

Teach First

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address

Teach First
4 More London Riverside
London
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Unique reference number

70270

Inspection number

365969

Inspection dates

6–15 June 2011

Lead inspector

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist inspectors in accordance with the *Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008–11)*.
2. The inspection draws upon evidence from all aspects of the provision to make judgements against all parts of the inspection evaluation schedule in the framework. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the training in supporting high-quality outcomes for participants and the capacity of the partnership to bring about further improvements. A summary of the grades awarded is included at the end of this report.

Key to inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Explanation of terms used in this report

Attainment is defined as the standard reached by a trainee at the end of their training.

Progress is judged in terms of how well a trainee has developed professionally from their starting point to the standard reached at the time of the inspection or at a suitable review point.

Achievement is judged in terms of the progress made and the standard reached by a trainee at the time of the inspection or at a recent assessment review point.

The provider

3. The Teach First Initial Teacher Training programme is provided by the National Initial Teacher Training Partnership (NITTP) formed in September 2009. The NITTP is coordinated by Teach First in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University, The University of Warwick, the Institute of Education (University of London) and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. The training is delivered in regions by 13 universities acting as accredited Regional Training Providers. The inspection was undertaken in the four Teach First regions operating in 2010/11: London; the East and West Midlands; the North West; and Yorkshire and The Humber. Each region was graded separately.
4. The training is through an employment-based route. Trainees on the Teach First programme are known as participants. Those accepted onto the programme commit themselves to working for two years in a school in challenging circumstances. The first 13 months of the programme enables participants to gain qualified teacher status (QTS). Participants undertake a

period of national selection and attendance at a six-week summer institute before starting work in their allocated school. During this period of training, participants work as unqualified teachers teaching a slightly reduced timetable (equivalent to that typically taught by a newly qualified teacher) from the first week in the school.

5. Schools apply to be part of the programme; these schools are all in challenging circumstances to meet Teach First's aim of addressing educational disadvantage. To be accepted, they must meet at least one of two strict criteria: one based on the proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE passes including English and mathematics; the other based on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).
6. The training leads to qualified teacher status and a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) from one of the participating universities. The training prepares participants to teach across the 11–16 age range (for the award of QTS), although many also have experience of teaching students in the 16–18 age range. Nationally, training is provided in art and design, citizenship, design and technology, English, geography, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, religious education and science (biology, chemistry and physics), although not all subjects are available in all regions. Training in business studies covers the 14–19 age range. Teach First is also running a 7–11 age range pilot primary education programme, with a specialism in modern foreign languages, in the London region; this was not included in this inspection.
7. Following completion of the two years, participants who complete their two years in school and fulfil the requirements of the leadership development programme become Teach First Ambassadors. Around two thirds remain in teaching beyond the second year, with many continuing to work in schools in challenging circumstances.

A commentary on the national provision

8. Teach First is very successful in meeting its commitment to address educational disadvantage by placing high-quality graduates into schools in challenging circumstances, and, through this, to working closely with the schools to improve students' aspirations, experiences and achievement. Many participants are already having an impact in their schools, even in their first year, on the professional development of other staff as well as on their students. They are well on their way to becoming inspirational teachers and some already are.
9. The recruitment and selection of Teach First participants is undertaken nationally; the process is extremely rigorous. Participants with strong personal characteristics and who display the required Teach First competencies, including the intellectual capacity and resilience to cope well with the high expectations and demands of the Teach First programme, are recruited. As a result, highly qualified and exceptional participants, many of whom might not otherwise have considered teaching, are given the encouragement and opportunity to enter the profession. The overwhelming majority successfully complete the first year of the training and almost all of these complete the second year of the programme. Teach First recruits a diverse cohort with a high proportion nationally of participants from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. However, fewer participants from minority ethnic backgrounds are allocated to schools in the North West and to Yorkshire and The Humber than the other regions, partly as a result of the demand for subjects in each region. The success of the selection procedures is clearly evident in the exceptionally high retention and successful completion rates, and in participants' outstanding attainment in all regions. Participants are very carefully matched to schools. Schools that are selected for the programme are carefully evaluated to determine any specific support that might be required by the subject departments participants are placed in.
10. The high quality of the six-week summer institute, when participants spend three weeks in their region and the three 'national weeks', means that participants are extremely well prepared for teaching. A rigorous analysis of individual strengths and areas for development, including subject knowledge, and sharply targeted support enables participants to begin their full teaching commitments from the beginning of the school year. Their future development is then supported very effectively by a series of six nationally planned subject days and well-focused and well-timed assignments common to all regions, in addition to a wide range of other activities. Teach First offers a much higher than usual level of support for participants and is able to draw upon extensive high-quality resources matched precisely to individual needs. In addition to school-based subject and professional mentors, participants are also visited and observed frequently by Teach First university-based (from the Regional Training Providers) regional subject and, particularly, professional tutors. These tutors have a significant impact on participants' achievement. Participants are also attached to a Teach First leadership development officer whose focus in the first year is on the 'leadership of learning'; participants value this and the way it helps ensure their attention to the learning of the students they teach.

