities carried out during inspections of ITE under section 18B of the Education Act 1994 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

3. The document has two parts and two annexes:

- Part 1 – The ITE framework: why we inspect ITE providers

This part sets out the purposes and principles of inspecting ITE providers and the statutory basis for doing so.

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- Part 2 – The ITE handbook: how we will collect evidence and judge ITE providers

This part contains information about the processes before, during and after the inspection. It contains the evaluation criteria that inspectors use to make the graded judgements about the ITE provider and includes examples of the kinds of evidence and activities used by inspectors to make their judgements.

- Annex A – Instructions and guidance for thematic subject inspections

This contains the evaluation criteria on the quality and effectiveness of training in subject/specialist areas of the ITE curriculum.

- Annex B – Glossary of common terminology

This contains common terminology used throughout the handbook and useful links to official publications.

Privacy notice

4. During inspection, inspectors will collect information about staff and trainees at the provider by looking at records, survey responses and other recorded information. Inspectors will also visit trainees while they are receiving training and/or teaching in schools and other settings. Inspectors may also meet with trainers, early career teachers (ECTs), [\[footnote 1\]](#) leaders, managers, mentors and employers, where appropriate.

5. Ofsted uses this information to prepare its report and for the purposes set out in its [privacy notice](#). In most cases, we will not record names. However, some of the information recorded may make it possible to identify a particular individual. We will not publish any information that identifies an individual trainee or member of the provider's staff in the report.

6. Section 18B (5) of the Education Act 1994 sets out Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) 'right to inspect, and take copies of, any records kept by the training provider, and any other documents containing information relating to the training provider' when inspecting a training provider.

7. Section 132 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 sets out HMCI's power to 'inspect, take copies of, or take away any documents relating to the education or training' during inspections of FE and skills teacher training programmes. This power also enables our inspectors to inspect computers and other devices that may hold information.

8. In the vast majority of providers, we will gather evidence electronically using a range of devices, including laptops, mobile phones and tablets. All evidence is securely transferred to Ofsted's systems. Inspectors may take photographs of

trainees' work, but the trainee's name will not be recorded.

Part 1. The ITE framework

References to ITE 'providers' and 'partnerships'

9. This framework and handbook has been updated to amend the majority of previous references to ITE 'partnership(s)' to now state 'provider(s)'. This is to reflect the fact that not all teacher training provision inspected under this framework is a formal 'partnership'. For example, we inspect a range of organisations across the FE sector, including colleges and independent learning providers that deliver level 5 and above FE teacher training programmes and teacher training apprenticeships, which are not managed through formal partnership arrangements.

10. Where references to 'partnership(s)' are interchangeable with the term 'provider(s)' we now only refer to 'provider(s)'. However, there remain a small number of references to 'partnerships', which reflect that these criteria are specific to partnership arrangements.

11. The inspection report will confirm the judgements given for each age phase of teacher training programmes delivered by the provider being inspected. In the case of an FE provider delivering FE teacher training as part of an ITE partnership arrangement, the FE provider will not receive an individual or separate inspection report. Instead, the FE age phase judgement will be confirmed in the single report of the lead ITE provider.

References to centre-based and placement-based teacher training

12. Throughout this document, we include references to centre-based and placement-based teacher training. Typically, references to centre-based training are intended to encapsulate training elements such as lectures, research and seminars. In some providers, such as higher education institution (HEI) partnerships, this training may take place in different locations. For example, centre-based training may take place at a partner college, rather than at the university.

13. References to placement-based training relate to elements of teacher training

where trainees receive training from their mentors and practise their teaching. This may take place in the same or different locations as the centre-based training, but will generally be distinguished by the way it is structured and delivered. For FE teacher training routes, the placement-based training may also be the trainee's place of employment.

Teacher training provision in scope of ITE inspections

14. Inspectors will take account of all types of provision within the scope of an ITE inspection. Below we have listed the main routes and qualifications into teaching that are subject to an ITE inspection. We have grouped these according to the relevant age phases, although we recognise that some universities may have different naming conventions:

- EY teacher training leading to the award of Early Years Teacher Status
 - graduate entry
 - graduate employment-based
 - undergraduate
 - School Direct
 - assessment only [\[footnote 2\]](#)
- primary teacher training leading to the award of qualified teacher status (QTS)
 - postgraduate (including High Potential Initial Teacher Training)
 - undergraduate
 - School Direct (fee paid)
 - School Direct (salaried)
 - level 6 teacher apprenticeship
 - assessment only
- secondary teacher training leading to the award of QTS
 - postgraduate (including High Potential Initial Teacher Training)
 - undergraduate
 - School Direct (fee paid)
 - School Direct (salaried)
 - level 6 teacher apprenticeship (leading to QTS)
 - assessment only
- FE teacher training
 - postgraduate certificate in education
 - professional graduate certificate in education
 - level 5 certificate in education
 - diploma in education and training

- level 5 learning and skills teacher apprenticeship

Why we inspect ITE providers

15. This framework sets out the purpose of ITE inspections, how Ofsted inspections promote improvement, the principles of inspection and the statutory basis for ITE inspections. It explains who inspects ITE and the factors that determine the timing of an ITE inspection.

The purpose of ITE inspections

16. The inspection of an ITE provider offers an independent external evaluation of its effectiveness and, where appropriate, recommends what it should do to improve. It is based on the range of evidence available to inspectors, which they evaluate against a national framework. It takes full account of our policies and relevant legislation in areas such as safeguarding, equality and diversity.

17. Ofsted's inspections of ITE perform 4 essential functions:

- They provide trainees and prospective trainees with an expert, independent assessment of how well an ITE provider is performing and the quality of ITE and training offered.
- They ensure that ECTs and former EY and FE and skills trainees are well prepared to meet the needs of pupils, children and learners in their care. Note: the term 'pupils' is sometimes used to refer to children in EY, pupils at primary and secondary, students in post-16 provision and learners in FE and skills, as appropriate to the teacher education phase.
- They provide information to the Secretary of State for Education and to Parliament about the work of ITE providers and the extent to which an acceptable standard of teacher training is being provided. This provides assurance that minimum standards are being met, provides confidence in the use of public money, and assists accountability, as well as indicating where improvements are needed.[\[footnote 3\]](#)
- They encourage the improvement of individual ITE providers and the education system as a whole.

A force for improvement

18. Ofsted exists to be a force for improvement through intelligent, responsible and focused inspection and regulation (see '[Ofsted strategy: 2017 to 2022](#)'). This is our guiding principle. The primary purpose of inspection under this framework is

to bring about improvement in the services we inspect.

19. Through the use of evidence, research and inspector training, we ensure that our judgements are as valid and reliable as they can be. These judgements focus on key strengths, from which other providers can learn intelligently, and areas of weakness, from which the provider should seek to improve. Our inspections act as a trigger to others to take action.

How we determine the timing of an ITE inspection

20. We publish the [criteria used for the annual risk assessment process](#) yearly. The inspection arrangements will ensure that the frequency of inspection is proportionate to the performance and circumstances of ITE providers. This means that some ITE providers may be inspected more than once during the current cycle, which is due to be completed by end of July 2024.^[footnote 4] The timing of an ITE inspection is determined by the annual risk assessment process and the calendar information that ITE providers return to us on an annual basis.

21. New providers will have their first inspection in their second year of delivering ITE to trainees.

Risk assessment

22. We use risk assessment to ensure that our approach to inspection is proportionate, so that we can focus our efforts on where we can have the greatest impact. Risk assessment combines an assessment of each provider, based on analysis of official national data, with a more in-depth desk-based review of a wider range of information.

23. We use a broad range of indicators to select ITE providers for inspection.

24. In a risk assessment, we analyse:

- the provider's course arrangements, and the number of trainees in each age phase, submitted to us via the annual provider survey
- the views of trainee teachers, as provided through the trainee online questionnaire
- the time since the previous inspection
- the outcomes of the previous inspection, as well as the inspection framework that it was inspected under
- any other significant concerns that are brought to our attention, for example complaints about the provider.

25. An ITE provider that has been judged at an inspection as requires improvement or inadequate will have a re-inspection (of the phase(s) judged as such) within 12 months of that inspection. The re-inspection will focus on ensuring that the provider is consistently good or better, and that it adheres to the [initial teacher training \(ITT\) compliance criteria for EY](#) and for [primary and secondary phases](#). It will also check whether the provider ensures that trainees within a primary or secondary phase receive their minimum entitlement, which is set out in the [Department for Education's \(DfE\) ITT core content framework](#). Inspectors involved in re-inspections will use the instructions and guidance set out in this handbook.

Principles of inspection and regulation

26. Inspection of ITE providers offers important information to potential trainees, current trainees, employers and other stakeholders about the quality of ITE. These groups should be able to make informed choices about different providers based on the information published in our inspection reports.

27. This handbook sets out the judgements that apply to all phases of ITE and training programmes of individual providers. These are underpinned by consistent, researched criteria for reaching those judgements. Inspectors will take comparable approaches to gathering evidence for different phases, although there may be some variation, for example depending on the type of provision. Inspectors will comply with relevant guidance and codes of conduct, [\[footnote 5\]](#) but they will always try to be curious.

28. Inspection provides assurance to the public and to government that:

- minimum standards for educating trainee teachers are being met
- where relevant, public money is being spent well
- arrangements for safeguarding are effective

Statutory basis for ITE inspections

29. This framework sets out the statutory basis for ITE inspections carried out under the Education Act 1994 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

30. Section 18B of the Education Act 1994 provides a power for HMCI to inspect initial training of teachers for schools and, when requested by the Secretary of State, a duty to do so. [\[footnote 6\]](#)

31. The [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) and the [Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(Prescribed Education and Training etc\) Regulations 2007](#) set out the

duty on HMCI to inspect publicly funded training of FE teachers, lecturers and trainers when requested by the Secretary of State.

32. EY ITT inspections are covered under paragraph 9(1) of [Schedule 13 \(Interaction with other authorities\) to the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which states that:

“ The Chief Inspector may make arrangements with a public authority for the carrying out by him (a) in England or Wales, or (b) in Northern Ireland, of inspections of any institution or matter which he is not required or authorised to carry out by virtue of any other enactment.”

The Equality Act 2010

33. The ITE inspection framework is intended to encourage improvement in the education and training provided to all trainee teachers in England. The ITE inspection framework and criteria are clear that the expectation is that all trainee teachers will receive high-quality, ambitious education and training.

34. Inspectors will assess the extent to which the provider complies with the relevant legal duties as set out in the [Equality Act 2010](#), including, where relevant, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

One-stage inspection model

35. ITE inspections under this framework will have a sharp focus on areas that have the greatest impact on a trainee’s development and training, as well as the overall impact of the ITE education offered.

36. The evidence from our pilot inspections has led to the introduction of a one-stage inspection model. The new framework focuses on the quality of education and training, with emphasis on the training programme, visits to trainees’ sector placements and the ITE provider’s curriculum as key elements at the heart of inspection.

37. For inspections of primary and secondary providers, inspectors will consider how well providers have translated the minimum entitlement, which is set out in the DfE’s ITT core content framework, into a carefully sequenced curriculum of education and training, including subject and phase expertise.

38. For inspections of FE and skills providers, inspectors will consider how well providers have translated the [professional standards for teachers and trainers in education](#) into a carefully sequenced curriculum of education and training relevant to the subject. This includes providing their trainees with the skills they need to develop inclusive approaches to meeting the literacy, language, numeracy and

ICT needs of their learners.

39. Inspectors will assess how trainees are summatively assessed against the relevant standards, for example the [teachers' standards \(for primary and secondary phases\)](#) and the [early years teachers' standards \(for early years phases\)](#).

40. The new approach is built around the connectedness of curriculum, teaching and assessment within the 'quality of education and training' judgement.

41. The inspection team will normally be on site for 4 days, within a single week.

The ITE curriculum

42. A provider's ITE curriculum sets out the aims of a teacher-training programme, covering both centre- and placement-based training. It also sets out the structure within which those aims should be implemented, including the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be gained at each stage. It enables the evaluation of trainees' knowledge and skills against those expectations.

