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Research and analysis

Teaching teachers during COVID-19

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Executive summary

Context

The initial teacher education (ITE) sector is responsible for training teachers in early years, primary, secondary and college education. It is the main route for aspiring teachers to gain the knowledge, skills and experience they need to teach. There are currently 236 registered ITE partnerships, which this year are responsible for educating over 40,000 trainee teachers.[FOOTNOTE1]

In June last year, Ofsted introduced a new framework for inspections of secondary initial teacher education (ITE) partnerships. This framework focuses on the quality of the ITE curriculum and what it (the) judgements: the 'quality of education and training and leadership and management'. Previously, ITE partnerships were inspected in accordance with different terms, with less focus on the curriculum and more on trainees' outcomes.

Ofsted was due to start inspecting under this new framework in January 2021, but we suspended our plans due to the third national lockdown. This means that no ITE partnership has been inspected against the new framework.

In spring 2020, Ofsted and the Secretary of State for Education agreed to use research methods to evaluate how ITE partnerships have responded to COVID-19 and how the ITE curriculum has been developed. This involved a series of remote research visits to ITE providers, which took place in the autumn term. This report sets out our findings of that curriculum planning. This report presents the findings.

Ofsted will be inspecting ITE partnerships from May 2021. The inspectors will evaluate partnerships against the inspection framework. They will also use this work to understand the impact of COVID-19 on each partnership and how leaders have responded.

Findings

While COVID-19 has been an immense challenge for partnerships and their trainees, the move to remote training and remote teaching has, in some cases, stimulated better and more considered thinking about the ITE curriculum. Partnerships have generally been able to deliver a coherent curriculum, which has met the needs of their trainees, and their school partners have generally felt supported in their roles as mentors.

The hard work and support for trainees that ITE partnerships have provided have mitigated much of the potential impact of COVID-19. However, some trainees remain, which may have been systemic before the pandemic:

- the trainees who have not sufficiently ambitious ITE curriculum. For example, only a minority of partnerships could demonstrate that they had incorporated trainees' learning from their school placements into their plans, and this was also happening[FOOTNOTE2]
- the many partnerships are overly reliant on the experiences that trainees gain in their school placements to develop their understanding of the curriculum
- little many partnerships have found innovative methods for providing trainees to make up for lost time in the classroom due to COVID-19. these efforts are unlikely to be enough to provide trainees with full and rounded ITE.

All trainees are likely to need some additional support in their first year as NQTs, and some will need it in their second year of teaching.

The ITE sector must now develop improved and more ambitious ITE curriculum. This means developing curriculum that are better designed around subject and phase, better integrated across the partnership, and more informed by up-to-date and pertinent research.

Methodology

This report uses the concepts and language of the ITE framework to evaluate evidence collected during remote research visits to ITE partnerships. It draws on this evidence to address 2 broad questions:

- What has been the impact of COVID-19 on ITE partnerships and the quality of education they have been able to provide?
- How well do ITE partnerships developing their curriculum with respect to Ofsted's concept of curriculum quality?

The remote research visits covered 75 ITE partnerships (30% of all partnerships) across 17 of the following age phases (the Annex):

- 4 early years
- 28 primary
- 28 secondary
- 5 combined
- 8 further education

The 75 partnerships covered every ITEC region, and were representative of the sector in terms of type, size and phase.

Participation was voluntary and so partnerships are not identifiable from this report. Ofsted's inspectors will not use this report to inform inspections.

During each remote research visit, we spoke to most of the following in separate focus groups, chaired by an Ofsted Her Majesty's Inspector(s):

- college partnership leads
- programme leaders or their equivalents
- mentors
- trainees, both undergraduate and postgraduate
- school leaders

Participants were asked a series of mostly open-ended questions about the impact of COVID-19 on their partnership, and about broader questions about their curriculum approach to the ITE curriculum. Partnerships were also asked to send in curriculum plans relevant to the phase of provision and to distribute an online survey to trainees and staff.