Additional and targeted support is frequently used to help participants with, for example, managing behaviour in the early stages of the programme. Subject work in the regions is overseen by national subject leaders working closely with the subject teams in each region to ensure consistency and to respond swiftly to developments in the subject. Throughout all activities, there is an intense concentration on meeting the particular needs of each participant to ensure their progress; this is supported well by the highly effective use of a reflective journal.

11. There are particularly strong features of the provision in all of the Teach First regions:
 - the commitment to meeting local and regional needs and addressing educational disadvantage by placing participants in schools in challenging circumstances and the impact they have on raising achievement in these schools
 - the extremely close monitoring of each participant's progress against very challenging expectations through frequent, high-quality support and the intense focus of all aspects of the provision on each participant's personal and professional development ensures that their achievement is outstanding
 - the highly effective integration of all aspects of the programme that enables participants to make outstanding progress against the high expectations
 - the impact of the high quality of review and self-evaluation, planning and taking actions, monitoring and evaluation on the continuous improvements in the outcomes for participants.
12. In all regions, the quality of the participants is exceptional: particularly their personal characteristics, professional attributes, self-motivation, critical reflection and their commitment to raising the aspirations and achievement of the students in their schools and addressing educational disadvantage. Their understanding of how to teach a diverse range of students, of the complexities of teaching students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of the wider role of the teacher is outstanding. They are highly skilled in promoting good behaviour through their teaching, and in managing poor behaviour when necessary. A notable strength is participants' understanding and use of strategies to develop early reading skills, including the use of systematic synthetic phonics, and their understanding of how low levels of literacy can be a barrier to learning and how to overcome this in their teaching.
13. The leadership and management of Teach First at the national level are very strong and provide a very secure framework and principles for the national and regional programmes. Together with close monitoring and excellent communications, this ensures high levels of consistency where required. However, there is sufficient flexibility for each region to work within its particular context and to make full use of the expertise in each of the participating universities. Developments in one region are fully trialled and

carefully monitored before being applied nationally. In this way, best practice is shared very effectively. Good examples of this are the excellent procedures for tracking the progress of participants and the effectiveness of the Teach First 'mentor recognition framework' in raising the quality of mentoring. Arrangements for the quality assurance of the assessment of participants across all of the regions are highly effective.

14. While the quality of the provision in each region, based on the quality of the outcomes for participants, is outstanding, there are some regional variations. Some differences reflect the nature of the provision and the schools in that region, although there is a slightly different balance of strengths and areas for development across the four regions; these are explained in each section of the report. The provision in London has been running for the longest, and many improvements and refinements to the Teach First model are clearly embedded in this region. Similarly, a number of key developments have been initiated in the North West region and the impact on improvements in the outcomes is clear. In the Midlands region, attainment had been lower than the national figure for several years. As a result of national support and developments in the region, outcomes, including attainment, have improved to be in line with the other regions and with the national picture. The provision in Yorkshire and The Humber is the most recently established, but is already showing clear strengths.
15. Each participant is employed as an unqualified teacher in their school for the first year of the Teach First programme. During the summer institute and this year, they are given some opportunities to spend time in other schools, including a primary school. While this is matched well to individual needs and aspirations, it does not always enable the participant to have enough contrasting teaching experience.
16. The following recommendation should be considered to further improve the quality of the outcomes for participants in all regions:
 - how to provide greater breadth of teaching experience for all participants.