43. The teachers' standards provide an end-point assessment for QTS in primary and secondary phases delivered by ITE providers. They are not a curriculum.

44. We will judge fairly providers that take radically different approaches to the ITE curriculum. However, for primary and secondary school ITE, this does not mean to the point of exclusion of the full ITT core content framework, which the DfE has made compulsory from September 2020. We recognise the importance of providers' autonomy to choose their own curriculum approaches. If leaders are able to show that they have built a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing, then inspectors will assess the provider's curriculum favourably.

When an inspection can take place

45. Because trainees in the autumn term have only just started their training, inspectors are unable to gather sufficient evidence to determine the quality of education and training. ITE inspections (including re-inspections and focused thematic subject inspections) will therefore usually only take place in either the spring or summer term.

Concurrent inspection of validated programmes

46. We may align the inspection of ITE programmes where individual colleges that are not part of a university partnership deliver programmes validated by a common university. We may schedule concurrent inspections of the colleges so that lead inspectors can share any common relevant information.

47. Inspectors will make judgements about the individual colleges, and each inspection will result in a separate report. This is different to the inspection of a university partnership, where colleges deliver programmes on behalf of the university. In this case, inspectors will make judgements about the partnership and present the findings in a single report.

Part 2. The ITE handbook

Inspection during the COVID-19 pandemic

48. This section outlines the additional considerations for inspectors when carrying out inspections of ITE providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

49. Our approach to inspection will take into account the COVID-19 context and the disruption caused to many education providers.

50. During the inspection planning discussion with the provider representative, the inspector will seek to understand the specific impact of COVID-19 on the provider and how leaders have responded to the situation. In this conversation, the provider representatives and inspector will agree safety protocols that the inspection team will follow, to ensure that the inspection is completed in a COVID-secure way.

51. Given these additional elements, it is possible that this conversation may take longer than usual. It may be that all these elements are discussed in a single telephone conversation. Alternatively, they may be carried out as two separate conversations with a break inbetween, as agreed between the inspector and the provider.

52. Within this handbook, there are references to 'visits', interactions and observations with a variety of stakeholders, including leaders, trainers, trainees and mentors. All of these will be done in a COVID-secure way and any face-to-face interactions will be done in a socially distanced manner, taking into account the provider's policies.

53. All ITE inspections will be on-site, where possible. However, it may be pragmatic to carry out some elements of the inspection through video calls.

Practical working arrangements will be agreed with the provider at the start of the inspection to ensure that the team works within COVID-19 safety measures. Remote working will usually only be used to involve stakeholders who are unable to meet in person.

How we will collect evidence and judge ITE providers

54. This handbook is primarily a guide for inspectors on how to carry out ITE inspections. However, we have made it available to ITE providers and other organisations to ensure that they are informed about the processes and procedures of inspection. The handbook seeks to balance the need for consistency in inspections with the flexibility required to respond to the individual circumstances of each ITE provider.

55. This handbook should not be regarded as a set of inflexible rules, but as an account of the procedures of inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement when they use this handbook. It applies to all inspections of ITE providers carried out from September 2020 under the ITE inspection framework ('the framework').

Clarification for providers

56. The information below confirms our requirements. This is to dispel myths about inspection that can result in unnecessary workload in providers. It is intended to highlight specific practices that we do not require.

57. Ofsted will:

- take a range of evidence, including that in electronic form, into account when making judgements. This will include official national data, discussions with leaders and managers, staff, trainees and ECTs, and questionnaire responses
- ensure that ITE providers are compliant with the relevant DfE compliance criteria (as appropriate) for teaching apprenticeships, EY, primary and secondary, and assessment-only routes
- report on any failure to comply with statutory arrangements when they form part of the inspection framework and evaluation schedule (see page 33 of this handbook)
- invite the provider's representative or equivalent (a maximum of two observers per phase meeting), phase leaders and managers to observe the inspectors' end-of-day and final team meetings.

58. Ofsted will not:

- grade individual lessons led by trainees or sessions led by trainers/mentors
- provide evidence that could be used in capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management or the provider's 'cause for concern' arrangements
- create unnecessary workload for provider staff/trainees through its report recommendations
- advocate a particular method of planning (including lesson planning), teaching or assessment; it is for providers to determine their practices and it is for leadership teams to justify these on their own merits rather than by referring to this handbook
- expect ITE curriculum planning to be organised around the teachers' standards, which are an end-point summative assessment for qualified teacher status (QTS) and not a curriculum
- expect any particular recruitment and selection process.

59. Ofsted does not require providers to produce:

- evidence in any specific format, as long as it is easily accessible to inspectors
- ITE curriculum planning (and trainee teaching planning) in any specific format
- evidence for inspection beyond that set out in this handbook
- photographic evidence of trainees' work (although inspectors may ask to take photographs of trainees' work, which will be anonymised)
- any written record of teachers'/trainees' oral feedback to pupils
- previous, current or future lesson plans
- grading evidence of trainees' progress against individual professional standards (early years teacher status (EYTS)/ QTS/qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS))
- performance- and trainee-tracking information
- assessment or self-evaluation, other than that which is already part of the provider's business processes.

60. Ofsted does not require providers to:

- do additional work or ask trainees to do work specifically for the inspection
- carry out a specified method or frequency of assessing trainees during their practical teaching experiences
- use the Ofsted evaluation schedule in any way to grade teaching or individual lessons
- provide additional information outside of their normal ITE curriculum planning

61. Ofsted does not specify:

- how planning (including curriculum and lesson planning) should be set out, the length of time it should take or the amount of detail it should contain
- the frequency, type or volume of trainee assessments, observations or feedback

- the content of, or approach to, trainee assessments

Before the inspection

Notification and introduction

62. We will normally contact the ITE provider representative by telephone to announce the inspection between 9.30am and 11am 3 working days before the inspection. This will normally be on a Wednesday.

63. If the provider representative is unavailable when the notification call is made, we will ask to speak to the most senior member of staff. Once we have informed the provider by telephone that the inspection will take place, we will send confirmation to the provider by email.

64. The inspection support administrator (ISA) will then send the provider a note setting out information for leaders to be aware of before the inspection. This will include:

- Ofsted's privacy notice, which provider leaders should share with any settings/schools/colleges and trainees that inspectors will be meeting during the inspection
- that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including mobile devices, tablets and laptops
- a notification to be distributed to trainee teachers and provider placement settings/schools/colleges confirming the dates of the inspection
- that inspectors may request to take photographic evidence, for example of trainees' work, but that inspectors will not take photographs of trainee teachers, pupils or learners, or of any materials that will identify individuals

Information that providers must produce by 9am on the day following the notification call

65. The lead inspector will ask the provider to produce certain information to aid preparation. The ISA will send the provider a document requesting that the following are made available to inspectors by 9am on the day following the notification call:

- a copy (where applicable) of the timetable for any delivery of the ITE curriculum taking place during the inspection
- a copy of the current staff list

- a list of all provider settings, indicating where trainees are currently placed (if no trainees are currently assigned to a provider setting, inspectors will want to know when the last placement was assigned to the setting)
- evidence of involvement in the ITE provider of settings/schools/colleges that are based in areas with different socio-economic circumstances, and those judged as requires improvement and new academies whose predecessor was judged less than good
- the number of trainees in each age phase and their subject(s)
- an overview of the programmes of education offered by the provider. This might include postgraduate certificate in education, professional graduate diploma in education, QTS, level 5 learning and skills apprenticeship and so on
- maps (where appropriate) and other practical information
- information about the ITE curriculum, including an overview of the training calendar
- handbooks or other relevant information for subjects/courses to be explored during a focused review, as agreed during preparatory telephone conversations with the provider's representatives
- a summary of any improvement planning, self-evaluation or equivalent
- in primary and secondary providers, an overview of how the provider meets the requirements set out in the ITT core content framework
- an overview of how leaders and managers (where relevant) ensure compliance with the requirements and expectations of an apprenticeship route, EY, primary and secondary, and assessment-only route criteria

Information that providers must provide by 10.30am on the first day of inspection

66. The lead inspector will ask the provider to produce certain information to aid the inspection process. The ISA will request that the following are made available, by the provider, to inspectors by 10.30am on the first day of the inspection:

- any further evidence or detail of improvement planning as a result of self-evaluation and the impact of this on the quality of the provider's education and training
- any available evidence of internal and external monitoring and evaluation, including external examiners' reports and how the findings are used to improve the ITE curriculum
- any evidence of the involvement of settings/schools/colleges in the leadership of the ITE provider and the process for the recruitment and selection of trainees
- any evidence of how provider leaders meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the public sector equality duty (where applicable)
- background information on relevant trainees, including qualifications, prior

experience and, for postgraduates, information about their undergraduate/postgraduate qualifications

- any evidence of how provider leaders monitor the quality of mentoring, including an understanding of the experience and expertise of mentors and trainers
- any evidence of the professional development provided for mentors and trainers that supports the delivery of the curriculum (for primary and secondary mentors/trainers, this encompasses the ITT core content framework)
- any evidence (where relevant) of the quality and effectiveness of the ITE provider's work in the areas covered by any annual focused thematic subject inspections

Preparation

67. Once we have informed the ITE provider of the inspection, the lead inspector will contact the provider by telephone and ask to speak to the ITE provider representative. In multi-phase provision, this conversation will be held for each phase of the provider.

68. Inspectors' preparatory telephone conversations with provider representatives will have two elements:

- a reflective, educationally focused conversation about the provider's context, challenges and progress since the last inspection
- a shorter inspection-planning conversation that focuses on practical and logistical issues.

69. It may be that both these elements are discussed in a single telephone conversation. Alternatively, the conversations may be carried out as two or more separate telephone meetings with a break in between, as agreed between the lead inspector and the provider representative.

70. In practice, there are likely to be a number of shorter conversations about administrative matters between the lead inspector and the provider representative. Discussions are likely to focus on organisational issues, such as visits to trainees and organising meetings.

The reflective, educationally focused conversation

71. This discussion will take place on the day of the notification call, normally between 12.30pm and 3pm. However, the lead inspector will try to ensure that practical arrangements are in place that take account of the provider staff's availability and avoid disrupting the provider's day-to-day programme. This conversation will usually last around 90 minutes.

72. Inspectors will use this conversation to understand:

- the provider's context, and the progress it has made since the previous inspection, including assessment of the provider's current strengths and weaknesses, and any specific progress made on areas for improvement identified at previous inspections that remain relevant under the current inspection framework
- how leaders ensure, and assure themselves of, the ambition of the ITE curriculum, that it is designed around subject and phase dimensions, and that it is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment
- for providers that include primary and secondary trainees, the way in which leaders have translated the ITT core content framework into a carefully sequenced curriculum for trainees and how they have ensured that all aspects of that framework are covered. Inspectors will also discuss aspects of the programme that go beyond that framework. The discussion will explore how and why leaders have prioritised particular aspects of the programme
- how the provider assesses trainees formatively throughout the course (and summatively against the teachers' standards for primary and secondary trainees, including those on the assessment-only route and the early years teachers' standards for EY trainees)
- 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 (SEND) is developed throughout the ITE curriculums offered
- how leaders have ensured that the provider is contributing to and meeting the local demand for teachers
- any enhancements and adaptations to the programme to meet the needs of current trainees and local/national priorities
- how leaders ensure (where applicable) that the centre-based and placement-based ITE curriculums are integrated to ensure that trainees make the best possible progress in their teaching
- how leaders ensure, and assure themselves, that trainees receive clear, consistent and effective training and mentoring
- how leaders ensure formative and summative assessment of trainees' progress in mastering the components of the ITE curriculum, without creating an unnecessary burden

73. The educationally focused conversation will seek to confirm:

- the number of trainees in each age phase and their subject(s) (where appropriate)
- information about the organisation of the ITE provider, including staff names and responsibilities

74. For all phases/sectors of teacher training, the lead inspector will discuss the specific subject areas that should form part of a focused review of the inspection.