The Education EPPI tools notes throughout the work and recorded their overall analysis for the visit in a curriculum tool, which was then coded and analysed by research.

In this report, we use the phrases 'most', 'many', 'some' and 'none' to roughly quantify the responses. We use the phrase 'many partnerships' to mean that a significant number of partners, across a diverse and representative sample, were in the same situation. However, made sure that every use of each phrase broadly refers to similar proportions of partnerships, ignoring any minor exceptions.

Methodological limitations

There are limitations to this methodology. Participation was voluntary, which impacted on the range of partnerships we were able to visit. Several partnerships declined to take part due to COVID-related issues. However, we revisited the sample frequently and made sure that the participating partnerships were broadly similar to the sample. We confident that our findings are generalisable, as we were able to visit 30% of all ITE partnerships.

Participation had some control over who took part in the visit, so they were asked to contact trainees, mentors and NQTs to invite them to participate. This is likely to have skewed the views we heard toward those who are more engaged.

The findings in this report are almost solely on the observations and views we collected from focus groups and the ITE curriculum plans that were shared. We did not, for example, review assessment materials or observe teaching or training. We also did not documented evidence of training being delivered online. Our findings on the ITE curriculum therefore relate mostly to curriculum intent – that is, planning and design of the curriculum – rather than the implementation of the curriculum through teaching.

List of key terms

Term	Definition
ITE	The organisation that is responsible for delivering ITE, typically a higher education institute (HEI) or a school-led initiative (lead lead school SCITT) centre
Placement	All early years, primary, school or college-based place trainees experience (placement) within the ITE partnership
Mentor	A nominated teacher who is responsible for supporting a trainee teacher, and for coordinating their education while they are in a placement
Tutor	A nominated university or ITE partnership member who is responsible for supporting trainees during university-based training and will provide any pastoral or academic support they need
Leading teacher	A teacher who is responsible for a school's ITE partnership, and who is responsible for ensuring trainees receive high-quality training
Research lead	The education lead in a given key assessment provided, which trainees are given the opportunity to practice teaching and assessing

Main findings

What is working well

Learning and teaching remotely has been an immense challenge for trainees and their partnerships, but in some cases it has stimulated deeper and more connected thinking about the ITE curriculum. In these cases, the ITE partnerships have improved their curriculum, and have been able to deliver a coherent curriculum, which has been consistent across the partnership even if delivery has varied. Training has also sometimes been made more coherent by the lockdown, which has allowed many trainees to reflect on the general principles of how pupils learn and how teachers teach, rather than focusing on the specifics of a school or a phase, which has largely unfolded during COVID. This gives trainees space to learn about and learn to implement the ITE curriculum.

The take up of remote training in some subject training has also improved equality of access to the ITE curriculum. This allowed many trainees to learn alongside peers, having additional caring commitments, such as children. Training speakers have been able to attend training sessions, which has made it easier for trainees to participate and the opportunity to learn from leading subject specialists.

In the main, partnerships have been effective at supporting trainees to develop resilience and cope. Many have held joint meetings with mentors, tutors and trainees more regularly, some specifically focused on mental health. Several partnerships have developed peer-to-peer support groups, which have been valuable for trainees, both in group and individual contexts. Most trainees felt supported and were pleased that the ITE partnerships were going 'above and beyond' to ensure their well-being.

What is working less well

Due to COVID-19, trainees have not yet had sufficient time to apply what they have learned in their training to their practice. Many partnerships have not sufficiently developed their curriculum plans to allow for the extension of curriculum content into the classroom. Many trainees have not had sufficient opportunities to practise teaching in partnership-led efforts. Trainees are particularly behind in their experience of teaching in a variety of contexts, including teaching pupils with special educational needs, teaching including vulnerable pupils, teaching in challenging contexts, and experience of teaching subjects with specialist equipment, such as music, physical education and science. Many trainees have not had sufficient opportunities to practise feedback. It is unlikely to be enough for trainees with a full, rounded curriculum to be ready to be NQTs still likely need additional support next year.

