

Sacred Heart Newcastle SCITT

Address: Sacred Heart High School, Fenham Hall Drive Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne, England, NE4 9YH

Unique reference number (URN): 1222539

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

1. Primary

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

 **Compliance, including safeguarding: standards met**

Exceptional 

Inclusion

Exceptional 

Leaders offer notably high levels of support and care to its trainees. The distinctive mantra of 'no surprises' is widely understood well by stakeholders. This facilitates a culture in which trainees are completely at ease to disclose additional needs and barriers, meaning they receive timely and highly effective support that enables them to thrive. From the outset through to the point of employment, the importance of openness and transparency is emphasised. This facilitates success and longevity in the profession. For example, when applying for jobs, trainees receive support to disclose their needs and current adaptations to potential employers. This mitigates against any issues developing once the trainee enters the workplace.

Robust systems exist through which additional needs and barriers are swiftly identified. This enables leaders to put highly effective support in place, which often has a transformational impact on trainees' ability to complete the programme successfully. Trainees are unanimously positive in their view of the provider and the care and support they receive.

Leaders give very high levels of consideration to trainees' personal preferences regarding the sharing of information. The recently introduced passport system is having a positive impact on trainee support. This provides a structure for conversations about needs. It also helps trainees to understand what constitutes a reasonable adjustment or adaptation in the teaching profession.

Professional behaviours, personal development and wellbeing

Exceptional ●

From the outset, leaders are explicit about the professional behaviours they expect from trainees. The distinctive recruitment to specific placement process supports trainees to understand and enact these expectations. Trainees receive highly effective support to develop, and be able to reflect on, their own professional identity. They demonstrate a very strong commitment to learning, actively seeking opportunities that will help them to shape and develop their practice.

Leaders have implemented particularly effective systems to address the rare issues with trainees' attendance. These often-bespoke systems support trainees to understand not only the impact of their absence on their own completion of the programme, but also the implications of their absence on pupils and colleagues.

Trainees have access to an extensive range of pastoral support. This includes support for their mental health and wellbeing. Trainees greatly appreciate this support. Leaders strike a highly effective balance between supporting trainees while educating them about what might reasonably be expected in the workplace. Trainees accept that their workload may be high, but can cite strategies they have learned to help them to manage this effectively.

Leaders create a highly respectful and professional culture within the organisation. They implement clear systems for dealing with incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination. However, such incidents are very rare.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Leaders' careful consideration of curriculum design and sequencing prepares trainees very well for the workplace. Almost all trainees complete both the programme and the postgraduate certificate in education successfully. Many trainees secure a teaching post before the end of the programme.

Trainees have a comprehensive understanding of the realities of the profession. They are confident and resilient and demonstrate an eagerness to apply their learning in practice.

Trainees view teaching as a long-term career as a result of the highly effective preparation that they receive.

Trainees receive a solid foundation in safeguarding, behaviour management and adaptive teaching. They feel well prepared to apply their learning in practice and do so effectively, drawing on the strategies and techniques they have learned to provide tailored support for pupils.

Leaders support trainees to become highly reflective practitioners. Through the assessment system, trainees know precisely where their strengths and weaknesses lie. They know who to seek help from when they find something difficult.

Curriculum, teaching and training

Strong standard 

Through regular reviews, leaders ensure that their ambitious curriculum is informed by high-quality research and meets statutory requirements. Leaders consider the sequencing of the curriculum very carefully so that it has maximum impact on trainees' classroom practice. Elements of the curriculum are regularly revisited throughout the year to ensure trainees remember more of what they learn.

There is very purposeful integration between centre-based training, intensive training and practice (ITAP) and trainees' school experience. For example, behaviour management is woven through all aspects of the programme, with trainees undertaking a learning module on this in the summer before they even join the course. Trainees learn what behaviour management within the context of specific subjects looks like. This careful approach leads to trainees developing a deep and thorough understanding of behaviour management. There is a very similar approach to developing trainees' understanding of how to support pupils who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. In this instance, trainees complete specific tasks to develop their knowledge of adaptive teaching strategies. Trainees feel well prepared to meet these pupils' needs.