From this conversation, the inspector will reach a decision on which subject areas to focus on, and this will inform the inspection planning discussion. For inspections of primary providers, inspectors will focus on early reading, including phonics and the foundation subjects as a whole. Other subject areas may be agreed as a focus with the provider leaders.

Inspection planning discussion

75. This discussion will normally begin on the morning after the notification call, normally on a Thursday. However, the lead inspector will try to ensure that practical arrangements take account of the provider representative's availability and aim to avoid disrupting the provider's day-to-day programme.

76. The lead inspector will (where applicable):

- discuss any information about previously planned interruptions to normal routines during the inspection
- consider information about specific settings/schools/colleges and centre-based training, recruitment and selection, and other events taking place during the inspection week
- discuss whether any trainers/trainees cannot be visited while teaching for any reason (for example, if they are subject to capability procedures)
- review details of trainees' placements or place of work, including addresses and unique reference numbers (URNs) for settings/schools/colleges
- discuss the settings selected for visits during the inspection, including mentors and trainees (this should not be extensive)
- discuss other meetings needed to support exploration of the training course(s)
- arrange meetings with relevant staff, including those responsible for delivering the ITE curriculum and mentor training, and with groups of mentors
- clarify any cross-phase aspects of the inspection that the lead inspector could carry out to avoid duplication, for example compliance, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and safeguarding checks, or reporting and monitoring incidents of discrimination and/or harassment
- request information about staff absence and other practical issues
- organise a meeting with those responsible for oversight of the provider
- discuss the availability of ECTs to give feedback on their training experiences
- agree a place where the inspection team(s) can meet and other practical arrangements, such as wifi codes
- provide an opportunity for the provider to ask any questions or raise any concerns, such as perceived conflicts of interest

77. The lead inspector may also ask the ITE provider for any further information required to carry out the inspection.

78. Inspectors and providers must follow the expectations set out in ['Conduct during inspections'](#). Inspectors should be as flexible as possible, to fit in with the ITE provider's arrangements, while ensuring that they can gain robust evidence to support inspection judgements. We expect providers to work with inspectors to ensure a positive working relationship based on courteous and professional behaviour.

Further inspection preparation carried out by the lead inspector

79. To draw an initial picture of the ITE provider's performance, planning for inspection will be informed by analysis of a wide range of information. Inspectors will review and consider:

- the previous inspection report on the age phase(s) of the provider
- any surveys or monitoring letters
- the outcomes of any risk assessment carried out by Ofsted
- information on our provider information portal, [\[footnote 7\]](#) including any complaints received since the last inspection and compliance action taken by the DfE
- information available from the trainee online survey (where relevant) and questionnaires
- relevant publicly available information, such as the ITE provider's website
- information provided to Ofsted on an annual basis by the ITE provider.

80. In addition to the information requested from the provider, inspectors will review and consider all relevant information held by Ofsted, including any complaints made about the provider and the most recent provider return.

81. The lead inspector should consider the following local information to help understand the context in which trainee teachers are being prepared:

- relevant findings from any [inspection of the local area's arrangements for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young children with SEND](#)
- the most recent inspection report on the [relevant local authority's children's services](#)

Seeking the views of stakeholders

82. Inspectors will use the information to hold discussions about SEND training and the preparation for the trainees' child protection responsibilities while training in settings/schools/colleges.

83. Trainees' perceptions are important for Ofsted to come to a view about the effectiveness of an ITE provider. As part of the ITE inspection, a link to the staff and trainee surveys will be made available following the notification call and will be included in the notification to the provider. The surveys will be open to complete during the inspection period. The surveys will close on day 3 of the inspection, at

1pm.

84. Alongside first-hand discussions with trainees, inspectors will use the annual trainee online questionnaire when taking trainees' views into account. Inspectors will also take account of the results of past surveys carried out internally by the ITE provider.

85. ITE providers may want to encourage trainees to complete the annual online questionnaire for trainees. It will be available annually during the summer term of each academic year. If responses are received, we will share the provider summary in hard copy with individual providers to help with their own improvement planning.

86. Inspectors will access summary information from the online survey of trainees twice during the inspection process. Before the inspection begins, inspectors will have access to information available from the previous year. During the inspection, there will be an opportunity to gather trainees' views through an online survey that will end on the third day of inspection. This allows inspectors to consider further responses received during the inspection.

Information for inspectors

87. After receiving the information requested from the ITE provider, lead inspectors will liaise with phase leaders and managers to select a sample of trainees to meet.

88. Inspectors will visit a selection of trainees to support their focused reviews of the ITE curriculum:

- Inspections of primary and EY phases will always include a focused review and trainee visits on early reading, including phonics, and foundation subjects.
- Inspections of the secondary phase will include visits to a selection of trainees specialising in the subject areas that inspectors have agreed with the provider's representative.
- Inspections of the FE and skills phase will include visits to a selection of trainees. The choice of trainees will depend on the nature of training provided and may include specific subject areas or, where appropriate, clusters of commonly occurring subject areas. Inspectors will agree their strategy with the provider.

89. Wherever possible, inspectors will maximise the time available by visiting a number of trainees based in the same settings/schools/colleges. Lead inspectors must check that the settings/schools/colleges selected are not due to be visited as part of another known Ofsted inspection by completing and submitting a record of visit form.

90. Lead inspectors may work with the provider representative to organise

conference calls with trainees, particularly those who are placed in settings that are geographically challenging to visit.

91. Lead inspectors must provide a notification for the ITE provider to send electronically to any settings/schools/colleges that will be visited by inspectors as part of the ITE inspection. The notification explains that the inspector will visit the settings/schools/colleges as part of the inspection of the ITE provider. Lead inspectors must identify the nature and timing of inspection activities to be carried out in these settings to enable the ITE provider to make the necessary practical arrangements. These activities are likely to include: visits to trainees teaching lessons/sessions; discussions with trainees and mentors; and reading trainees' files or equivalent evidence. Each of these activities enables inspectors to examine how the central ITE education and training are embedded into the trainees' placement-based experiences.

92. The lead inspector will identify any centre-based taught sessions (where applicable) and/or other training events that inspectors wish to visit and the range of discussions that will need to be arranged. The lead inspector should discuss and agree these requirements with the ITE provider as soon as possible to enable them to make the necessary practical arrangements.

93. The ITE provider will confirm the inspection timetable in discussion with the lead inspector and will set out the practical arrangements for the inspection team, including, for example, rooms and car parking.

94. The lead inspector will prepare and distribute brief joining instructions to the inspection team. In a multi-phase inspection, the relevant phase lead will be responsible for preparing these and distributing them to their team. The joining instructions are likely to include:

- essential information about the ITE provider and the timing of the inspection
- a brief summary of the pre-inspection information
- a clear indication of individual inspectors' roles and responsibilities
- an inspection programme, including details of the trainees, the settings/schools/colleges to be visited and any other inspection activities, including team meetings and how these relate to the subject areas of the ITE curriculum being explored
- programme subject areas that will be inspected during the first two days of the inspection

95. The choice of focused reviews will be discussed and agreed with the leaders and managers of the ITE provider. Inspectors must inspect early reading, including phonics when looking at EY and primary training courses. For primary and secondary ITE curriculums, inspectors must ensure that they will be able to judge whether the course provides trainees with their minimum entitlement, as set out in the ITT core content framework. Day 3 of the inspection will allow the lead inspector (or phase lead) to carry out additional focused reviews, as agreed during the initial inspection planning. However, in smaller providers it may not be necessary to introduce additional areas to sample. Days 3 and 4 will also allow

inspectors to look more broadly at leadership and management. However, inspectors should be flexible with their programme if other opportunities to gather evidence are available. For example, if a recruitment and selection event is taking place on day 1 or 2 of the inspection, inspectors may include this in their inspection evidence gathering.

96. Lead inspectors must deploy inspection team members effectively to contribute to the evaluation of the two key judgements.

97. Inspectors must plan sufficient time to meet regularly with provider leaders, for inspection team meetings and to give oral feedback so that they can finish the inspection in good time.

Requests for deferral or cancellation

98. A provider may request a deferral of its inspection. It may make a request to the ISA when it is notified of the inspection, or to the lead inspector on the day it is notified of the inspection. We will not normally consider a deferral request if we receive it after 4.30pm on the day the provider is notified. If the ISA or lead inspector receives a request, they must immediately contact the regional duty desk. We will decide whether this should be granted, in accordance with [our deferral policy](#).

The inspection

Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

99. Inspections will consist of 4 days within the same week. The size of the inspection team will vary according to the size of the provider.

Arrival time on the first day of inspection

100. On the first day of inspection, inspectors will arrive between 10.30am and 12pm. However, lead inspectors and phase lead inspectors should adapt the start time to ensure that inspectors do not need to travel on a Sunday evening.

Gathering and recording evidence

101. Meetings with leaders are important. Inspectors also need to gather a wide range of other evidence through their inspection activities.

102. Inspectors will evaluate evidence of the intent, implementation and impact of the ITE curriculum for trainees. Inspection activities to gather evidence may include:

- talking to stakeholders, including provider leaders, trainees, ECTs and mentors
- observing trainees and mentors, including during teaching practice
- talking to provider headteachers and/or leaders and gathering their views
- examining written evidence provided by the provider and trainees

103. Inspectors should bring together evidence relevant to the framework criteria that they have gathered through different inspection activities, in order to inform the judgements.

104. Inspectors must record their electronic evidence clearly, ensuring that evidence is labelled and tagged for all inspection activities correctly.

105. Electronic evidence is the main record of the evidence that has been considered in the inspection and may be scrutinised internally for retrieval or for quality assurance monitoring and in the event of a complaint.

106. Inspectors will also request evidence of how the ITE provider meets:

- the relevant mandatory ITT criteria, assessment-only route criteria or the EY ITT requirements
- all relevant legislation and guidance, including that related to meeting the relevant professional standards (for QTS or EYTS), promoting equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination, and safeguarding.

Evaluating different approaches to teacher education

107. Ofsted does not advocate that any particular teaching approach should be used exclusively with trainees. Different approaches to ITE can be effective in preparing trainee teachers for their first year of teaching. What is appropriate will depend on the aims of a particular training session or activity, and its place in the sequence of teaching a particular topic and subject.

Overarching approach to inspection

108. The ITE framework focuses on factors that both research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to high-quality education and training. [\[footnote 8\]](#) The framework seeks to put a single, joined-up conversation about education at the heart of inspection. It is built around the connectedness of the trainee curriculum, training on pedagogical approaches and assessment of trainees within the 'quality of education and training' judgement. As a result, the inspection methodology for this judgement is structured to ensure that inspectors will be able to gather evidence through the focused review. Inspectors need to be able to gather evidence of how a provider's activities to deliver high-quality education and training for its trainees connect and work together to achieve the highest standards.

109. The crucial element for inspectors is to be able to form a connection between different pieces of evidence. Inspectors will not emphasise one specific type of evidence above all others. Instead, inspectors will focus on gathering evidence that is balanced and connected.

110. This evidence will always lead inspectors back to the overall quality of education and training on offer in each phase. The focus of inspection will not be on one particular training session or trainee. Rather, it will be on the interconnection of all of these pieces of evidence. Inspectors will consider what this evidence suggests about the quality of education and training provided. In particular, they will consider how the ITE curriculum enables trainees to ensure that pupils make progress, in the sense of knowing more, remembering more and being able to do more. The evidence from our piloting of the framework is that this approach enables inspectors and leaders to build up a clear picture of whether the provider is meeting the criteria set out in the 'quality of education and training' judgement.

Inspector visits to training

111. Lead inspectors may ask for visits (where applicable) to centre- or placement-based training to be carried out jointly with provider leaders, mentors and/or trainers. Following a visit to a training session, inspectors should provide an opportunity to discuss how the training builds on previous training and how it will link to centre-based learning for trainees. Inspectors should follow this up with further discussions with trainees and mentors.