The pandemic has made it difficult for many partnerships to develop their trainees. This is equally true for SCITTs and HEIs. But apprenticeship leaders were aware of the challenges and were working to address them. Many trainees have not had sufficient opportunities to learn about the pupils they will teach.[FOOTNOTE3] However, most had not yet had the opportunity to meet their ITE curriculum plans. A small number of partnerships could demonstrate that they had incorporated COVID-19 into their ITE curriculum. Many trainees felt that their training was not sufficiently ambitious and that their ITE curriculum plans were still incorrectly relying on the 'Teachers' standards', a workmanlike assessment tool that is not sufficiently ambitious.

Too many partnerships relied heavily on placement experiences to deliver their curriculum and this was a problem for both HEIs and SCITTs. Some ITE curriculum plans were not sufficiently ambitious, and they did not make sufficient use of training and as the quality of education depended heavily on what happened during the school or college placements. Trainees were sometimes asked to teach subjects before they had been trained to teach them, and some were asked to teach pupils with special needs and they had already learned and what they needed to work on. It was also clear that apparent in early years and primary, learning the fundamentals of phase and subject was not sufficiently ambitious. Many trainees felt that their training was not appropriate to their ITE curriculum underlay by given a high proportion of trainees. But left the ITE sector particularly vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19, which has significantly increased the amount of teaching experience trainees have had.

The impact of COVID-19

This section explores the impact that COVID-19 has had on the operations of ITE partnerships, including their ability to provide and plan trainees, their methods of teaching trainees, and their systems and capacity to support and coach trainees on placements.

Trainee recruitment and placements

Most partnerships received more applications for teacher training in the academic year 2020/21 than in previous years, which aligns with the national data.[FOOTNOTE4] Leaders had mixed views on the quality of applications: some received good applications from a wide range of backgrounds, and others felt their focused applications could be better.

Around half of partnerships had increased their intake as a result of receiving more applications. Some had increased their intake because they had more trainees who were unable to take up their placements in other countries, and some had increased their intake because of COVID-19 recruitment.

All partnerships had adapted their recruitment processes in response to COVID-19 restrictions. Like most other organisations, online interviews and assessments have been the norm. Some partnerships had found that the move to online recruitment had allowed them to make a more diverse cohort than they would have otherwise been.

Partnerships considered remote recruitment to have some advantages over typical recruitment processes, such as saving travelling time. A few leaders felt that it had helped them to continue some online elements of recruitment in the future. Others were initially concerned that it was harder to get a feel for candidates' suitability, but felt that they had found their cohorts were adequate.

Most partnerships had secured school or college placements for all, or the majority of, their trainees for the academic year 2020/21. Some had had difficulties in finding placements for HEIs to have secured placements for all of their trainees, and different partnerships had worked to secure placements in different ways. Some had relied on their existing contacts, and others had had to work with local authorities and other partnerships to secure placements.

Some placement providers had been unwilling to offer placements due to COVID-19. Some other placements were arranged and later cancelled due to schools' sudden closures or changes in their COVID-19 risk assessments. Some leaders felt that successfully found alternative placements for trainees. It often has been relevant to share placements, which meant they shared a mentor and their teaching time with other trainees. Some leaders felt that this had been beneficial for trainees, as it had given them a wider range of experiences than they would have had in a typical year. Overall, the sector was able to compare the quality of education of a virtual or shared placement with that of a typical placement.

In a minority of cases, partnerships had been unable to place some of their trainees. They instead deferred admission centre-based training, but were aware that was not an adequate substitute for practical teaching and training.

In anticipation of further COVID-19 restrictions at the start of 2021, most partnerships had made plans for how they would provide remote training and support for placements until schools reopened in March. This allowed trainees to continue teaching remotely in a school context that they were familiar with, helping them develop more confidence before returning fully face to face in their second placements.

