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Official Statistics

Methodology and quality report: initial teacher education inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2021

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Introduction

This document contains methodology and quality information relevant to our annual release of initial teacher education (ITE) inspections and outcomes data.

This official statistics release reports on the outcomes of ITE inspections that were completed within the 2020 to 2021 academic year. This release also includes the most recent inspection outcomes of all open age phases that have been inspected, as at the end of that period.

This report includes outcomes for:

- all providers of programmes leading to qualified teacher status for maintained schools and academies in England
- all providers of programmes of further education teacher training validated by higher education institutions in England
- all providers of programmes leading to early years teacher status in England

We inspect ITE providers in accordance with section 18B of the Education Act 1994 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006. Several sections of the Act relate to the inspection of ITE. The ITE inspection handbook contains more information.

The inspection framework was most recently revised on 1 September 2020. Under this framework, each provider can offer training for up to 4 different age ranges. These are called age phases. They cover:

- early years
- primary
- secondary
- further education

Age phases are judged on a 4-point scale as:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- inadequate

If a provider has been inspected more than once, not all age phases may have been inspected each time. Statistics on most recent inspection judgements are based on the most recent judgement of each age phase, not the most recent judgement of each provider.

From September 2020, we moved to a 1-stage inspection model, rather than the previous 2-stage model.

From June 2014 to September 2020, an age phase that had been judged as requires improvement or inadequate would have a 1-stage follow-up inspection in the summer term of the same academic year as its 2-stage inspection. If we did not see improvement at the second inspection of primary or secondary provision, the provider was usually subject to the withdrawal of its accreditation by the Department for Education (DfE). A similar condition does not exist for inspection of further education providers since they are not accredited by the DfE.

Quality

This section is broken down by the 5 dimensions of statistical output quality in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics:

- relevance
- coherence and comparability
- accuracy and reliability

- timeliness and punctuality
- accessibility and clarity

There is also additional information on meeting user needs.

Relevance

Information in this release has 5 distinct purposes:

- it gives trainees and prospective trainees an expert and independent assessment of how well an age phase is performing and the quality of teacher training offered
- it allows users to track movement in the sector and monitor the quality of provision available at a national and local level
- it gives an accurate picture of the provision, which influences policy decisions and helps to ensure that provision is available where it is most needed
- it helps identify good practice and target areas of weak performance, which informs policy development within the DfE to address issues and implement strategies to mitigate them
- within Ofsted, it contributes to inspection profiles, which inform inspection framework development and underpin policies to improve standards

Inspection acts in several ways to drive and support improvement in the ITE sector. It:

- raises expectations by setting the standards of performance and effectiveness expected of providers
- provides challenge and the impetus to act where improvement is needed
- clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses
- recommends specific priorities for improvement for providers and, where appropriate, checks on and promotes subsequent progress
- promotes rigour in the way that providers evaluate their own performance, thereby enhancing their capacity to improve
- monitors the progress and performance of providers that are not yet good, providing challenge and support to the senior leaders and managers who are responsible

Assessment of user needs and perceptions

We welcome feedback about our statistical releases. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please contact the Inspection Insight team.

Coherence and comparability

Ofsted assumed responsibility for inspection of ITE from the Teacher Training Agency in 2002.

We have reported on inspections and inspection outcomes as official statistics since 2012 (covering the 2011 to 2012 academic year).

There have been a number of framework changes since the first release of statistics and we have reflected these in the publications.

For inspections after September 2020, the current framework has 2 key judgement areas: 'The quality of education and training' and 'Leadership and management'. There is no longer an 'Outcomes for trainees' judgement.

When we have implemented changes, such as releasing a new framework, we have alerted users through updates in the main findings document. When framework changes have meant direct comparisons have not been possible, then breaks in time series have been clearly added to tables and charts and explained in the text. When we have implemented methodological changes to improve the output, we have added guidance to footnotes and the main findings document for easy access.

For the inspection outcomes aspect of this release and when statements are made about whether inspection outcomes have declined or improved, we are referring to the most recent relevant outcome and to overall effectiveness outcomes only.