112. Visits to training sessions should focus on:

- the content and context of the session within subject- and phase-specific dimensions of the provider's curriculum, and, in primary and secondary phases, the content laid out in the ITT core content framework
- whether the session is part of a curriculum that is ambitious in scope, coherent, and rigorous in content choice
- whether the content of the observed session fits into a well-sequenced

programme of sessions

- evidence of how observed training is part of a purposefully integrated curriculum across the centre- and placement-based settings (where applicable)
- whether, in this session, trainees are able to build on previous learning (when relevant).

Undergraduate ITE

113. Lead inspectors should ensure that they are aware of any undergraduate provision when preparing and planning for an inspection.

114. Lead inspectors should be aware of the regulations that limit the changes to undergraduate course provision that universities can make once trainees have begun training.

Meeting with stakeholders

115. Inspectors will hold meetings or conference calls with individual or groups of:

- trainees
- trainers
- mentors
- phase leaders and managers
- ECTs/employed teachers
- members of the strategic provider committee
- other stakeholders.

Initial meeting with the provider's representative/senior leaders

116. Inspectors should meet with the provider's representative/senior leaders to discuss the ITE curriculum. Provider leaders will be able to explain the organisation and structure of the ITE curriculum to inspectors. Inspectors should:

- discuss how the ITE curriculum is ambitious in scope and rigorous in content choice
- ensure that the ITE curriculum is coherent and well sequenced and leads to cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills
- in primary and secondary programmes, discuss how the provider ensures that it meets the minimum expectations set out in the ITT core content framework,

ensuring coverage of all 'learn that' and 'learn how to' statements. The framework describes in detail the minimum entitlement of all primary and secondary trainee teachers, which all ITE providers must incorporate in full within their curriculum

- ensure that discussions focus on both centre-based input for trainees and how providers blend the school-based and centre-based curriculums (where applicable)
- ensure that conversations explore how the course structure is designed around subject- and phase-specific dimensions
- ensure that leaders understand that information does not need to be in any specific format, as long as it is easily accessible for the inspection team
- ensure that all information from leaders and staff about the ITE curriculum is considered, including how trainees are supported in managing their workload
- ensure that leaders are responding to the needs of individuals and groups of trainees, and how they are adapting the ITE curriculum or pastoral arrangements for each new cohort of trainees.

Meeting with subject leaders/staff

117. Inspectors should arrange meetings with the appropriate subject leaders/managers and any other key staff. Subjects will be selected based on the pre-inspection evidence and discussions with senior leaders.

118. Inspectors should gather first-hand evidence to evaluate how well:

- the course structure is designed to prepare trainees to teach the subject within their phase of education
- the course prepares trainees for teaching subjects across the full curriculum (EY/primary)^[footnote 9] and, where appropriate, inspectors may sample any specialism(s) offered as part of their course
- leaders ensure (where applicable) that the placement-based training aligns with and reinforces the content, sequencing and progression of the centre-based ITE curriculum (inspectors of primary and secondary ITE will ensure that the overall content of courses provides trainees with their minimum entitlement laid out in the ITT core content framework)
- leaders identify gaps in prospective trainees' fundamental English and mathematics skills that will not be covered in the course content and ensure that those gaps are filled before the course is completed

Meeting with mentors

119. Inspectors will use meetings with mentors to consider how the training and support they provide for trainees is part of a subject- and phase-specific

curriculum that is purposefully integrated (where applicable) across the centre- and placement-based settings. This conversation will allow inspectors to consider the role of mentors within the provider and whether the mentors' agreed role allows them to provide trainees with the training and support they need.

Meeting with trainees, ECTs and former EY/FE and skills trainees

120. Inspectors will use meetings to consider how well trainees have been taught and how well they have learned the intended curriculum, as well as to consider whether they are gaining the practical experience, support and feedback they need.

121. Ofsted does not have a preferred model for dividing the curriculum between centre- and placement-based training. For example, inspectors of FE and skills providers understand that they may need to spend longer considering the taught curriculum through placements and engagement with mentors. However, inspectors will consider how well this training aligns with and complements the intentions of (where applicable) centre-based leaders.

122. Inspectors should ensure that they also consider trainees' knowledge and practice in behaviour management, in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and those who speak EAL, and (EY and primary only) in systematic synthetic phonics.

123. Meetings should be held in a variety of ways to maximise the number of trainees who inspectors can meet during an inspection. This can include:

- visits (where applicable) to placements where multiple trainees, ECTs and former EY/FE and skills trainees are present
- arranging a conference call, allowing trainees to dial in
- setting up individual calls in which a specific issue needs to be discussed that may be important for evidence-gathering
- meetings where the provider is based
- focus-group discussions with a range of trainees, ECTs and former EY/FE and skills trainees to discuss the impact of training

124. Discussions with ECTs and former EY/FE and skills trainees should allow inspectors to explore how well they felt prepared in their subject(s).

Engaging with the provider's representative, leaders and managers

125. Inspection has the strongest impact on improvement when the ITE provider understands the evidence and findings that have led to the judgements and

recommendations for improvement. The lead inspectors will ensure that the provider representative/leaders (where relevant, a maximum of two observers per phase) and managers at team and final meetings:

- are kept up to date with how the inspection is proceeding
- understand how the inspection team reaches its judgements
- have opportunities to clarify how evidence is used to reach judgements
- understand the strengths and weaknesses identified when looking at the ITE curriculum
- at end-of-day team meetings only, are given the opportunity to present additional evidence

126. The lead inspector should meet with the provider's representative daily during the inspection to:

- produce an update on emerging issues and enable the ITE provider to provide any further relevant evidence
- allow the provider's representative to raise any concerns, including those related to the conduct of the inspection or the conduct of individual inspectors
- alert the provider's representative to any serious concerns that may lead to the ITE provider being judged less than good and/or non-compliant with ITT criteria and other statutory requirements

127. The inspector will record any key points arising from discussions with the provider's representative in their electronic evidence.

Teaching apprenticeships

128. Inspectors will consider how well leaders and managers ensure that the apprenticeship curriculum meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship.

129. Evidence will include the extent to which the provider's staff engage with employers to:

- plan the initial assessment, training, formative assessments, review points and milestones throughout, and agree any additional qualifications to be included
- monitor and support apprentices to gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours and achieve to their full potential.

130. Inspectors will judge how well trainers, assessors, coaches and mentors communicate up-to-date vocational and technical subject knowledge that reflects expected practice and meets employers' needs.

131. Inspectors will determine whether apprentices acquire that knowledge effectively so that they demonstrate the skills and behaviours that will enable them

to:

- complete their apprenticeships
- contribute to their workplace
- fulfil their career aims by progressing to their intended job roles, other sustained employment, promotion or, where appropriate, a higher level of apprenticeship or qualification.

The use of data on inspection

132. Inspection judgements will not be based on data. However, inspectors will use nationally available data, such as data on employment and completion of qualifications, to help prepare for the inspection. When patterns are identified in the data, these will form part of the rationale for exploring particular aspects of the ITE curriculum. However, data will not be a factor that determines final grades at the end of the inspection.

133. If providers gather information and/or benchmark outcomes data against wider sector data, inspectors will not seek to validate this information. Inspectors will focus on what leaders have established from their data and how this has been used to improve the ITE curriculum for trainees and the pupils they teach.^[footnote 10] Inspectors may check that this data avoids premature use of generic outcome descriptors, such as the teachers' standards, and ask leaders to explain how the data has been used to shape improvement planning and secure better quality for trainees.

Team meetings during the inspection

134. The inspection team for each phase will:

- meet briefly at the end of each day (if possible) to discuss emerging findings – a maximum of two nominated phase leaders or managers from the ITE provider will be invited as observers^[footnote 11]
- meet at the end of the inspection for a grading meeting – a maximum of two phase leaders and managers from the provider will be invited as observers, but all judgements will be made by inspectors and the inspection team
- meet with other inspection teams at a cross-phase grading meeting, where relevant, to finalise judgements and identify areas of improvement – the phase leaders and managers and the provider's representatives are invited as observers, but all judgements are made by inspectors and the inspection team
- record the outcomes of all team meetings electronically

Reaching final judgements

135. The inspection team will also ensure that time is set aside to prepare for the final team meeting and the final feedback. During the final team meeting, the team will complete an evaluation card. The main points for feedback to the ITE provider will be recorded as the meeting progresses.

136. In multi-phase inspections, phase teams will meet in a cross-phase grading meeting to identify any common strengths and areas for improvement across the provider, and to ensure that the grade criteria are interpreted in the same way. Lead inspectors will also agree the points to be included in the commentary at the start of the report.

Providing feedback

137. The on-site inspection ends with a final feedback meeting with the ITE provider. The lead inspector must ensure that the ITE provider is clear:

- about the provisional grades awarded for each key judgement
- about the key findings from the inspection, as summarised in the final summary evaluation – the lead inspector must give sufficient details to enable all attendees to understand how judgements have been reached
- that the grades are provisional and may be subject to change as a result of quality assurance procedures or moderation, and so must be treated as restricted and confidential to the relevant senior personnel (as determined by the ITE provider). They may be shared with provider staff and those responsible for governance, irrespective of whether they attended the meeting, so long as they are marked as provisional and subject to quality assurance. Inspection outcomes should be shared more widely only when the provider receives a copy of the final inspection report
- that the main findings of the inspection and the main points provided orally in the feedback, subject to any change, will be referred to in the text of the report, although the text of the report may differ slightly from the oral feedback
- that the provider is invited and encouraged to complete the post-inspection survey
- about any recommendations for improvement
- about the procedure leading to the publication of the report
- about the procedure for making a complaint about the inspection
- if the ITE provider is being placed in a category of concern, that it may make comments on the judgements in the draft report during quality assurance; that is, it is not limited to comments on factual accuracy

After the inspection

The inspection report

138. The (phase) lead inspector is responsible for writing the phase-specific inspection report and submitting the evidence to Ofsted shortly after the inspection ends.

139. The overall lead inspector will:

- ensure that the text of the report explains the judgements and reflects the evidence
- ensure that the findings in the report are consistent with the feedback given to the ITE provider at the end of the inspection
- complete and submit the final version of the record of visits (ROV) form

140. The report usually contains sections for the different phases inspected. ITE providers with fewer than 60 trainees across both the primary and secondary phases, the report will provide one set of judgements covering both the primary and secondary phases.

Arrangements for publishing the report

141. Inspection reports will be quality assured before we send a draft copy to the ITE providers.^{[footnote 12](#)} The draft report is restricted and confidential to the relevant personnel (as determined by the ITE provider) and should not be shared more widely or published.

142. Normally within 18 working days^{[footnote 13](#)} of the end of the inspection, the ITE provider will be invited to comment on the draft report. The ITE provider will have five working days to alert us to any factual inaccuracies in the draft report or other comments about the inspection process and findings it would like us to consider before the report is finalised.

143. The lead inspector will respond to the ITE provider's comments about factual accuracy. The factual accuracy comments of both the provider and the lead inspector will be reviewed by the regional SHMI for ITE and/or the specialist adviser for ITE, if appropriate.

144. Typically, the ITE provider will receive an electronic version of the report within 30 working days of the end of the inspection. We will also send our response to its comments on the draft report and inspection process and findings. In most circumstances, the final report will be published on our website within 38 working days.

145. The ISA will email the final version of the report to:

- the ITE provider
- the lead inspector
- the DfE

146. The inspection process should not be treated as complete until all inspection activity has been carried out and the final version of the inspection report has been published on our reports website.

The inspection evidence base

147. The evidence base for the inspection will be retained in line with Ofsted's retention and disposal policy. This is normally for six years from when the report is published. We may decide that retaining it for longer is warranted for research purposes.

Quality assurance and complaints

Quality assurance

148. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector (or overall lead inspector in the case of multi-phase inspections) must ensure that inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the expectations set out in ['Conduct during Ofsted inspections'](#).

149. We monitor the quality of inspection through a range of formal processes. This may involve a telephone call to the inspector to discuss progress, or an on-site visit during the inspection. When an on-site quality assurance visit is scheduled, the lead inspector will explain the purpose and format during the initial telephone conversation with the provider's representative.