Provision in the London region

Context

17. The Teach First provision in London is led by Canterbury Christ Church University. The full range of Teach First subjects is offered in the London region. At the time of the inspection, 274 first year participants were teaching in around 90 schools across greater London and neighbouring local authorities.

Key strengths

18. The key strengths are:
- the success in placing high-quality participants into schools in challenging circumstances to raise students' aspirations and achievement and, in this way, meeting the needs of schools in the region
 - the extremely high calibre of participants and their commitment to raising educational achievement and addressing educational disadvantage
 - the participants' relentless focus on the learning and progress of the students they teach, which is supported outstandingly well by the training they receive
 - participants' understanding of how to teach a diverse range of students and how to promote good behaviour and attitudes to learning
 - the level and quality of support for participants' personal well-being and professional development that result in exceptionally high retention and attainment
 - the integration of all aspects of the programme to enable participants to make outstanding progress against very high expectations
 - the highly effective combination of the close monitoring of participants' progress, their own perceptive critical reflection, the setting of sharp developmental targets and the role of the reflective journal in supporting participants' outstanding achievement
 - the extremely thorough and rigorous process of self-evaluation and improvement planning that leads to continuous improvement in all of the outcomes for participants.

Recommendation

19. In order to further improve participants' progress and attainment, the provider should consider how to:

- support the more progressive development of participants' understanding and application of subject pedagogy throughout the course.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

20. Exceptional participants are recruited to the programme and allocated to the region; the overwhelming majority complete the first year and achieve well so that attainment is outstanding by the end of the year. Almost all who complete the first year also complete the second, and many then remain in teaching, often continuing to work in schools in challenging circumstances.
21. The attainment of participants is outstanding and has improved each year for the last three years. The proportion of participants whose attainment is outstanding has improved significantly and there is a reduction in the small proportion whose attainment is satisfactory at the end of their first year. There have also been improvements in the attainment of particular groups, such as male participants, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with non-standard degrees, so that all groups now attain at an outstanding level. The proportion of participants completing the first year, although already extremely high for all groups, has also improved. Although few, all cases of non-completion are investigated thoroughly to establish any lessons for selection, the training or the support for participants. An increasing number of participants are remaining in teaching beyond the second year of the programme; this is now around two thirds. It is indicative of the emphasis and success of the Teach First programme that almost all choose to continue to teach in schools in challenging circumstances.
22. Participants' personal characteristics, professional attributes, intellectual capacity, resilience and commitment are exceptional; the way they can relate to a wide range of people is impressive. Even in their first year of training they are well on their way to becoming inspirational teachers, and some already are. The quality of their critical reflection and metacognition, and their ability to link theory and practice, is clear in the high quality of their reflective journals. They accept and welcome high levels of challenge. Their teaching engages students' interest and they use a wide range of approaches to ensure good pace and variety in their lessons; they make effective use of the good resources available in their schools and students frequently enjoy their lessons. Participants carefully monitor the learning of individuals and groups of students during lessons and they can adapt their teaching when the learning is not as good as expected. The speed with which participants learn and apply strategies to promote good behaviour, and to manage poor behaviour when necessary, is highly impressive.
23. Participants have an excellent depth of understanding of the complexities of teaching a diverse range of learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language or who are at early stages of learning English. They can apply much of this to their teaching, although they are less secure in effectively deploying

and working with learning support staff. Particularly noteworthy for secondary trainee teachers is their understanding and use of strategies to develop early reading skills, including the use of systematic synthetic phonics. Through the focused training they receive, participants' understanding of how low levels of literacy can be a barrier to learning and how to overcome this in their teaching is very strong. In those subjects where this is important, they can also apply this to numeracy. It is also very pleasing to note their ability to discuss the importance of oracy in their subjects. Their understanding and ability to focus on the wider aspects of young people's well-being and development is equally impressive.