Learning theory remotely

Since the first national lockdown, ed trainees have been learning from home instead of attending training centres. Partnerships are using various online platforms and tools to deliver the ITE curriculum remotely. Many felt that developed their online material in response to the lockdown in a way that was more coherent than previous, and some developed practices with a lot of professionals and psychologists in mind. Trainees, in general, felt that the sessions were focused using broad over-term formats on group calls to facilitate discussion.

Many partnerships found it easier to attract trainees to attend training sessions, which would have ordinarily. Because there was no need for the speaker to travel. Having the sessions recorded meant that trainees could watch them at a time that fitted with additional commitments, such as COVID-19, such as childcare. The ability to pause, rewind, fast-forward and rewind, to review the ITE curriculum content online has, in some cases, strengthened teaching and subject knowledge.

Most partnerships felt that they had been able to ensure that trainees had had enough forward-centred training strategies originally planned for the summer term, so that they could have mastered how to present and implement curriculum restrictions were lifted.

Learning to teach remotely

Most trainees taught their first lesson or unit remotely during the autumn term 2020. This generally continued in spring 2021, as trainees and those assisted to work with pupils in school settings. Most trainees felt that they had had sufficient time to plan, prepared problems did not include trainees in the day, and so trainees felt that they only teaching and receiving feedback remotely between January and March 2021.

These trainees teaching for the future were still affected by the use of remote or hybrid placement schools. This often prevented them from teaching or observing as many lessons as would have been the case in a typical year. Trainees felt that they had had to have as many opportunities to teach remotely as would have been the case in a typical year. Trainees felt that they had had to make up for lost time in the classroom due to COVID-19 teaching by providing online videos and coordinating sessions for trainees to rehearse teaching with their peers. Some trainees felt that they had had to teach in a way that not best fit pupils's learning. Nonetheless, most felt that their training had encouraged them to dig out the finer details of the class and maintain social distancing from pupils and other teachers.

A few partnership leaders were aware of these knowledge gaps and had planned a programme of catch-up sessions for their trainees. Most felt that their trainees had caught up with their lost weeks of their course, or were on track for their cohort to be ready to be NQTs.

Trainees in subjects requiring specialist equipment to practice, such as science, music, physical education and technical courses, were also prevented from developing subject-specific teaching skills. Some trainees had been able to teach practical lessons in school or college's classroom. Trainees felt that practical lessons could not practical lessons could not be delivered in a way that was equivalent to remote lessons in the school or college site.

Some partnerships had found other opportunities for teachers to develop and practising practice into subjects, such as arranging for trainees to observe video lessons recorded by other teachers, or providing trainees with access to online resources. Some Mathematics computing partnerships in schools had offered pupils parent tutoring, innovative responses to the challenges posed by COVID-19. Group tutorial helps trainees experience of teaching pupils in knowledge through teaching.

Feedback, mentoring and assessment

Schools and colleges have moved most feedback, mentoring and assessment online. In some cases, this had a higher attendance of mentors at online training sessions than in previous years, and several partnerships plan to continue this in future. Many had developed online tools for mentors to use with their trainees. Most trainees felt that mentors had been supportive and had tried to continue coaching. Some trainees commented that they plan to continue providing some elements of training online in the future.

Partnerships have adapted the assessment of trainees in various ways. Most COVID-19. Some have been more flexible about written assessments, for example by extending deadlines or allowing trainees to submit fewer pieces of work. Some have made more good mentors or subject specialists to complete teacher observations rather than the designated assessor, and others have allowed the tutor to assess trainees virtually. Most trainees felt that their assessments had been reviewed on regular contact with trainees throughout their placements.

Partnerships described how they had offered various forms of additional support to trainees and mentors during the pandemic. Most partnerships had offered extra mentor and tutor training, and some had offered more regularly, and some of those had made it mandatory for mentors to attend. Some had offered additional sessions to support their emotional health and wellbeing, and some had been given access to external support such as counselling. Trainees and they felt well supported by their partnerships in managing the additional challenges and difficulties brought through COVID-19.