150. Lead inspectors should contact the regional SHMI for ITE, who will inform the specialist adviser for teacher development if an ITE provider is likely to be judged as outstanding, inadequate or requires improvement, or if there is any potential aspect of non-compliance.

151. All ITE providers are invited to take part in a post-inspection survey so that their views about the quality of the inspection are obtained and contribute to the development of inspection.

Handling concerns and complaints

152. The great majority of our work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise during the inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible, in order to resolve issues before the inspection is completed. Any concerns raised, and actions taken, will be recorded in the inspection evidence.

153. If it is not possible to resolve concerns during the inspection or through submitting comments in response to the draft report, the ITE provider may wish to lodge a formal complaint on receipt of the final report. The lead inspector will ensure that the provider is informed that it is able to make a formal complaint and that [information about how to complain](#) is available on GOV.UK.

Conduct during inspections

154. So that inspection is productive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and ITE providers establish and maintain an appropriate working relationship based on courtesy and professional behaviour.

155. Inspectors and providers must follow the expectations set out in '[Conduct during inspections](#)'.

The evaluation schedule – how we will judge ITE providers

156. The evaluation schedule is not exhaustive. It does not replace the professional judgement of inspectors. Inspectors must interpret the way that grades are described according to the stage of training and phase of education.

157. Inspectors will use the evaluation schedule in conjunction with the instructions and guidance in Part 1 of this handbook.

158. Inspectors will make judgements on the following (wherever appropriate for each phase):

- overall effectiveness

and the two key judgements:

- quality of education and training
- leadership and management

159. Inspectors will use the following 4-point scale to grade the key judgements

and the overall effectiveness judgement:

- grade 1: outstanding
- grade 2: good
- grade 3: requires improvement
- grade 4: inadequate

160. Inspectors will use the criteria set out below to make each of the graded judgements. The handbook explains how these criteria are applied in each context.

Reaching a judgment of outstanding

161. Outstanding is a challenging and exacting judgement. In order to reach this standard, inspectors will determine whether the provider meets all the criteria for good under that judgement and whether it does so securely and consistently. In other words, it is not enough for the provider to be strong against some aspects of the judgement and not against others; it must meet each and every criterion for good. In addition, there are further criteria set out under the outstanding judgement that the provider will also need to meet.

162. A provider should only be judged outstanding in a particular area if it is performing exceptionally. This outstanding performance should be consistent and secure across all judgement areas in order for the phase to be judged outstanding overall.

Reaching a judgement of good, requires improvement or inadequate

163. When considering a final judgement, inspectors will assess whether the evidence they have gathered shows that the provider's overall quality for each phase is most closely aligned with the good criteria.

164. When a provider does not, on a best-fit approach, meet the good criteria, and none of the inadequate criteria apply, the provider will be graded as requires improvement.

165. When inspectors' evidence shows that any one of the inadequate criteria applies, then this aspect of the ITE provider's work will likely be judged inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

166. In judging the provider's overall effectiveness for each phase, inspectors will take account of the two key judgements: the quality of education and training, and the leadership and management of the partnership.

167. Inspectors will draw on inspection evidence from the two key judgements to determine an overall effectiveness judgement for each phase of the ITE provider.

168. Inspectors must consider whether the ITE offered by the provider complies with the relevant statutory ITT criteria, assessment-only route criteria or EY ITT requirements and all relevant legislation and guidance, including those related to promoting equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination, and safeguarding. In primary and secondary school training, inspectors must ensure that the provider offers trainees their minimum entitlement, ensuring coverage of all 'learn that' and 'learn how to' statements set out in the ITT core content framework.

169. Where appropriate, inspectors must also consider the extent to which the ITE offered by the provider complies with apprenticeship requirements and expectations.

170. Inspectors will judge the overall effectiveness of each phase by applying the grading criteria set out below.

Grade descriptors for overall effectiveness

Outstanding (1)

- The quality of education and training is outstanding.
- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

Good (2)

- Both key judgements must be at least good.

Requires improvement (3)

- When the provider is judged as requires improvement in either of the two key judgements, the overall effectiveness of the relevant phase will

also be requires improvement, unless one is judged inadequate.

- ITE is non-compliant with statutory criteria and requirements and/or all relevant legislation and guidance, excluding that related to promoting equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination, and safeguarding. Non-compliance is likely to be minor and not have a significant impact on the quality of education and training provided to trainee teachers.

Inadequate (4)

- The judgement on the provider's overall effectiveness for each phase will be inadequate when either one or both of the key judgements is inadequate.
- ITE is non-compliant with the ITT compliance criteria. Non-compliance is likely to have a significant impact on: the quality of education and training provided to trainee teachers; the safeguarding of pupils in EY, schools or colleges; and the quality of apprenticeships.
- The provider does not comply with relevant legislation and guidance relating to safeguarding, equality and diversity, and eliminating discrimination.

The quality of education and training

171. Inspectors will take a rounded view of the quality of education and training that a provider offers. This will include close consideration of the ITE curriculum.

172. Inspectors will consider the knowledge and skills that the provider plans that trainees will gain at each stage (we call this **'intent'**). They will also consider the way that the ITE curriculum developed or adapted by the provider is taught and assessed in order to support trainees to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills (we call this **'implementation'**). Finally, inspectors will consider whether trainees know more and remember more of the intended curriculum and apply that knowledge to their practice (we call this **'impact'**).

Intent

173. In evaluating the ITE provider's intent, inspectors will primarily consider the curriculum provided by the ITE provider. They will discuss this with the provider's representatives, leaders and managers. Inspectors must ensure that the curriculum provided prepares trainees to meet the relevant professional standards (QTS or EYTS). In primary and secondary phases, ITE inspectors must ensure that providers produce the minimum entitlement outlined in the ITT core content framework.

Implementation

174. In evaluating the implementation of the ITE curriculum, inspectors will primarily consider how trainees are taught, trained and supported at both the centre and on placements, including the quality of mentoring.

The use of assessment

175. Inspectors will evaluate how the provider uses assessment of trainees to inform the teaching of the ITE curriculum.

176. Ongoing assessment of trainees should be largely formative. Inspectors should check that trainees are gaining, applying and refining the knowledge and skills set out in the ITE curriculum. The provider should also use formative assessment to help trainees embed knowledge and use it fluently, and to assist trainers/mentors in refining a robust ITE curriculum. Therefore, providers should avoid the premature use of summative assessments, for example generic outcome descriptors, such as the teachers' standards.

177. For apprentice teachers, the provider should make accurate and rigorous assessments that enable apprentices to take their end-point assessments.

178. The provider should make 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 EY ITT trainees. For FE and skills trainees, the provider should ensure that trainees understand the professional formation process that they may undertake towards the end of their first year of teaching.

Impact

179. When inspectors evaluate the impact of the education and training offered by the provider, their focus will primarily be on whether trainees know more and remember more of the intended curriculum and apply that knowledge to their practice.

Grade descriptors: quality of education and training

180. Inspectors will use professional judgement when judging the provider's quality of education and training:

- If all aspects of the good criteria are consistently met, inspectors will consider whether all the outstanding criteria are met. For a provider to be graded outstanding for quality of education and training, it must be consistently meeting all aspects of the good and outstanding criteria.
- When a provider does not, on a 'best fit' basis, meet the good criteria consistently and none of the inadequate criteria apply, the provider will be graded as requires improvement for its quality of education and training.
- When inspectors' evidence shows that any of the inadequate descriptors apply, then this aspect of the ITE provider's work will likely be judged inadequate.

Outstanding (1)

- The provider meets all the criteria for good quality of education and training securely and consistently.
- The quality of education and training provided is exceptional.

In addition, the following apply:

Intent

The provider's training programme is:

- designed to ensure that any generic principles are always understood practically and in relation to subject and phase
- co-produced with partners (where applicable) to ensure the curriculum is integrated and sequenced across the partnership
- delivered by leaders, mentors and (where applicable) centre- and placement-based staff throughout the partnership who have a firm and common understanding of the intended curriculum and what it means for their practice
- 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
- the curriculum is designed to ensure that trainees are introduced to the tools to develop their knowledge further, for example through sharing access to professional networks.

Implementation

- Teaching and training are of a high quality, which allows trainees to learn the intended curriculum effectively.
- The curriculum is delivered effectively across all settings within the provider.
- Trainers and mentors are consistently skilful at drawing on the taught curriculum during their interactions with trainees, particularly during mentoring sessions and feedback following observations.

Impact

- Trainees develop detailed knowledge and skills across the taught ITE curriculum. This knowledge is routinely and skilfully applied by trainees to their professional practice.
- Trainees are able to apply what they have learned from the range of different placement experiences and settings.

Good (2)

Note: When inspectors are considering the intent and implementation criteria set out below, it must be clear that leaders have designed an ambitious ITE curriculum. We recognise that some providers will have completed new curriculum plans but disruption to normal operations, as a result of COVID-19, has meant that they have not had the opportunity to deliver their new plans fully. We intend to review whether these arrangements are still needed in March 2022.

Intent: principles informing the ITE curriculum **Ambitious**

- The ITE curriculum is ambitious in scope and rigorous in content choice. It is coherent and well sequenced and leads to cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills.
- In primary and secondary programmes, the ITT core content framework defines in detail the minimum entitlement of all trainee teachers, which all ITT providers must incorporate – in full – within their curriculums. The ITE curriculum covers the full entitlement described in the ITT core content framework, including all ‘learn that’ and ‘learn how to’ statements.
- EY, primary and secondary programmes will prepare trainees for QTS or EYTS. For FE and skills trainees, the provider should ensure that trainees understand the professional formation process that they may undertake towards the end of their first year of teaching.

Designed around subject and phase

- The course structure is designed around subject- and/or phase-specific dimensions.[\[footnote 14\]](#) The application of any generic principles is taught and practised as and when appropriate.
- In primary phase programmes, training ensures that trainees learn to teach early reading using systematic synthetic phonics, as outlined in the ITT core content framework, and that trainees are not taught to teach competing approaches to early reading. Trainees are taught the importance of providing pupils with enough structured practice to secure fluency in both reading and numeracy work.
- In EY programmes, trainees gain knowledge of appropriate curriculum content as well as appropriate pedagogies for children.
- In FE and skills programmes, trainees gain or consolidate appropriate knowledge and skills for the vocational, pre-vocational or academic courses that they will teach. The ITE curriculum is designed to secure competence in appropriate teaching skills. Centre-based leaders (where applicable) ensure that trainees are gaining high-quality training and subject-related professional practice in their placement settings.
[\[footnote 15\]](#)

Purposefully integrated

- The ITE curriculum is purposefully integrated across its different provider settings.
- Inclusion and teaching pupils with SEND are meaningfully integrated into all aspects of the training programme.

Informed by up-to-date or pertinent research

- The ITE curriculum is designed to ensure that trainees engage with up-to-date or pertinent research findings, for example the research informing the ITT core content framework (for primary and secondary phase trainees).
- The curriculum ensures that trainees are taught how to apply principles from scholarship relevant to their subject and phase when making professional decisions. 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 relating it to their professional experience.
- Trainees know about up-to-date research for promoting inclusion and teaching pupils with SEND, and those who speak EAL. They are able to apply this knowledge in their subject and phase.

High expectations [\[footnote 16\]](#)

- The ITE curriculum introduces trainees to the scope and richness of the knowledge that pupils can acquire in each subject. The curriculum is designed to ensure that trainees are ambitious for their pupils, practise communicating shared values that improve school culture and sustain excellent behaviour.

How pupils learn

- The ITE curriculum ensures that trainees know how pupils can be taught to acquire expertise and how this applies in their subject and phase. Trainees are taught how to ensure that pupils remember and/or practise components of knowledge and skills that they teach, and to ensure that pupils integrate new knowledge into larger concepts or accounts. Trainees are also taught that some pupils experience specific difficulties with acquiring, recalling and using knowledge.