24. As a result of the quality of the training they receive and their own ability to critically reflect, the overwhelming majority of participants make outstanding progress against highly challenging expectations, meeting or exceeding these expectations. Progress in the early stages of the programme is often very good because of the close attention to the particular needs of each participant. This focus on individual needs is maintained throughout the training and many participants make rapid progress in the latter stages of the programme when they combine all of the elements of the training. Programme leaders' careful analysis of a range of risk factors to determine the support required for individual participants, building on all of the information gathered through the summer institute, and to provide highly personalised training is key to participants' early and ongoing progress. Rigorous attention is paid to the development of participants' subject knowledge with strong early focus on the application to teaching. One particular feature of the early training is the recognition of the need for work on promoting good behaviour; this leads to high-quality targeted interventions and support for participants. All elements of the training combine well to support participants' progress; they have the intellectual capacity to integrate the various aspects to take responsibility for their own professional development. A key strength is establishing from the outset that participants will be judged through the progress and achievement of the students they teach; this means that participants have a relentless focus on their students and their learning. This focus on the quality of the learning enables them to sensitively challenge the ways of working in their schools.
25. There is exceptionally close monitoring by Teach First regional tutors and programme leaders of individual participants' progress throughout the year. The Teach First 'tracking progress' procedures provide a clear holistic view of progress and are used well in setting sharp developmental targets. Participants' reflective journals are also used well to set challenging targets and to monitor and record progress. Their progress is also supported well by a series of timely, well-planned and highly relevant assignments. The level and quality of support for participants and the rapidity and effectiveness of any interventions required are highly effective; the role of the professional tutor is critical and undertaken extremely well in the very large majority of cases. School-based mentors provide extensive, frequent and useful feedback to participants on their teaching and wider professional development. Excellent use is made of expertise, such as advanced skills teachers, to provide well-targeted support for participants when required.

26. Through subject work in the summer institute, participants are helped to develop a model of what good learning in their subject looks like. This is further developed through the sequence of subject days which also deal well with key aspects of the subject. These days, particularly later in the year, have good flexibility to be responsive to participants' emerging needs and priorities. However, although participants teach at least good lessons and generally receive high-quality feedback, there are some missed opportunities to develop subject-specific points that would help participants progressively transfer an understanding of the key principles and ideas covered in the subject days to their teaching. This is more the case in mathematics and science than in other subjects. A very small minority of participants have fewer opportunities for planning, teaching and assessing students' progress over sequences of lessons.
27. Participants' are provided with opportunities to visit other schools and settings to acquire a greater breadth of experience; this is linked well to their individual needs and aspirations. However, much of this is focused on observations of others and some participants have limited scope for contrasting teaching experiences.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 1**

28. All of the outcomes for all groups of participants are high and have been for at least three years, but with a clear and marked trend of further improvement. Attainment, retention and successful completion, and the proportion of participants remaining in teaching beyond their two-year commitment, have all improved. These improvements have been sustained over several years. Improvements in the attainment of some groups of participants are particularly marked. The improved outcomes for participants over time can be linked directly to the rigorous monitoring of the progress of all participants, and the high quality of ongoing review and self-evaluation, improvement planning and the impact of actions taken. All aspects of the provision are kept under constant close scrutiny and actions are timely and effective to the benefit of all participants.
29. The leadership and management of the Teach First programme in London, and the relationship with the national leadership, is extremely strong at all levels. This provides a very secure framework and set of key principles that are fully understood and applied by all. Schools are completely clear about these principles, and support them and apply them thoroughly. Participants fully understand the key purpose of Teach First in addressing educational disadvantage and commit fully to this aim. Within this secure framework, there is flexibility to ensure that the personal needs of participants are fully met and the range of expertise and opportunity within the region, and nationally, can be fully exploited.