Several partnerships had also made efforts to provide social interaction for trainees as a means of supporting their well-being, such as virtual coffee mornings and informal conversations. Trainees said that partnerships had been very flexible and understanding, which was of particular value to those strong enough to be COVID-19 and those who had been affected by the pandemic in their own lives. Trainees felt very supported by their partnerships, and they felt that they had been given the opportunity to express during lockdowns. Most trainees felt that their partnerships were going 'above and beyond' to ensure their well-being.

The ITE curriculum

This section explores the quality of ITE partnerships' curriculum, as far as we could evaluate it during remote research visits and from the curriculum plans. It also explores barriers that some of the sectors within Ofsted's ITE framework Ofsted about ITE curriculum intent – that is, the ambition and design of the ITE curriculum. The section also explores what is discussed in relation to the integration of some based training and placements.

Ambitious

Ofsted's criteria for receiving a 'good' judgement under Ofsted's ITE framework is that 'the curriculum is ambitious in scope and ingenuity in content design'.[FOOTNOTE5] This section explores throughout the rest of the section our curriculum and training.

Having an ambitious ITE curriculum means that, at the very least, primary and secondary partnerships are planning and teaching a curriculum that encompasses all the material set out in the DfE's, which is a minimum entitlement for all primary and secondary schools.

While all partnerships were aware of the CCF and familiar with the ITT framework, many had not considered how the principles fit into the ITE curriculum design. This meant that their ITE curriculum did not include or align with the principles of the CCF.

Some partnerships had redesigned their ITE curriculum either before or since the introduction of the CCF in September 2020. Some had made changes to align the CCF should inform their curriculum and research to principles throughout using evidence-based practice. Some had made changes to their curriculum to align the CCF when discussing what they had learned and could illustrate how the ITE curriculum covered these aspects with examples from their training.

Some partnerships had considered how to incorporate the principles of the CCF was a minimum entitlement when thinking about curriculum design, and had made ambitious expectations for what trainees should know and be able to. Leaders gave examples of how they had made changes to their curriculum to align with the principles of academic research. These included arranging visiting speakers including academic experts, offering training in a wide range of subject areas, and providing a training programme to ensure trainees had experience teaching pupils.

Many partnerships were still using the teachers' standards as a guide to the content of their ITE curriculum. This was not sufficiently ambitious, because the teachers' standards are not a curriculum, and they do not provide a curriculum. Many felt that their curriculum and research had started to the standards. The teachers' standards are a workmanlike assessment tool that is not sufficiently ambitious and that trainees and NQT, and should not form the basis of the ITE curriculum.

Designed around subject and phase

This section explores the extent to which curriculum were designed around subjects for each phase we visited.

Early years

In early years, some partnerships said they had revised their ITE curriculum content to incorporate research into early learning and teaching reading, including early literacy and mathematics.

In other partnerships, trainees did not give a sufficient understanding of, or competency in, teaching early reading, including SSP, either before or during the training year in one case. The partnership said only 3 to 3 hours covering SSP before trainees went on placement, and that this was not sufficient for trainees to teach early reading. The partnership felt that trainees felt they were given no SSP, and so trainees felt unable to teach early reading and were not confident in doing so.

Phase generally, partnerships appeared to rely too much on practice based experiences in the early years. They were often not sure how to the introduction to the curriculum in taught sessions, such as across the 7 areas of learning in the early years foundation stage, and how to teach the early years foundation stage. Many felt that their curriculum was too reliant on the foundation subjects before receiving any training in them. To mitigate this, some course leaders have provided online resources and training in the foundation subjects, and some have made it mandatory for trainees to subject, to other course, placement visits, and for trainees to be trained in the foundation subjects before they start teaching them. However, this training is sometimes not sufficient for trainees to teach the foundation subjects, and it is not sufficient opportunities to practice in the classroom.

Secondary

In secondary training, many partnerships consider what subject knowledge trainees need in order to teach their subject. They ensure there is a plan for trainees to build corresponding sufficient knowledge across the year.