Subject and curriculum

- The ITE curriculum provides a systematic and critical introduction to key educational traditions, practices and debates within the trainees' specialist subject(s) and/or phase(s). It ensures that trainees have sufficient subject knowledge to identify and evaluate content for their

teaching, considering matters of scope, coherence, sequencing and rigour. Trainees are taught to identify appropriate pedagogies that secure the curriculum intent.

Classroom practice

- The ITE curriculum introduces trainees to up-to-date research on effective classroom practice. This includes research on how to present subject matter clearly and explicitly, promoting appropriate discussion, reflection and questioning, and on how to use relevant pedagogy to enable effective teaching of the subject/specialist area. Trainees are taught how to plan and resource lesson sequences within their specialist subject(s) in their phase, and to understand how sequences fit into and serve wider goals for that subject.

Adaptive teaching

- The ITE curriculum teaches trainees to promote inclusion. Trainees are taught the ways in which knowledge promotes inclusion, for example by giving access to texts, by allowing participation in discussion or by ensuring that all pupils are equally ready for next steps in a curriculum.
- The ITE curriculum is designed to ensure that trainees: recognise foundational curriculum components; teach them so that they are learned securely; and identify misconceptions and explicitly correct these through subsequent planning, teaching or feedback.
- Trainees are taught to recognise signs that may indicate SEND and know how to help pupils overcome barriers to learning. They are taught to adapt their teaching, while maintaining high expectations, by working closely with expert colleagues, such as the school's special educational needs coordinator and other special education professionals.

Assessment of pupils

- The ITE curriculum ensures that trainees know why, when and how to assess in a subject or phase. Trainees are taught how to seek and draw conclusions about what pupils have learned, for example to look for fluent recall or deployment in order to establish whether pupils have embedded an concept or procedure, as intended. The ITE curriculum introduces trainees to important concepts in assessment, such as why teaching 'of the subject domain' rather than 'to the test' is important.

Managing pupils' behaviour

- Trainees are taught the key principles of behaviour management and the importance of consistency of approach among teachers within an institution. The ITE curriculum ensures that trainees learn how to teach pupils explicitly how to behave. This practice will include setting and securing high standards of behaviour, creating an environment that allows pupils to focus on learning, and establishing classroom routines.

Professional behaviours

- The ITE curriculum prepares trainees for a fulfilling and successful career as a teacher. Trainees are taught how to manage their workloads and how to maintain their own health and welfare, as well as how to engage with relevant subject and/or scholarly communities, including communities of practice relating to technical and vocational training, where relevant.
- Trainees are taught how to promote pupils' safety and welfare. They understand their statutory safeguarding duties (including the 'Prevent' duty) and responsibilities.
- Trainees are explicitly taught high standards for teachers' personal and professional conduct, including promoting a positive view of inclusion.

Pupils' physical and mental health

- Trainees are taught how to respond appropriately to pupils' needs that arise from physical and mental health issues and how schools can promote good physical and mental health.

Implementation

How trainees are taught

- All trainers (including mentors) draw on and model expert application of their own knowledge and skills, relevant to their subject and phase. When teaching trainees how to appraise subject and curriculum approaches, trainers model and foster informed use of relevant professional and academic literature. They find meaningful opportunities to enhance trainees' subject and curriculum knowledge and their phase expertise.
- The ITT core content framework defines a key role for 'expert colleagues' in respect of the skills to be practised or introduced in the ITE curriculum. Providers ensure that all 'expert colleagues' understand their role in delivering the ITE curriculum.
- Trainees receive clear, consistent and effective training and mentoring across the placement settings. They have adequate opportunities to observe expert colleagues, for example, as they plan lessons, teach pupils and carry out assessment. Trainees have enough opportunities to practise, with appropriate support. They receive regular, focused feedback and are supported through focused and challenging discussion.
- Flexible and responsive opportunities are given for individual trainees to observe and learn from diverse, excellent practice in different settings, including in specialist settings such as special schools and pupil referral units. These might also include vocational placements, diverse contexts or settings related to trainees' own interests that are relevant to the pupils or subjects being taught. [\[footnote 17\]](#)
- Trainees are helped to recognise and create useful connections across

training experiences and relate these experiences to subject- or phase-specific challenges.

Assessment of trainees

- Ongoing formative assessment of trainees focuses on whether trainees are gaining, applying and refining the knowledge and skills set out in the ITE curriculum, paying particular attention to subject-specific dimensions. Ongoing assessment enables providers to diagnose deficits and close gaps. It avoids premature use of generic descriptors such as the teachers' standards. These outline final summative outcomes and not the curriculum, which, when learned, enables those outcomes.
- In primary and secondary programmes, the ITT core content framework is not used as an assessment framework. Instead, providers will use it to design an ITE curriculum that ensures that all trainees receive their full entitlement. This includes coverage of 'learn that' and 'learn how to' statements, as described in the ITT core content framework.
- When targets are set for trainees, they: are produced collaboratively between mentors and trainees; relate to programme content to be mastered and specific expertise to be developed; and are adapted flexibly in response to trainees' progress and needs, ensuring that agreed actions are implemented by all parties.
- The provider makes accurate and rigorous final summative assessments for the award of QTS in relation to the teachers' standards for primary and secondary trainees and for the award of EYTS for EY ITT trainees.
- For FE and skills trainees, the provider ensures that trainees understand the professional formation process that they may undertake towards the end of their first year of teaching.

Impact

Professional development

- Trainees have largely learned the intended knowledge and skills set out in the ITE curriculum. Their mastery of knowledge and skills is evident in any planning produced, teaching, evaluation and assessment.[\[footnote 18\]](#)
- Trainees reflect on their teaching in the context of the curriculum components that they intended pupils to master. They take into account their assessment of what and how much pupils have securely learned.
- When trainees complete their training, they are aware of their professional strengths and areas for improvement. FE and skills trainees understand that they have the option to achieve QTLS through the professional formation process.

Requires improvement (3)

- The quality of education and training provided by the provider is not good.
- In primary and secondary programmes, the provider does not comply fully with the ITT core content framework. The non-compliance does not have a significantly negative impact on the overall quality of the ITE curriculum for trainees.

Inadequate (4)

The quality of education and training is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies:

Intent: principles informing the ITE curriculum Ambitious

- The ITE curriculum lacks ambition and rigour in content choice. It lacks coherence and fails to develop cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for trainees.
- In primary and secondary programmes, the provider does not comply with the ITT core content framework in multiple areas or in areas that have a significantly negative impact on the overall quality of the ITE curriculum for trainees.
- The provider has not ensured that the ITE curriculum prepares trainees to meet the professional standards required for their phase (QTS/EYTS).
- In EY programmes, the provider does not adequately prepare trainees for EYTS at the end of their training.

Designed around subject and phase

- EY and primary training does not ensure that trainees only learn to teach decoding using systematic synthetic phonics as part of early reading.
- In EY programmes, trainees have not gained sufficient knowledge of appropriate curriculum content and pedagogies for children.
- In FE and skills programmes, trainees have failed to gain appropriate knowledge and skills for the vocational, pre-vocational or academic courses that they will teach.
- In FE and skills programmes, trainees are not gaining high-quality training and professional practice in their placement settings. [\[footnote 19\]](#)

Informed by up-to-date or pertinent research

- Trainees do not know about up-to-date or pertinent research and so are

unable to apply this knowledge in their subject and phase.

Adaptive teaching

- 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.

Assessment of pupils

- The ITE curriculum does not ensure that trainees know why, when and how to assess pupils in a subject and phase context.

Managing pupils' behaviour

- The ITE curriculum does not teach trainees the key principles of behaviour management, how important it is to teach pupils how to behave and the importance of consistency of approach among teachers within an institution.

Professional behaviours

- Trainees are not taught how to promote pupils' safety and welfare. They do not understand their statutory safeguarding duties (including the 'Prevent' duty) and responsibilities.
- Trainees are not explicitly taught high standards for teachers' personal and professional conduct, including promoting a positive view of inclusion.
- Trainees are not taught how to manage their workloads or to maintain their own health and welfare.

Implementation

How trainees are taught

- Trainees consistently receive unclear and ineffective training and mentoring across various settings.
- Trainees have few opportunities to observe expert colleagues.
- Trainees consistently receive poorly focused feedback and are not supported through rigorous and challenging discussion.

Assessment of trainees

- In primary and secondary programmes, the ITT core content framework is, incorrectly, being used as a formative assessment framework.

Impact

Professional development

- When trainees complete their training, they are unaware of their professional strengths and areas for improvement.

Leadership and management

181. Inspectors will evaluate the work and impact of senior leaders, managers and other leaders with leadership and management roles across the provider.

182. Inspectors must consider how effectively schools, colleges, EY or FE and skills settings are engaged in the ITE provider, for example through their involvement in:

- strategic leadership and management
- quality assurance systems
- recruiting and selecting of trainees
- designing and delivering training and assessment
- reviewing, evaluating and developing provision with settings/schools/colleges based in areas of challenging socio-economic circumstances and those judged to require improvement, and in FE and skills with employers and business engagement

183. In evaluating the extent to which leaders ensure that the overall provider prepares trainees to teach subjects and phases, inspectors must consider:

- how leaders have prepared trainees for the realities of teaching, including how leaders have used the [DfE's guidance on workload in ITE](#) to eliminate unnecessary workload
- how leaders have equipped subject leaders/trainers with the appropriate level of subject expertise, subject teaching experience and ongoing subject training in order to lead, design and deliver subject dimensions of courses
- how leaders have overseen and engaged with decisions concerning the scope, depth, timing and sequencing of content of overall subject provision, and the extent to which leaders have ensured that:
- in the secondary phase, trainees receive:
 - comprehensive, coherent (across settings) and well-paced training in how to plan, teach and assess their subjects
 - training that promotes excellent teaching through high levels of subject and curriculum knowledge
 - in the primary phase, trainees receive:
 - adequate training in all national curriculum subjects, relationships and religious education, sufficient to understand the scope, purpose and principles of each subject, to begin to build secure frameworks of knowledge for each subject and to recognise high-quality subject resources that make efficient use of lesson time
 - thorough training in teaching systematic synthetic phonics, early number work

and handwriting, including focused practice in school placements, based on up-to-date or pertinent research.

- whether leaders have created opportunities for subject leaders and other subject trainers (and, in secondary, subject mentors) to renew and strengthen the subject dimensions of training. This might happen through collaboration in sourcing, producing or adapting high-quality subject resources or through giving trainers opportunities to consider quality in subject practice or subject curriculums
- how leaders have ensured that 'subject distinctiveness' is paramount. This means ensuring generic programmes do not compromise subject rigour.