30. Self-evaluation at all levels is thorough, rigorous, precise and perceptive. The aspects of the provision identified by the inspection as needing further development or improvement were already known and actions are in place to deal with these. Self-evaluation is underpinned by the comprehensive and detailed analysis of data on the outcomes for participants: for the whole cohort, by subject, for all groups and within groups of the QTS Standards. This leads to sharp identification of what is working well and what needs to be improved, to clear actions and to the impact of these being monitored through the outcomes for participants. The range of evidence used to inform self-evaluation is extensive. Alongside the rigorous quantitative approach, excellent use is made of the outcomes of the intense focus on monitoring individuals' personal and professional development. Current participants in the first and second years of the programme, Teach First ambassadors, all trainers and schools contribute to review and self-evaluation. This all leads to an exceptionally well-balanced and thorough approach to continuous improvement.
31. The high-quality improvement planning arises from the comprehensive self-evaluation and is sharply focused on improving the experiences and outcomes for participants. The priorities for improvement are precise and understood well by all involved in the Teach First programme. There is a definite commitment to improving the outcomes for participants, but also to working with subject departments and schools to improve the life chances of the young people in those schools. The detailed evaluation of schools and subject departments is used well to target training and support for school-based mentors; this ensures that participants receive consistently high-quality training. Where the school does not meet the high expectations demanded, the actions taken are swift and effective. Close monitoring across all schools means that the provider is fully aware of any wider emerging issues and, again, takes rapid and effective actions.
32. The expertise and research undertaken in all of the universities involved in the programme (as represented in the NITTP), as well as Teach First staff, are used to ensure that the programme is completely up-to-date and full account is taken of all current educational developments. The success of this is seen in the quality of the participants and their depth of understanding of key issues and current priorities.
33. There are many examples of the effectiveness of the Teach First approach to continuous improvement and the impact on participants and their students. To take just one, the extension of the Teach First 'mentor recognition scheme' is a good example of dealing with the difficult problem of ensuring high-quality mentoring in all schools. The detailed evaluation of each school and of the subject departments where participants are placed enables highly focused support to be provided. This is handled extremely efficiently and sensitively. The fundamental principles of Teach First, and the focus on addressing educational disadvantage, mean that it works to support the schools as well as ensuring high-quality training for participants. This is a good example of the wider impact of Teach First through developing coaching and mentoring skills

in schools that will benefit other staff, and hence, the students in these schools.

Provision in the East and West Midlands region

Context

34. The Teach First Midlands region consists of two sub-regions: the East and West Midlands. The current regional training provider overseeing the training is Nottingham Trent University. It works in close partnership with Birmingham City University, Newman University College, the University of Wolverhampton and the University of Worcester to administer training provision on behalf of Teach First. Most, although not all, subjects are available in the region. At the time of the inspection, 85 first year participants were based in the West Midlands and 39 were based in the East Midlands; participants were allocated to 49 schools across the region.

Key strengths

35. The key strengths are:

- the recruitment of highly qualified participants who respond outstandingly well to the very high expectations and level of challenge to become exceptional teachers in schools in challenging circumstances and to raise students' aspirations and achievement and, in this way, meet the needs of schools across the region
- the highly reflective, capable and confident participants who demonstrate the necessary qualities, skills and ambition to become inspirational teachers
- the close monitoring of participants' progress and effective use of the extensive support available for participants to ensure that they achieve high-quality outcomes
- the highly effective integration of all elements of the programme to ensure that participants are prepared well to succeed in schools in challenging circumstances
- the partnership between the schools and regional training provider that supports participants' good or better progress
- the teamwork that exists between the Teach First national and regional teams to provide outstanding capacity to continue to improve the outcomes for participants.

Recommendation

36. In order to further improve participants' progress and attainment, the provider should consider how to:

- ensure that all participants are supported well in applying their subject knowledge to their teaching.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

37. The overall effectiveness of provision within the Teach First Midlands region is outstanding; all of the outcomes for participants are outstanding. Excellent communication between all parties and a drive to improve the quality of students' learning and achievement within a diverse range of schools in challenging circumstances are key characteristics of both participants and all those involved within the partnership.
38. Participants' attainment overall has significantly improved and is now outstanding. A clear trend of improvement is indicated by the increase in the proportion of participants whose attainment is outstanding to approximately two thirds with a significant reduction in those whose attainment is satisfactory at the end of the first year of the programme. The overwhelming majority of participants now make good or better progress against challenging expectations throughout the programme. All participants demonstrate very high levels of commitment to the key principles of Teach First; they set very high expectations for themselves and are extremely professional in their ambition to become highly effective teachers. The depth and breadth of participants' reflection about their own practice is impressive. They possess a mature approach to self-study by following up targets set for themselves to improve their own performance. Strong personal initiative is a key characteristic of these participants. An indication of how highly they are regarded in their schools is the proportion taking on additional responsibilities within their departments during the first year or at the beginning of their second year on the Teach First programme. Many senior staff in schools speak very highly about participants' positive impact on students' achievement.
39. Participants have very positive relationships with the students they teach and, through the combination of the highly effective training they receive and their own capability, they have the ability to effectively promote good behaviour, even in sometimes very difficult circumstances. Participants are highly competent in the use of visual aids and resources such as interactive whiteboards and digital media to both illustrate key teaching points and support students in their learning. They recognise potential barriers to learning, such as low levels of literacy or numeracy, and deal with these well through their subject teaching. They make good use of their understanding of systematic synthetic phonics and other strategies to support students in the early stages of reading. High-quality planning for lessons includes a good range of well-chosen tasks that cater very effectively for students of different ability. Many participants are highly competent in using assessment information to monitor the progress of students and plan for the next steps in their learning.
40. The preparation of participants to teach a diverse range of learners is outstanding. The programme provides them with good levels of theoretical understanding about issues related to teaching students who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or