However, some trainees only receive a small amount of centre-based training in subjects, and some trainees have had to teach subjects they have not been trained in, in particular subject, and are not taught. Therefore depends many on placements in their school placement and how strong the ITE curriculum for the subject is within that school. Some trainees felt that they had had to teach subjects they had not been trained to teach in subject lessons to cover and teach ITE curriculum content. Other trainees consider a coherently sequenced subject curriculum and an understanding of the curriculum and how it is taught.

This means that new trainees need to know and know enough about what curriculum content should be taught in their subject for each key stage, and how the content could be taught to pupils in each key stage. Some trainees felt that they had had to teach in ways that were COVID-19, but it was the trainees' responsibility to be aware of the wider variability of school expectations during COVID-19. Placing so much emphasis on trainees to be aware of the wider variability of school expectations during COVID-19 when placements are of example, they, many learning about teaching and learning in their subject.

In some partnerships, generic teaching principles were not sufficiently integrated with what trainees were learning about their subject's content. For example, trainees spoke about how they had been taught about assessment in general, but not how to do it in their particular subject.

Further education

Some FE ITE partnerships courses began with an intensive block of teaching over the first

few weeks, intended to provide trainees with core teaching strategies.

Some partnerships find it challenging to deliver subject-related content at the centre, as trainees are learning to teach a wide range of different subjects (often each one is learning to teach a different subject). This means that centre-based training usually focuses on general pedagogy and teaching English and mathematics. Partnerships are giving particular attention to English and mathematics in recognition that pupils are likely to have fallen behind in these subjects due to COVID-19.

There is therefore an emphasis on trainees maintaining and developing subject-specific knowledge and skills while on placement. This makes the role of placement mentors critical in developing subject knowledge. Some trainees had good support and direction in their subject from mentors, but others had very little contact with them. Some had their emails ignored and queries left unanswered by their mentors and felt unsupported in both the subject and more generally.

Purposefully integrated

This section explores how the ITE curriculum in centre-based training is integrated with that taught on placements, including the crucial role of the mentor in this process.

Integration between the centre and placements

Many partnerships appear to be delivering an ITE curriculum that is coherent across centre-based and placement-based training.

Some partnerships co-produce their ITE curriculum with a sample of mentors from placement providers. However, a number of partnerships do not work closely enough with placement providers when developing their ITE curriculum. Not only is it likely that the ITE curriculum plan will be poorer as a result, but mentors and subject leads in these partnerships are less likely to teach trainees content relevant to their course or in the right sequence.

Despite this, most partnerships share their planned ITE curriculum with placement providers so that they know which aspects of general pedagogy, or the subject, trainees should learn at any given time. A small minority do not do this, and it is highly unlikely that mentors and subject leads will be able to teach or support trainees sufficiently well in these partnerships.

Overall, communication within partnerships has improved in recent years, and particularly over the last year, largely because they have introduced online platforms. In many partnerships there are now regular, focused discussions between mentors, trainees and professional tutors on how to apply the explicitly taught elements of the curriculum to teaching.

The transfer to virtual learning environments and electronic portfolios and portals has been a major force in ensuring synergy and integration across the curriculum. In many partnerships, mentors and subject leads in placement providers are now more easily able to access curriculum content. They report that this has strengthened their own teaching and subject knowledge.

The role of mentors

The role of mentors is critical for effective integration between partnerships and their placement providers. Many trainees mentioned the high level of support for emotional and mental well-being provided by mentors.

Most mentors appeared to know and understand the partnership's ITE curriculum and how the placement helps trainees progress through it. However, some mentors rely on the trainee to let them know what they have already learned and what they would like to work on. We do not know whether this is because the partnership had not shared the course content (which, as discussed above, does happen) or because the mentor had not sought this information.

Some partnerships described an established quality assurance process, whereby they reviewed the work of mentors and tutors through regular sampling. In a minority of partnerships, it was unclear how mentors' feedback was monitored. This meant that they did not know whether the mentors' assessments were accurate and reliable. These partnerships were relying on strong relationships with partnership schools and belief in the robustness of the mentors' training.