184. Inspectors must consider evidence of appropriate monitoring and assessment of trainees' progress in mastering the components of the overall ITE curriculum. For example, they will consider the extent to which leaders and managers are:

- monitoring the quality of the overall ITE curriculum, its implementation and impact on trainees' teaching and professional behaviours, including acting on findings in order to improve trainees' progress
- evaluating accurately the quality of the intent, implementation and impact of the ITE curriculum and overall training provision in relation to other ITE providers
- ensuring that each trainee's individual training programme is responsive to ongoing formative assessment of strengths, gaps and needs
- taking opportunities to embed knowledge and skills of the ITT core content framework, for example by ensuring that regular review of routine targets, new target-setting and personalised training activities draw on the ITT core content framework wherever appropriate
- drawing on evaluations and satisfaction surveys of trainees, ECTs and former trainees to review and improve provision
- actively seeking feedback on the performance of ECTs/former trainees from employers to improve the quality of provision
- monitoring the preparation of trainees (where applicable) for employment and induction
- ensuring that the final assessment arrangements (in EY, primary and secondary phases) are rigorous in establishing whether trainees have met the minimum level of practice expected of teachers, as defined in the teachers' standards or the EY teachers' standards
- understanding and applying the fundamental principle that 'the curriculum is the progression model', for example by avoiding attempts to track progress, by making premature summative judgements, or using final outcome descriptors such as the EY teachers' standards, the teachers' standards or the quality of teaching and learning standards

185. In evaluating how well leaders and managers ensure the rigour of the provider's recruitment and selection process, inspectors must consider:

- the extent to which leaders recruit trainees with the potential to meet the needs

of local, regional or national employers and to meet the needs of the wider educational community, including settings/schools/colleges in areas of challenging socio-economic circumstances and those judged as requires improvement

- the extent to which leaders select candidates with appropriate qualifications, relevant subject/specialist knowledge and (in EY, primary and secondary phases) the potential to meet the relevant professional standards by the end of their training
- whether leaders have placed applicants on a training programme that makes best use of their skills, aptitudes and previous experience and develops their subject knowledge, where appropriate

186. Inspectors must consider the provider's capacity to bring about further improvements, as shown by a combination of:

- a track record of improving or maintaining high-quality provision
- specific improvements in the quality of training, including national priority areas for ITE, and (for primary and secondary) the implementation of the ITT core content framework within the overall ITE curriculum and the impact this has on improving trainees' practice over time
- leaders' and managers' attention to building subject-specific capacity in trainers and mentors, so that the training provision is secure and sustainable

187. Inspectors must consider how effectively leaders and managers ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and guidance, including the ITT statutory criteria (for EY, primary and secondary phases), and requirements relating to:

- promoting equality and diversity
- eliminating discrimination
- safeguarding, including e-safety

188. Inspectors must evaluate how far leaders and managers pursue a vision for excellence focused on improving or sustaining high-quality provision for trainees. To do this, they must consider:

- the extent to which primary and secondary leaders have ensured that the ITT core content framework is thoroughly taught, appropriately integrated within the ITE curriculum as a whole and reinforced in the provider's various settings
- leaders' implementation of improvement plans and the extent to which these are based on a robust and perceptive self-evaluation of overall ITE curriculum intent, implementation and impact
- leaders' analysis of improvements in trainees' practice, for example in securing good behaviour, in teaching reading using systematic synthetic phonics, in applying effective approaches for learners with SEND or (at secondary) in ensuring that pupils master foundational subject components
- the training that leaders have constructed and the extent to which it successfully integrates:

- general principles for learning to teach (such as the application of up-to-date or pertinent research in the science of learning or in classroom management)
- learning to teach a subject (including subject knowledge, subject pedagogy and subject curriculum)
- learning to be a teacher (in terms of professional behaviours and values)
- the consistency of leaders' application of effective policies and procedures across the provider, for example ensuring that trainees receive good-quality mentoring and regular mentoring time, and ensuring that routine target-setting and target reviews are detailed, subject-specific where appropriate, and rooted in a thorough evaluation of trainees' recent practice
- the extent to which professional development for all mentors and trainers involved in the ITE provider is of a high quality
- how leaders liaise with settings/schools/colleges and other employing settings in the local area/region in order to promote high-quality induction of ECTs/former trainees
- the extent to which provider leaders are strategic and effective in addressing local, regional and national concerns. These include teacher quality, supply and retention issues, all of which contribute towards improving the education sector's professional capacity for curriculum improvement, in line with the education inspection framework (EIF)
- whether trainers evaluate their teaching and have ensured that trainees learn sufficient knowledge and skills

Grade descriptors: leadership and management of the provider

189. Inspectors will use professional judgement when judging the provider's leadership and management.

- If all aspects of the good criteria are consistently met, inspectors will consider whether all the outstanding criteria are met. For a provider to be graded outstanding for leadership and management, it must be consistently meeting all aspects of the good and outstanding criteria.
- When a provider does not, on a 'best fit' basis, meet the good criteria consistently and none of the inadequate criteria apply, the provider will be graded as requires improvement for leadership and management.
- When inspectors' evidence shows that any of the inadequate descriptors apply, then this aspect of the ITE provider's work will be judged inadequate.

Outstanding (1)

- The provider meets all the criteria for good in leadership and management securely and consistently.

- Leadership and management are exceptional.

In particular, the following apply:

- Leaders and managers are relentless in pursuing a vision for excellence focused on improving or sustaining high-quality provision for trainees.
- Leaders and managers are highly proactive in ensuring that settings/schools/colleges are engaged in the ITE provider and contribute to success of its work.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the ITE curriculum includes phase-specific and subject-specific training, so that trainees are fully prepared to teach the range and depth of subjects appropriate to their phase.
- Monitoring and formative assessment of trainees' progress is highly effective in identifying that trainees are learning the sequenced components of the ITE curriculum.
- Improvement planning is based on rigorous and systematic evaluation of the ITE curriculum, using evidence of qualitative impact on trainees' learning, professional knowledge and developing expertise in the classroom. Evaluation takes into account, where appropriate, the perspectives of training partners, surveys from employers, trainees and former trainees, and an understanding of local, regional and national needs.

190. In order to judge whether the provider is good or requires improvement, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2) Strategic leadership

- Leaders in settings/schools/colleges work together as a partnership in order to contribute to: the strategy for recruiting and selecting trainees; developing the education and training that trainees receive; systematically evaluating the intent and implementation of the ITE curriculum; and the strategic leadership of the ITE provision.
- Quality assurance systems sustain effective and consistent teaching of coherent, well-planned programmes and their integration across the ITE partnership.
- Engagement and liaison with employers assist an effective continuum from initial teacher training to induction and early career development.
- Where possible, leaders ensure that training provision includes placements that offer diverse experiences across pupil attainment, demographics and needs.
- Leaders ensure that the provider consistently meets the DfE's ITE

compliance criteria (where applicable).

Vision of excellence

- High-quality mentors benefit from an effective cycle of mentor induction, training and feedback that involves all partners.
Settings/schools/colleges work with the provider to ensure that, as far as is possible, mentoring supports the intent of the ITE curriculum.
- Leaders and managers have a clear picture of the provider's strengths and weaknesses, and have used this to secure improvements for trainees.
- Leaders and managers routinely use trainees' views to evaluate the effectiveness of the course, plan for improvement and measure the impact of initiatives.
- Selection procedures ensure that trainees are ready to acquire the relevant curriculum/vocational knowledge and teaching expertise during the course and that trainees have clear potential to meet the required professional standards by the end of their training.
- Trainees receive appropriate and timely professional and pastoral support, including with managing workload and maintaining good health. The provider is alert, and intervenes, when possible, to avoid trainees withdrawing from the programme when they have the capacity to continue.

Workload

- Leaders do not encourage unnecessary bureaucratic workload demands such as excessive paperwork. This may include documentation or paperwork for generic tracking against teachers' standards that is not related to immediate, specific programme components, training targets and needs.
- All trainers understand the limitations of the different forms of assessing pupils' learning. Trainers do not require trainees to mark or assess pupils' work in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for trainees or that detracts from their own wider learning within the course programme.
- Leaders make proportionate demands with regard to lesson planning and balancing the need for the trainees to learn how to plan sequences of lessons with workload considerations.

Equality and diversity

- Leaders ensure that training respects and teaches knowledge and application of fundamental British values and the Equality Act 2010.

191. In order to judge whether the provider is good or requires improvement, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of

the inspection team.

Requires improvement (3)

Leadership and management are not good.

Compliance

- Leaders have failed to ensure that the provider consistently meets the DfE's ITE compliance criteria. Identified areas of the programme that do not meet the compliance criteria are minor and easily rectified. Consequently, the gaps in compliance do not have a significant impact on trainees or their training.
- In primary and secondary programmes, leaders have failed to ensure that the provider complies fully with the ITT core content framework. The non-compliance does not have a significantly negative impact on the overall quality of the ITE curriculum for trainees.

Inadequate (4)

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following apply:

- The provider does not work effectively with settings/schools/colleges. For example, they do not contribute to the provider's strategy for recruiting trainees, or the evaluation of the provider's ITE curriculum.
- Leaders do not ensure the effective and consistent implementation of coherent, well-planned programmes and their integration across the ITE partnership (where applicable).
- Leaders do not liaise or engage with employers, resulting in an ineffective continuum from ITE to induction and early career development.
- Leaders do not ensure that trainees benefit from high-quality mentoring that supports their development relevant to their subject and phase.
- Mentoring training does not focus on ensuring quality interactions between trainees and mentors. Mentoring is consistently not matching the intent of the ITE curriculum.
- In EY and primary programmes, mentors do not support the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics. Some trainees are being poorly prepared to teach systematic synthetic phonics.
- Improvement planning is weak. It is not based on rigorous and systematic evaluation of the ITE curriculum.
- Selection procedures do not ensure that trainees are ready to acquire the relevant curriculum/vocational knowledge and teaching expertise

during the course and have clear potential to meet the required professional standards.

Workload

- Leaders do not routinely check that all partners avoid bureaucratic workload demands. Unnecessary burdens are placed on trainees, mentors and trainers, and these routinely detract from their own wider learning within the training programme.

Equality and diversity

- Leaders do not ensure that training respects and teaches knowledge and application of fundamental British values and the Equality Act 2010.

Compliance

- Leaders have failed to ensure that the provider consistently meets the DfE's ITE compliance criteria. Identified areas of the programme that do not meet the compliance criteria are not minor, and they have a significant impact on trainees or their training.
- In primary and secondary programmes, leaders have failed to comply with the ITT core content framework in multiple areas or in areas that have a significantly negative impact on the overall quality of the ITE curriculum for trainees.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that the provider fulfils the requirements of a quality apprenticeship (where relevant).

Annex A – Instructions and guidance for thematic subject inspections

A thematic subject inspection is not a part of the full routine inspection of ITE providers as described in the handbook. This is a separate type of inspection event and for different purposes. When arranging and planning a thematic subject inspection, inspectors will clarify details with providers as prescribed below.

Background

192. Thematic subject inspections concentrate solely on the quality and effectiveness of individual subject training in primary and secondary ITE

providers. We carry out these inspections as part of the ITE inspection framework, but they also contribute towards national thematic subject reports led by Ofsted's national subject leads. Inspectors focus on the preparation of trainee teachers within individual subjects.

193. We select ITE providers for thematic subject inspections based on a range of data available to us. However, we may include providers due to their size, geography or secondary subject provision.

194. ITE providers will receive their next ITE inspection in accordance with routine inspection scheduling arrangements. Thematic subject inspections cannot change the primary or secondary inspection grade for overall effectiveness. However, if the thematic subject inspection raises concerns about the standard of training provided, then this may influence the timing of the next ITE inspection.

195. This guidance sets out the judgements that inspectors make and report on when evaluating the quality and effectiveness of a subject in a thematic subject inspection, and the range and types of evidence they will use.

196. All thematic subject inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles and code of conduct for inspectors, as set out in [paragraphs 154 to 155](#).

197. Thematic subject inspections are led by a specialist ITE lead inspector. These are inspectors who are contributing to national subject thematic studies and are experienced ITE lead inspectors. They will be allocated three days to plan, carry out and report on the inspection event. They may be joined by up to three team inspectors for each phase on the second day of the inspection, depending on the size of the primary and/or secondary ITE provider.

Evaluating the quality and effectiveness of training in subject/specialist areas of the ITE curriculum

198. In all thematic subject inspections, inspectors are required to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of subject/specialist training.

199. Inspectors will provide a feedback letter that identifies strengths and weaknesses. They will reach these findings by carefully considering the evidence gathered and using their professional judgement.

Outline guidance

200. Inspectors must consider first-hand evidence, including a sample of visits to trainees teaching the subject being inspected and observations of any school- or (where applicable) centre-based subject training taking place at the time.

