



The National Association of
School-Based Teacher Trainers

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NASBTT publishes response to ITE inspection framework consultation

NASBTT has responded to the Department for Education's 'Initial Teacher Education inspection framework and handbook 2020: inspecting the quality of teacher education' consultation.

The objective of the consultation, which closes on 3rd April, is to seek views on changes to the ITE framework from September 2020, including to:

- Introduce two key judgement areas only: the new 'quality of education and training' judgement will replace the current 'outcomes for trainees' and 'quality of training across the partnership' judgements.
- Apply a new methodology for gathering evidence during an inspection a one-stage model of inspection.
- Introduce a short and longer telephone call with ITE partnership representatives.
- Hold spring and summer term inspections only.

Whilst NASBTT is broadly in agreement with these proposals, but in stressing a clear preference for summer term inspections, Executive Director Emma Hollis has highlighted five key recommendations for government's consideration:

1. Timescale

"We recommend that Ofsted recognises the tight timescale to which providers are being asked to respond to the proposed changes, which are not insignificant. With final publication currently expected in the summer term of 2020, there is less than a term available for providers to adjust their programmes, which will be expected to be 'up and running' from September ready for the first inspections in spring 2021. This timescale has, of course, been made even more challenging by the impact of the coronavirus on school closures, meaning that many partnerships may be restricted from being able to adequately plan for a new inspection framework whilst their energies are directed towards supporting schools and trainees through uncharted waters. Until we can more definitively say what the long-term impact on schools might be, we do not necessarily propose that the timescales are adjusted (although this should be kept under review if closures continue for significant periods of time) but note the following paragraph from the EIF, and recommend that a version of this is incorporated into this inspection framework to allay fears and explicitly recognise the time that will need to be taken for partnerships to make changes which are meaningful, lasting and effective: *Inspectors will bear in mind that developing and embedding an effective curriculum takes time, and that leaders may only be partway through the process of adopting or redeveloping a curriculum. If leaders have an accurate evaluative understanding of current curriculum practice in their school and have identified appropriate next steps to improve curriculum quality and develop curriculum expertise across the school, inspectors will evaluate 'intent' favourably when reaching the holistic quality of education judgement (paragraph 180).*"

2. Trainee assessment

“We are concerned by a lack of clarity in the framework regarding trainee assessment and would urge Ofsted to review and amend the references made to the assessment of trainees in order to alleviate the strong possibility of widespread confusion across the sector. At present there are conflicting messages within the framework, which at paragraph 45 states that Ofsted will not specify *the content of, or approach to, trainee assessments* but at paragraph 117 states *inspectors may check that such data avoids premature use of generic outcome descriptors, such as the teachers’ standards*, and at paragraph 161 states that: *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. Assessment should also be used to help trainees embed knowledge and use it fluently, and assist trainers/mentors in refining a robust ITE curriculum. Therefore, partnerships should avoid the premature use of summative assessments, for example generic outcome descriptors such as the teachers’ standards*; and in the inadequate category includes the statement: *the ITT core content framework is, incorrectly, being consistently used as an assessment framework*. It is NASBTT’s view that these paragraphs are, to a large degree, specifying ‘the content of, and approach to, trainee assessments’. Ofsted must either refrain from any specification at all or must provide clarity as to what can be used in the trainee assessment process.”

3. Mentoring

“The inspection framework, quite rightly, recognises the importance of high-quality mentoring to support in-school training and development: *We also know that mentoring is vital in high-quality teacher education. For this reason, our inspectors will want to see that the approaches to mentoring align with the partnership’s ITE curriculum. This is key in ensuring that the substance of a trainee’s education is embedded in their practical learning through their placements in nurseries, schools and colleges*. NASBTT wholeheartedly agrees with these sentiments but urges inspection teams to recognise that ITT providers have no right of access to mentors within their school partnerships and, in many cases, genuine and concerted efforts to provide high-quality training to mentors are frustrated by lack of engagement with training, often caused by capacity and funding issues within schools. NASBTT strongly suggested that schools were encouraged to engage with ITT programmes by including guidance for schools within the Education Inspection Framework, but these suggestions were not adopted. As there is no lever with which providers can guarantee engagement with mentor training programmes, Ofsted should include specific guidance for inspectors which recognises the intent to provide high-quality training, whilst acknowledging that a favourable inspection outcome must not hinge on mentor engagement and/or adoption of training, over which providers have little or no control.”

4. Subject-specific leads

“Ofsted’s current inspection model appears to be based around a ‘faculty’ style approach which does not suit all sizes and contexts of partnership. Primary provision in particular, whilst offering a good breadth of subject-specific experiences for trainees, may not be able to identify a ‘subject lead’ for every National Curriculum subject as subject knowledge acquisition is often overseen by the general programme lead. Smaller secondary providers may also adopt a variety of models to ensure that sufficient quality of experiences are offered to their trainees, without necessarily employing a named and separately identifiable ‘lead’ for every subject offered. NASBTT recommends that Ofsted explores the quality of trainee subject-specific training and experience without presupposing that the only way to achieve good outcomes is through a faculty-style approach.”

5. Exceptional v Outstanding

“Paragraph 147 states that: *Our aim in making this change is that a partnership should only be judged outstanding in a particular area if it is performing exceptionally. This exceptional*

performance should be consistent and secure across all judgement areas in order to be judged outstanding overall. We are unclear as to the difference(s) between the terms 'exceptional' and 'outstanding' and recommend that further clarification is made to ensure consistent application of expectations."

-ENDS-

NASBTT is a registered charity committed to promoting high-quality schools-led programmes of training, education and professional development of teachers.

NASBTT represents the interests of schools-led teacher training provision in relation to the development and implementation of national policy developments. Our members include SCITT providers, School Direct Lead Schools, Teaching Schools, HEIs as well as a range of other organisations involved in the education and professional development of teachers. We have over 200 members representing more than 10,000 individual trainees.

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