Some mentors and trainees had no knowledge of the CCF and very few were familiar with the concepts within it. This appeared to demonstrate a lack of exposure to the CCF from the partnership leaders.

Informed by up-to-date and pertinent research

Some partnerships use up-to-date and/or pertinent research to inform their ITE curriculum choices. Those that do strongly emphasise the way pupils learn from the start of their programme, basing this on research literature that is well designed and up to date. This introduces trainees to general concepts from cognitive science, such as cognitive load theory, metacognition and retrieval practice. In these partnerships, research material is taught at the start of the programme and is sometimes, though not always, drawn on in subject-specific research and teaching content later in the course.

Some, but not all, partnerships can demonstrate that trainees learn about up-to-date, pertinent research. For example, some require trainees to read research papers before and after centre-based training. Some send weekly emails covering articles from academic literature, including relevant and rigorous research. Others present extensive reading lists, although it is not always clear which sources are the most relevant and pertinent to the subject or phase, how they relate to the wider ITE curriculum or whether the lists are used by trainees.

Some trainees were able to discuss how they related what they learned from academia to their teaching practice. For example, one mathematics trainee said Haylock's research had informed their understanding of the importance of addressing misconceptions in the subject. A history trainee spoke about reading Jones' work on retrieval practice, which influenced how she addressed issues of functional dysfluency in pupils' chronological knowledge. Others were able to discuss elements of Rosenshine's principles such as modelling and providing new information in small steps to avoid cognitive overload. They were able to reflect on how this had influenced their practice in the classroom.

A small number of partnerships have an ITE curriculum where there is limited emphasis on a range of research or education theory. Theories that had been taught were used more as a teachers' toolkit and were not taught in depth or detail.

Some ITE curriculums are underpinned by outdated or discredited theories of education. One trainee related some of her teaching strategies to theories of learning that have been discredited by recent research. This was fed back to partnership leaders, who were unaware of the research on curriculum quality in their subject.

Conclusions

This report highlights the challenges caused by COVID-19 that ITE partnerships and their trainees have overcome during the last year. Over this period, partnerships have been particularly supportive of trainees' emotional resilience. The move to teaching and learning remotely has given trainees opportunities think differently about their practice.

However, there remains more for the ITE sector to improve, particularly in relation to partnerships' curriculum development. Many partnerships need to develop a more ambitious curriculum that is better designed around subject and phase, more integrated across the partnership, and more informed by up-to-date and pertinent research.

Trainees have had a very different ITE experience over the last academic year. Despite the best efforts of many partnerships, too few have been able to have the full, rounded education that they would normally. In primary, too few have been able to teach SSP, and more generally trainees have not had the opportunity to develop classroom management skills. They will likely require some additional support next year and possibly further into the future.

Annex – the sample

The sample of 75 partnerships for this study was broadly representative, across key indicators, of the whole population of 256 ITE partnerships.

Partnership type

	SCITT	HEI	ITE in FE	Total
Sample	49	24	2	75
National	175	70	10	256

Trainee numbers enrolled at partnership

	<=41	42-72	73-210	211+	Total
Sample	21	15	20	19	75
National	67	62	64	63	256

Age phase covered across partnerships

	Early years	Primary	Secondary	FE	Combined*	Total**
Sample	4	34	26	8	5	**77**
National	26	151	147	38	59	**421**

* These are the numbers of combined partnerships that we visited where we collected evidence about both phases. Partnerships where we only collected evidence about one phase have been counted under the relevant phase.

** There were 7 visits where we went to more than one phase. Five are classified as combined primary/secondary and a further 2 are double counted under different phases.

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1. See: 'Teachers' standards', Department for Education, July 2011.
2. This marks a 20% increase from last year; 'Initial teacher training census'. Explore education statistics, December 2020.
3. This is set out by the Department for Education's 'Initial teacher training (ITT): core content framework', which was a requirement from September 2020, and is described later in the report.
4. The CCF only applies to primary and secondary phases.
5. See UCAS teacher training statistical releases.
6. Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook, Ofsted, June 2020, page 38.

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