201. Inspectors will take account of:

- the quality of the ITE curriculum and how effectively the implementation of that curriculum prepares trainees to:
 - teach the subject to children/pupils/learners
 - promote and manage good behaviour in the subject and age range for which they are trained
- whether trainees:
 - ‘if teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics’ by the end of their training
 - ‘manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment’ (see [‘Teachers’ standards’](#))
- any specific issues raised in the last inspection report about the subject or behaviour management and whether these have been tackled effectively and are showing clear signs of improvement
- the views of trainees, ECTs, mentors, trainers, induction tutors and employers on the quality of subject training and its impact on trainees’ teaching and pupils’/learners’ learning
- the effectiveness of the ITE provider’s work in seeking and responding to satisfaction surveys, including those from trainees, ECTs, induction tutors and employers, about the quality of subject training
- how the provider has taken account of the ITT core content framework, ensuring that the subject training has taken account of the up-to-date research to support subject training
- the quality, coherence and rigour of school- and (where applicable) centre-based subject training
- the quality and effectiveness of training materials, directed tasks, assignments and audits related to the subject being inspected
- the quality and effectiveness of placement settings/schools/colleges in providing experiences that develop trainees’ confidence and competence in the teaching of the subject being inspected
- the expertise and effectiveness of mentors and other trainers in providing high-quality subject training
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers in ensuring that the quality and effectiveness of the subject training is sustained or improving

What happens in thematic subject inspections

202. The ISA will telephone the ITE provider the afternoon before the first of the three days allocated to the inspection to inform the provider’s representative of the inspection and the inspectors’ expected time of arrival to complete preparation. This phone call could take place on any day of the week. Thematic subject inspections usually take place during the spring or summer terms. If the provider’s representative is unavailable, the lead inspector will ask to speak to the most senior member of staff present. If it is not possible to contact the ITE

provider, the lead inspector will inform the ITE provider of the thematic subject inspection on arrival.

203. Inspectors and ITE providers should follow the guidance for deferral in [paragraph 98](#).

204. As soon as they are certain that the thematic subject inspection can take place, the ISA will notify the inspector. The ISA will send the provider representative the privacy notice information and formal confirmation of the inspection by email. The email will include contact details for the ISA and an outline of the arrangements for publication of the thematic subject inspection letter after the event.

205. Inspectors should make initial preparations for the inspection on the morning after the initial notification. Preparation should be done on site, with the provider representative. When preparing for inspection, inspectors should be flexible in selecting appropriate and secure evidence to evaluate and report on the main focus of the inspection. Wherever possible, inspectors should maximise the time available by visiting a number of trainees based in particular settings/schools/colleges.

Inspection activities

206. Inspection activities should involve:

- observations of school- and/or (where applicable) centre-based subject training
- visiting trainees teaching the subject focus of the thematic subject inspection
- analysis of directed tasks, assignments and audits related to the thematic subject inspection
- scrutiny of the ITE provider's records and documentation, including:
 - curriculum and training materials
 - evaluations of the quality of school- and (where applicable) centre-based subject training
 - evaluations of mentor subject training and monitoring
- discussions with:
 - individual and/or groups of trainees and ECTs
 - trainers, mentors, induction tutors and employers
 - key staff involved in training in the subject that is the focus of the thematic inspection
- examination of additional documentation, including, for example:
 - reports or action plans from the DfE and/or other key partners
 - analysis of trainees', ECTs' and employers' views on the impact of actions taken to improve subject training
 - case or impact studies provided by the ITE provider.

207. Although discussions are important, the main focus will be on gathering first-hand evidence, including observations of:

- school- and/or (where applicable) centre-based subject training
- trainees' and ECTs' teaching of the subject being inspected.

208. Inspection activities will be focused on:

- issues that relate directly to the quality and effectiveness of training in the subject
- any concerns raised by the pre-inspection analysis or during the inspection, including those raised by trainees in the trainee online survey.

Engaging with the provider's representative, phase leaders and managers

209. The principles for engaging with the provider's representative and leaders and managers are set out in [paragraphs 125 to 127](#) and should be applied during thematic subject inspections. The lead inspector should exercise discretion in adapting and extending the approach according to the ITE provider's circumstances.

210. It is important that professional dialogue is maintained throughout the inspection. Emerging strengths and issues should be discussed during feedback at the end of the inspection and should not be a surprise to the ITE provider.

211. Throughout the inspection, inspectors should thoroughly investigate the areas of concern and acknowledge where the ITE provider has been successful in tackling areas for improvement.

Feedback on visits to trainees, and school- and centre-based training sessions

212. Feedback on the quality of subject teaching is an integral and essential part of the inspection. Inspectors must follow the guidance for feedback and discussion in paragraph 123.

213. The lead inspector and the provider's representative should decide which members of the ITE provider will attend the feedback, especially when the feedback is challenging or raises sensitive issues.

214. The feedback must:

- report on the range of evidence gathered
- explain the thematic subject inspection findings, including strengths and weaknesses
- make clear that the text of the inspection findings letter will be quality assured and may differ slightly from the wording of the oral feedback, although it will contain the same clear messages and the judgements are unlikely to change.

215. If the thematic subject inspection has raised serious concerns, this may affect the timing of the next ITE inspection. The lead inspector will make sure that the ITE provider is aware of this and will also inform the SHMI for ITE and/or the specialist adviser for ITE. However, the likely timing of any further inspection will

not be indicated to the ITE provider.

The thematic subject inspection letter

216. We will publish the letter on our reports website within 15 days of the end of the inspection.

217. Normally within eight working days of the end of the inspection, we will notify the ITE provider that the letter is available for a factual accuracy check. The ISA carries out this process if necessary. The ITE provider will have one working day to complete the check.

218. The lead inspector will respond to the ITE provider's comments about factual accuracy. The factual accuracy comments of both the provider and lead inspector will be reviewed by the SHMI for ITE and/or the specialist adviser for ITE if appropriate. The ITE provider will then receive an electronic version of the letter, normally within 14 working days of the end of inspection. After that time, we will publish the letter on our reports website, normally within 19 working days of the end of the inspection.

219. The ISA will email the final version of the letter to:

- the ITE provider
- the lead inspector
- the DfE

220. In general, thematic subject inspection letters are expected to be between 700 and 1,000 words in length. Inspectors will make professional judgements about the amount of detail needed to clearly explain the quality and effectiveness of an ITE provider's training in the subjects inspected.

221. The letter will include the strengths and weaknesses identified within the subject(s) reviewed or inspected as part of the thematic subject inspection.

Annex B – Glossary of common terminology

Compliance criteria – refers to the phase-specific 'compliance criteria', where such criteria exist.

- For the EY phase, the relevant compliance criteria are the [DfE's early years ITT requirements and supporting advice](#).
- For primary and secondary phases, the relevant compliance criteria are the [DfE's ITT criteria and supporting advice](#).

- For the assessment-only route, the relevant compliance criteria are the [DfE's assessment-only route to QTS: criteria and supporting advice](#).

Early career teacher (ECT)– the term ECT replaces newly qualified teacher (NQT), a teacher who has successfully completed an ITE two-year course in EY, primary or secondary age-phases.

Early years teacher status (EYTS) – EY ITE leads to the award of EYTS. This runs in parallel with QTS, but is not QTS, which is the qualification required to teach in maintained schools.

Overview – inspectors may initially discuss with providers a summary or ‘top-level’ outline of the evidence in an accessible format. The provider will subsequently make this evidence available during the inspection. The word ‘overview’ is not a reference to a particular type of document or form of evidence. Ofsted does not require providers to make evidence available in any specific format.

Pupils – sometimes used independently of the phrase ‘children, pupils and learners’. For the sake of brevity, the term ‘pupils’ is sometimes used to refer to children in EY, pupils at primary and secondary, students in post-16 provision and learners in FE and skills, as appropriate to the teacher education phase.

Report – used to describe the formal written outcome of the inspection.

Subject– refers to what is being taught, including areas of learning in EY, particular subjects and/or subject areas in schools and FE and skills.

Transition statement– this applies only to the ‘good’ grade criteria for the quality of education and training judgement. See [‘Note’ under the ‘Good’ criteria heading](#). Inspectors will consider the ambition of curriculum plans and how well they have been delivered. We intend to review whether these arrangements are still needed in March 2022. To be graded outstanding for the quality of education and training judgement, a provider must meet all of the criteria for good and should also be exceptional.

Schools – primary and secondary

Core content framework (CCF) – a mandatory, minimum requirement for all trainee teachers, which all ITT providers must incorporate – in full – within their curriculums. The ITE curriculum will encompass the full entitlement described in the [ITT core content framework](#), ensuring full coverage of all ‘learn that’ and ‘learn how to’ statements.

Qualified teacher status (QTS) – achieved following successful completion of an ITE programme. Teachers must have QTS to teach in a maintained primary, secondary, special school and a non-maintained special school in England.

Early career framework (ECF) – a [development support programme for all ECTs in England](#), to be rolled out nationally from September 2021 – piloting is due to commence in September 2020.

Further education (FE) and skills

Qualified teacher learner and skills (QTLS)– a professional status for post-16 education and training that helps practitioners advance in their careers and demonstrate their expertise and experience to colleagues, employers and learners. It is not a mandatory requirement to teach in the FE sector.

Professional formation – the term used for the [post-qualification process that FE and skills practitioners undergo to achieve QTLS](#). Practitioners need to be a member of the Society for Education and Training to apply to undertake the professional formation process. Former trainees generally undertake the process after their first year of professional practice.

Teacher apprenticeships

For teaching apprenticeships, the standards set out by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) for different levels are:

- **Level 5 teacher apprenticeship pathway** – the [Learning and skills teacher \(LST\)](#) is ‘dual-professional’, having first achieved competence in a vocational or subject specialism and then subsequently trained as a teacher. LSTs teach young people and adults in all parts of the education and training sector, including work based/independent training provision; further, adult and higher education; offender-learning; and the voluntary sector.
- **Level 6 teacher apprenticeship pathway** – the [apprenticeship pathway](#) complies with the statutory teachers standards. Apprentices must complete a programme of ITT with an accredited ITT provider. Apprentices will be assessed against the teachers’ standards for the awarding of QTS. The apprentices will complete their end-point assessment at the start of their ECT year. Successful apprentices are awarded their apprenticeship certificate.

End-point assessment (EPA) – a series of tests that an apprentice must take to prove their ability to do the job for which they have been trained. These tests take place at the end of an apprenticeship following a period of training and development often referred to as the ‘on-programme’ period.

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1. ['Induction for early career teachers \(England\)'](#), Department for Education, March 2021.[↵](#)
 2. The assessment-only route referenced here is an exception in that it is not a training route. Assessment only is intended for very experienced graduate teachers without QTS who can demonstrate that they meet all of the teachers' standards without the need for further training.[↵](#)
 3. See [Section 118 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).[↵](#)
 4. As a result of the ITT market review, the inspection cycle under the September 2020 framework will be accelerated, to be completed by the end of July 2024, ensuring that all ITE providers receive an Ofsted inspection under this inspection framework.[↵](#)
 5. Such as the ['Powers of entry: code of practice'](#), Home Office, March 2015.[↵](#)
 6. Paragraph 13 in [Schedule 14 \(Amendments Relating to the Training of The School Workforce\)](#) to the Education Act 2005 substitutes Section 18A of the Education Act 1994 with Sections 18B and 18C; [Education Act 1994](#).[↵](#)
 7. The provider information portal gives inspectors a high-level view of information about providers that Ofsted inspects and regulates.[↵](#)
 8. ['Building great teachers? Initial teacher education curriculum research: phase 2'](#), Ofsted, 2020.[↵](#)
 9. This may include looking at a sample of specialisms offered within primary courses.[↵](#)
 10. Providers should be aware of the principles of the use of data given in the [DfE's 'Making data work' report](#), November 2018.[↵](#)
 11. When a face-to-face meeting is not possible, team members will discuss their findings by telephone with the lead inspector, who will discuss these with phase leaders and managers or the provider's representative.[↵](#)
 12. The term 'report' is used to describe the formal written outcome of the inspection.[↵](#)
 13. The term 'working days' does not include school term-time holidays.[↵](#)

14. Inspectors will adapt their focus on the ITE curriculum to take into account the design approach as set out by the provider.[↪](#)
15. Professional practice in this context refers to vocational training courses such as plastering and plumbing.[↪](#)
16. Points 5 to 13 in the DfE guidance are structured to reflect the sequential order of teachers' standards.[↪](#)
17. One example among many might be musical or artistic practice or an industrial setting.[↪](#)
18. It is for the provider to decide on the planning requirements for trainees. However, this should take into account the stage of training that trainees are at and the workload demands that result.[↪](#)
19. Professional practice in this context refers to vocational training courses such as plastering and plumbing.[↪](#)

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