disabilities. Consequently, the very large majority of participants apply this knowledge and understanding to their teaching well. Participants demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion and the entitlement of all students to high-quality education. Their knowledge and understanding of teaching within a diverse society is enhanced significantly through comprehensive online pre-course materials.

41. The national selection procedures are very thorough and effective. These procedures are applied with rigour to allocate to the region highly qualified participants who demonstrate the potential to teach within schools in challenging circumstances. The regional training provider is effectively meeting regional needs for high-quality teachers committed to working in their schools. The proportion of minority ethnic participants allocated to the region is high with an increasing number coming from within the region. The proportion of participants successfully completing the course has improved because the regional training provider is particularly successful at implementing detailed support programmes for those few participants who experience difficulties and a slowing of progress. Interventions by Teach First regional subject and professional tutors are focused particularly well on individual needs and are timely and effective in ensuring the progress of the participant.
42. Improvements in the attainment of participants indicate clearly that the quality of training and assessment has improved to now become outstanding, with good links between all of the elements of the programme. The summer institute provides a very firm foundation for the development of participants' professional knowledge and understanding. It prepares them very well for teaching at the start of the first term. Detailed analysis of participants' subject knowledge clearly identifies individual needs and a detailed plan of action. The outcomes of this auditing are also used very effectively to further tailor the programme for each individual trainee. However, opportunities to progressively develop participants' understanding of subject pedagogy and the application of subject knowledge to teaching are sometimes missed.
43. The series of six subject days support the development of participants well. These are usefully supplemented by after-school sessions which are particularly well customised to meet their needs. There is a clear balance between theory and practice in the programme and this is significantly enhanced by the written assignments. The assignments are valued highly by participants because of the relevance to their teaching. The frequent visits by Teach First regional subject and professional tutors and the quality of the support and feedback they provide are crucial in securing the progress of participants. Participants are provided with opportunities to work in a contrasting school and these are effectively targeted to their needs. Although these are supplemented with further visits, a small number of participants have limited opportunities to observe outstanding subject teaching.
44. The assessment of participants' progress and achievement is a continuous process from the outset. The reflective journals support participants' high-quality critical review and analysis. The journals also provide a detailed record of their progress and facilitate the setting of precise developmental targets.

The Teach First 'tracking progress' procedures are comprehensive and used effectively to monitor the progress of all participants; the criteria are used well to set sharp targets. Robust moderation procedures across the region and nationally ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment.

45. School-based subject and professional mentoring is of often of very high quality, provides participants with a clear understanding of what they need to do next to improve, and ensures that the overwhelming majority of participants now make good or better progress against the high expectations set by Teach First. School-based mentors and Teach First tutors monitor participants' progress well through frequent observations of their teaching and provide them with outstanding support. While there is some variability in the quality of subject mentoring, interventions by Teach First regional subject and professional tutors usually make up for this.
46. Excellent communication between all involved ensures that much of the training is consistently of very high quality. The arrangements for training, monitoring participants' progress and assessment are clear and consistently applied across the partnership. The partnership with schools is strong and schools are very positive about the partnership; they value the many opportunities for them to shape the programme, such as the guidance for additional school experience.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 1**