Leaders draw on 'experts' to deliver various aspects of the curriculum. Over the course of the programme, trainees have multiple opportunities to observe expert practice. This helps them to develop their own teaching 'persona'. Trainees benefit from high-quality mentoring. Mentors and teacher educators know the curriculum well as a result of comprehensive, multi-layered training. They use the information from subject knowledge audits effectively in order to support trainees to fill any gaps in knowledge that they may have. Primary trainees learn to understand the importance of the development of foundational knowledge in the early years, as well as spending time in a secondary school to develop knowledge of key stage 3. The development of trainees' understanding of phonics is well considered.

Leaders have implemented a robust system for assessment that is well understood and applied consistently. Trainees know exactly where they are on the assessment pathway. They know that if their trajectory deviates from that which is expected, they will receive timely and effective support to help them catch up.

The trainee induction process and refresher training on safeguarding enables trainees to understand well their role in keeping pupils safe. Trainees confidently describe occasions where they have applied their learning from safeguarding training in practice.

Leadership

Strong standard 

Leaders, including those responsible for overseeing the provision, have a clear and ambitious vision that has pupils in schools at its heart. This vision is shared by wider stakeholders and is fundamental to the curriculum and trainees' overall experience. The provider's distinctive approach to recruitment means that trainees are recruited to the teaching profession rather than simply a training programme. There is an unwavering commitment to ensuring that only the very best candidates should be in the classroom.

Frequent opportunities to gather stakeholder feedback help leaders to have a clear oversight of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. The programme is constantly evolving, responding to both local and national needs and issues. For example, leaders are increasing the coverage of artificial intelligence in the initial teacher education curriculum.

Leaders forge positive relationships with external partners. This enhances trainees' experience of the curriculum and affords them opportunities to learn from specialists in areas such as speech and language.

Leaders comprehensively check that their statutory duties are met. They ensure the programme complies with the Department for Education's mandatory criteria. Trainees undergo a rigorous recruitment process that involves checks on their suitability to work with children and young people. Several leaders have completed safer recruitment training and are trained designated safeguarding leads.

Leaders create a highly positive culture in which to work. Consequently, incidents of bullying and harassment among staff are very rare. Staff and trainees know how to report this should it happen. There is a wide range of opportunities for staff to undertake professional development.

Next steps

Leaders, including those with oversight of the provision, should extend their exceptional work in the areas of inclusion and professional behaviours, personal development and wellbeing to other areas so that it has the same transformational impact on trainees.

2. Secondary

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Compliance, including safeguarding: standards met

Exceptional

Inclusion

Exceptional 

Leaders and staff place great emphasis on ensuring that trainees are remarkably well supported, ensuring that barriers to learning or wellbeing are addressed quickly and effectively. The provider's ethos, widely understood across the partnership, promotes openness and trust. As a result, secondary trainees feel confident that any additional needs or personal circumstances which may affect their training can be shared with leaders. This allows leaders to provide prompt, highly effective support, enabling trainees to fully engage with the programme and gain employment afterwards.

From the beginning of the course through to securing employment, leaders emphasise transparency and proactive communication. Trainees are supported to discuss their needs and any adjustments that may be required when applying for teaching posts. This careful preparation helps trainees transition smoothly into employment and reduces the likelihood of difficulties arising once they enter the teaching profession.

Leaders have established very well-structured systems for identifying additional needs early. Through these processes, trainees who face barriers receive targeted support and benefit from highly effective adjustments to continue making rapid progress through the programme. Trainees consistently express very positive views about the care and the support they receive.

Leaders and staff across the partnership are highly attentive to trainees' preferences regarding the sharing of our personal information. The recently introduced passport system is further strengthening this work. It provides a clear framework for discussing support needs and helps trainees understand the types of reasonable adjustments available in schools and other workplace settings.