When a provider offering only primary and secondary training has a small number of trainees, we may inspect both phases simultaneously and produce a combined judgement on the primary and secondary training. This is different from what happens in larger providers where we make judgements separately for primary and for secondary training. These inspections are marked as 'primary and secondary'.

Data View is a web-based tool that shows Ofsted inspection data in simple graphs that make the data quickly and easily accessible. Inspection outcomes data presented in the official statistics release will not match the data shown in Data View for 2 reasons:

- Data View does not currently include the provision type 'primary and secondary', where one set of judgements applies to both primary and secondary age phases; these age phases are included within both primary and secondary provision types and are 'double counted' and, as a result, aggregate figures will not exactly match those published in official statistics releases
- official statistics releases use more detailed provision-type breakdowns than Data View; the provider type 'ITE in further education' is included within 'higher education institution' in Data View

Accuracy and reliability

We extract inspections outcome data from our administrative systems. Errors in recording inspection outcomes may affect the quality of source data. We have put in place appropriate systems to minimise the risk of reporting error.

The lead inspector enters inspection outcomes onto our administration systems. Any errors are likely to be identified at this stage because inspection reports undergo a quality assurance process. In addition, we check a sample of the entries in our administrative system to ensure that these match their inspection reports. We focus on checking those entries where the risk of error is highest. An example of this is if the quality assurance process led to changes to the inspection outcome.

There remains a small chance that some outcomes are entered incorrectly onto our systems.

Technical production

Technical production of the official statistics publication may also result in manual errors. We carry out a rigorous data quality assurance procedure with the aim of minimising the risk of reporting error. If an error is discovered within the document, we place a note on the website and upload a corrected version of the document as soon as possible.

You can find more information online on the issues of using administrative data.

Changes to providers

A provider may list itself as closed but still provide training to individuals part way through the course. For data and statistics purposes, these providers are considered closed and are excluded from figures, even though a small number of trainees may still be receiving training.

From 1 September 2013, the DfE no longer allocates places to employment-based routes (EBR) into ITE. Therefore, we no longer inspect EBR providers separately. Some EBR providers have become school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) providers and others continue to offer the salaried Schools Direct programme as an employment route.

Timeliness and punctuality

We currently publish data once a year and include details of inspections that have taken place and been published in the relevant period.

We publish data at 9:30am on the date pre-announced in the publication schedule.

You can also find information on any delay in publication on the publication schedule.

The average production time for this release is approximately 6 weeks. This time includes obtaining and cleaning the data, drafting findings, quality assuring all outputs and uploading information onto GOV.UK.

We announce publications on our social media channels. We give pre-release access in accordance with the Pre-release to Official Statistics Order (2008).

Accessibility and clarity

We publish our releases in an accessible format on GOV.UK. The information is publicly available and there are no restrictions on access to the published data. Each release includes outcomes from inspections that have subsequently been published and accurate numbers of age phases registered with Ofsted. The data is aimed at keeping users informed of progress under the inspection framework and of changes in the sector.

Supporting underlying data in an accessible format accompanies each release. This data consists of provider-level information.

Performance, cost and respondent burden

There is no respondent burden in relation to this statistics release because data is a by-product of Ofsted's inspection process. The only cost involved is the internal resource involved in collating the release.

Confidentiality, transparency and security

When we hold sensitive or personal data, the disclosure control processes we have in place ensure that this data is not published.

All data releases follow our confidentiality and revisions policies.

Methodology

Official statistics only include information on published inspection reports. We choose the cut-off date for publication to allow all inspections that took place within the reporting period to be published. We specify the cut-off date in the official statistics publication.

We take the information on providers, including postcode, regional information and the status of which age phases are active at each provider, from the annual provider returns. This information may be subject to change.

We do not include judgements for EBR providers in the most recent inspection figures. This means that employment-based initial teacher training (EBITT) providers that converted to SCITTs are not included in this data unless they have been re-inspected after conversion. However, we do include EBITT providers that offer training in other age phases. Further information on inspections of EBR providers can be found in ITE official statistics from previous years.

Glossary

Definitions of terms are within the [statistical glossary](#).

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Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

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