47. The combination of national Teach First support and actions taken by the regional training providers mean that the capacity in the region to sustain high-quality outcomes and make improvements where necessary is now outstanding. A strong sense of teamwork exists between all leaders involved in the implementation of the Teach First programme within the Midlands sub-regions and national leadership. There is a clear and sustained trend of improvement in all of the outcomes for participants; the attainment of participants has moved from being good to now being securely outstanding.
48. Accurate self-evaluation identifies key priorities for further improvement in the outcomes for participants. An extensive range of strategies is used to monitor the quality of provision across the two sub-regions and is supported well by national procedures to ensure consistently high quality. The regional training provider makes highly effective use of robust risk assessments of schools, particularly those that are new to the partnership, to plan the level and nature of support required. This ensures that support for most participants is effective from the start. There is excellent engagement of key stakeholders in the process of self-evaluation and review, such as first- and second-year participants, Teach First ambassadors, school-based mentors and headteachers. Self-evaluation leads to improvements in provision that result in further improvements in the outcomes for participants. The views of participants are fully captured in regular feedback surveys administered by the

regional Teach First teams and used effectively to modify training provision. The analysis of data on all outcomes for all groups of participants is comprehensive and used effectively to monitor trends and patterns in performance.

49. Teach First national and regional leaders, working together, demonstrate the capacity to make changes in response to identified need across the sub-regions. National priorities are fully incorporated within the regional improvement plans and responded to rapidly. The programme is fully up-to-date. Close evaluation is undertaken of all subject departments in participating schools. This is used well to effectively target support for participants, and where necessary, the school, to ensure participants make strong progress. The region is supporting the use of the national Teach First 'mentor recognition framework' and has a specific regional plan for the development of mentoring skills to improve the consistency and quality where necessary.
50. The quality of improvement planning overall is outstanding. Regional planning is very detailed and fully consistent with the key priorities contained within the overarching national Teach First improvement plan. Clear lines of responsibility are fully identified to ensure effective levels of accountability within specific timescales. Targets are very clearly linked to improvements in participants' outcomes. The regional improvement plan is shared explicitly with all key partners and senior staff within placement schools through the sub-regional action groups.

Provision in the North West region

Context

51. The North West region of Teach First is managed by a partnership consisting of the University of Manchester and Liverpool John Moores University. The partnership works with approximately 30 schools in local authorities in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the Burnley area of Lancashire to deliver the Teach First programme. The regional provider offers training in the 11–16 age range in English, mathematics, science (biology, chemistry and physics), modern foreign languages and citizenship. At the time of the inspection, there were 57 first year participants in the region.

Key strengths

52. The key strengths are:

- the outstanding commitment across the regional partnership to producing high-quality teachers in order to meet a pressing regional employment need in schools in challenging circumstances
- self-motivated, highly reflective participants who take responsibility for their own professional development, demonstrate a range of excellent professional attributes and are dedicated to teaching and raising students' aspirations and achievement
- the close monitoring of participants' progress and the consistently high quality of personal, professional and academic support to ensure participants' well-being which results in very high completion rates and supports participants' ongoing professional development
- the highly effective recruitment, selection and induction processes, including the summer institute, that underpin the rapid early progress made by participants in the region
- the cohesion and strength of all aspects of the training programme, including its excellent emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusion, which enable participants to reflect critically and link theory and practice in their own teaching extremely effectively
- the high expectations and the exemplary quality of commitment throughout a tightly-knit and collegiate regional partnership which delivers a consistently high-quality training programme and enables the overwhelming majority of participants to attain at a good or outstanding level
- the very effective blend of trainers' expertise, together with the significant attention paid to current national, regional and local

initiatives, which has a very positive impact on participants' confidence, their practice and on meeting the needs of schools in the region

- the high-quality regional leadership and management and outstanding quality assurance procedures that ensure available resources are deployed extremely effectively to sustain high-quality outcomes for participants and continuous self-improvement.

Recommendation

53. In order to further improve participants' progress and attainment, the provider should consider how to:
- improve the quality of the developmental targets set for participants following observations of their teaching to ensure they are sharply focused on the participant's particular needs.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