Leaders ensure that trainees acquire and exhibit first-rate professional behaviours. From the outset of the course, a keen focus is placed on trainees' ability to engage positively with staff and pupils. This careful consideration guarantees that trainees are not only prepared to grow into effective educators but also demonstrate the integrity and professionalism needed to inspire and lead in the classroom.

Trainees fully engage in their learning and enjoy the different topics that they cover. Leaders have embraced the motivation trainees have to teach and have ignited a passion for professional curiosity. As a result, trainees develop a strong sense of professional accountability and fully participate in sessions with other trainees.

Trainees benefit from a comprehensive pastoral support offer. This includes support for mental health and wellbeing, alongside meaningful practical guidance when challenges arise. Trainees speak very highly of the precise care and encouragement they receive. Many trainees recognise that this support has been instrumental in helping them complete the programme. The commitment of leaders to valuing all trainees is evident in the absence of bullying and harassment, creating a safe and supportive learning environment. Leaders have established suitable systems and processes to promptly support the trainees in the event that any incidents of bullying or discrimination arise.

Leaders ensure that trainees develop a realistic understanding of professional expectations in the workplace. Training helps trainees understand the types of reasonable adjustments that may be available and the responsibilities that accompany them. Trainees are also supported particularly well when applying for employment, so that they can identify schools and settings well placed to meet their needs. This balanced approach enables trainees to enter the profession with confidence and a clear understanding of professional practice.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Trainees have a rich, deep knowledge of relevant educational theories and their specialist subjects. As a result, trainees achieve very strong outcomes. The vast majority successfully complete both the training programme and the postgraduate certificate in education, with only a very small number choosing to leave for good reason before completion. Many trainees secure teaching positions before the programme finishes.

Trainees are very well prepared for the realities of teaching in secondary schools. Early-career teachers who have recently left the provider praise the extensive knowledge they gained, saying it has perfectly prepared them for their first teaching job. This is in part due to how the courses develop a clear understanding of the demands of the profession and demonstrate growing confidence and resilience, which supports them in the long term.

Trainees effectively apply their learning in areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and adaptive teaching when working in their placement schools. Their

approach to classroom practice is enthusiastic and shows a strong commitment to improving their teaching.

Leaders ensure that trainees develop as reflective practitioners. The provider's assessment process helps the trainees to identify their own strengths and areas for development. As a result, trainees are very clear about how to improve their own practice and are also well equipped to be self-improvers.

Curriculum, teaching and training

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a carefully structured and ambitious initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum that meets statutory expectations and is robustly informed by relevant research and professional guidance. The curriculum is thoughtfully sequenced so that trainees steadily develop the knowledge and skills required to teach their specialist subject in secondary schools.

Training is very well integrated across the centre-based sessions, intensive training and practice (ITAP), University study and trainee school placements. Leaders ensure that key themes run throughout the programme so that the trainees revisit and deepen their understanding over time. For example, behaviour management is introduced early and further explored through subject-specific content links. This ensures that trainees understand how behaviour expectations are applied across different subjects.

Secondary trainees benefit from subject-specific training delivered by experienced teacher educators and specialists in their fields. These sessions ensure that trainees develop secure subject and pedagogical knowledge, including how to present complex subject content clearly and address common misconceptions. This prepares trainees well to teach their subjects effectively.

The curriculum also develops trainees' understanding of how to support pupils who may face barriers to their learning. Through structured activities and guided practice, trainees quickly learn to apply a range of highly effective adaptive teaching strategies in their subject areas, enabling pupils with diverse needs to access the curriculum.

Teacher educators have a secure understanding of the ITE curriculum. Their expertise enables them to provide coherent guidance that links centre-based learning with classroom practice. Mentoring is personalised and highly effective. Mentors use information from subject knowledge audits to identify areas where trainees need additional support and help them to strengthen their subject knowledge when necessary. Trainees rightly feel that the support received from mentors enables them to improve and make progress.

Assessment processes are well organised and clearly understood by trainees. Leaders track trainees' progress carefully so that any trainee who falls behind expected milestones receives timely guidance and support to help them improve.

Safeguarding is an integral part of the ITE curriculum. Induction and ongoing training ensure that trainees understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. As a result, trainees are

confident in recognising potential concerns and know how to respond appropriately in their school placements.

Leadership

Strong standard 

Leaders, including those with oversight of the programme, articulate a clear and ambitious vision for the secondary phase, placing pupils' education and wellbeing at the heart of the trainees' development. They are highly committed to preparing trainees to become very effective secondary school teachers. The shared vision is well understood by partners and stakeholders and underpins the design of the curriculum and the overall quality of trainees' experiences.

Leaders actively seek feedback from trainees, schools and other partners, using this information to refine and strengthen the programme so that it continues to respond to the emerging needs and developments in the sector.

Leaders work closely with a wide range of external partners. These partnerships enrich the training that secondary trainees receive and provide opportunities to learn from specialists, including experts in speech and language development and subject specialisms.

Leaders ensure that statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. The programme meets Department for Education requirements. Recruitment processes are thorough and include appropriate checks to ensure that trainees are suitable to work with children and young people. Several leaders hold designated safeguarding responsibilities and have completed appropriate training to support this work.

A strong culture of professional respect characterises the partnership. Staff are positive and supportive, fostering an environment where trainees thrive. Leaders model professionalism and create a culture where discussion and understanding are valued. Leaders create a highly positive culture in which to work. Consequently, incidents of bullying and harassment among staff are very rare.

Leaders also prioritise the professional development and learning for teacher educators who deliver the programme. There is a range of opportunities for professional development, including national qualifications linked to teacher education, leadership and access to wider professional learning resources. This investment in staff expertise strengthens the quality of training that secondary trainees receive.

Next steps

Leaders, including those with oversight of the provision, should extend their exceptional work in the areas of inclusion and professional behaviours, personal development and wellbeing to other areas so that it has the same transformational impact on trainees.

What it's like to be a trainee at this provider

Trainees benefit from studying with a provider that gives very high levels of consideration to any additional needs or barriers they may have. Leaders have created a highly inclusive culture. There is a range of opportunities for trainees to disclose if they need additional help before they join the programme, including through the application form, induction survey or individual interview. The provider's distinctive mantra of 'no surprises' supports trainees to feel comfortable with sharing personal information from the start. Trainees understand the importance of this in ensuring their success and longevity in teaching. There is a wealth of personalised, bespoke support available to trainees. This includes full access to the student services provided at Newcastle University. Trainees make extensive use of this support.

Trainees know that the provider's expectations are high and strive to meet these. Almost all trainees secure employment in the profession before completing the course. Trainees are unwaveringly positive in their views of the programme, commenting particularly on the pastoral and academic support they receive to help them succeed.

Trainees have a level of autonomy over the choice of school they are placed in, selecting this at the point of application. Their chosen school participates in the recruitment process, which means, from the outset, trainees are recruited to the profession, rather than a training course. This helps to prepare them for the demands of the profession from the very beginning.

The provider's robust recruitment process, combined with comprehensive safeguarding training for trainees, helps to ensure that the pupils and learners that the trainees teach are kept safe. Trainees can provide examples of where they have raised concerns about pupils with school staff because of the training they have had.

About this inspection

All primary and secondary trainees undertake a postgraduate route.

The provider does not use any training partners for the delivery of their initial teacher education.

The primary route prepares trainees to teach pupils aged 5 to 11.

The secondary route mostly prepares trainees to teach pupils aged 11 to 16. However, trainees preparing to teach psychology, health and social care and business studies complete teaching placements in the 14 to 19 age range.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the SCITT director, primary and secondary phase leads and the initial teacher training lead during the inspection. They also spoke with those responsible for governance.

Overall lead inspector:
Philippa Kermotschuk, His Majesty's Inspector

Secondary phase lead inspector:
Richard Jones, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Adrian Fearn, Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Beaumont, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 March 2026

Number of partners and trainees

Education phase	Number of training partners / partner colleges	Number of trainees
Primary	0	8
Secondary	0	39

Our grades explained

- Exceptional**  Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.
- Strong standard**  The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.
- Expected standard** 

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of training. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of training.

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