54. The overall effectiveness of the regional provider in securing high-quality outcomes for participants is outstanding. The overall attainment of participants is outstanding and has been for the last three years. Participants achieve such high levels of attainment because of their self-motivation and dedication to teaching and because of the exemplary commitment across the regional partnership to producing high-quality teachers to meet a pressing regional need in schools in challenging circumstances. Retention rates are significantly above the national average with the overwhelming majority of participants successfully completing the first and second years of the programme.
55. Participants demonstrate numerous strengths in their professional attributes and classroom practice. The most notable are their skills in critical reflection, their professionalism and their well-developed personal qualities. This includes their resilience, responsiveness, enthusiasm, confidence and creativity. Critical reflection is deeply embedded throughout all aspects of the strong and cohesive training programme. Participants' ability to link theory and practice in their teaching is developed extremely effectively through the use of the reflective journal. Mentors and participants make excellent use of this journal at their weekly meetings. Participants skilfully use their detailed reflections in the well-timed and carefully designed assignments which enhance the development of a range of professional skills.
56. Participants' professionalism and well-developed personal qualities result in highly productive working relationships with students and colleagues in schools. Participants take responsibility for their own professional development and are very open to constructive feedback to improve their practice. Their strong personal commitment to raising students' aspirations and achievement and working in schools in challenging circumstances help them drive improvement in their schools. They are able to hone their leadership skills by taking on

additional responsibilities and make a very positive contribution to the subject departments and schools in which they are employed.

57. Participants make excellent use of information and communication technology and a range of creative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment to fully engage and inspire their students. They are enthusiastic and make very effective use of their well-developed subject knowledge for teaching. Participants show a high level of awareness of current initiatives and are very well prepared in relation to national priorities. For example, school performance data are used skilfully to plan sequences of interesting and highly appropriate lessons which meet the needs of a range of different students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, very effectively. Participants understand and recognise their role in overcoming barriers to learning. They promote the development of basic skills very well through their subject teaching and make confident use of a range of behaviour and inclusion strategies in their teaching.
58. Very careful use of a range of complementary school placements ensures participants have appropriate experience of working with a range of ability groups across Key Stages 3 and 4. This includes high-achieving students and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In addition, a number of participants have valuable opportunities to work in special schools. All participants complete a very useful written assignment based on carefully selected students with specific learning needs. Participants have good opportunities to engage in activities related to the transition from primary to secondary schools at the end of their initial training year, but the majority have only limited experience of primary schools to develop their understanding of how to secure good progression.
59. The rigorous national recruitment and selection procedures result in the enrolment of well-qualified, high-calibre participants with the potential to become excellent teachers. The proportion of male participants and those with a declared disability are above the national average. The proportion of minority ethnic participants allocated to schools in the North West region, although improving, is below the national average. The outstanding recruitment and selection processes and the very well-designed summer institute, including time spent in schools, underpins the rapid progress made by participants in the early stages and throughout the programme. Participants are generally very carefully matched to the employing schools in the region. Subject knowledge audits are used very effectively at the start of the programme to develop initial action plans and identify professional development targets.
60. The intensive induction period is also used very well to foster the development of positive relationships amongst everyone involved in the Teach First programme. In particular, it enables participants to get to know their peers and share good practice to support their professional development. Participants in the first and second years of the programme are particularly appreciative of the opportunities to come together with their peers at the well-focused regional subject study days and conferences. The quality, deployment and use of resources across the partnership are excellent. High-quality personal,

professional and academic care and support ensure participants' well-being and that the overwhelming majority of participants make good or better progress throughout the programme. Successful completion rates are well above the national average and the proportion of participants who then complete the second year of the programme and continue with teaching beyond the two-year commitment is also very high. Participants are effusive in their praise for their school-based mentors and Teach First regional tutors: tutors provide inspirational training sessions, are always available to respond to queries and offer impressive levels of support. Schools indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the excellent preparation and support participants receive and the progress they make in their initial training and induction years; participants are often retained in their schools and frequently enjoy rapid career progression.

61. An extremely cohesive regional partnership provides exemplary personalised training that ensures that most participants reach their potential to become 'exceptional, inspirational teachers'. High expectations, a shared understanding of training approaches and procedures, and the high level of commitment throughout the tight-knit collegiate regional partnership ensures the delivery of a consistently high-quality training programme and leads to outstanding attainment. The training and assessment model is very carefully planned and structured. It provides a progressive and seamless continuum for the professional development of participants during both their initial training and second years. Experts provide outstanding and up-to-date subject and generic training. Regional subject and professional tutors and Teach First leadership development officers closely monitor participants' progress on, at least, a monthly basis and provide highly tailored personal support and appropriate interventions when necessary. As a result, all participants receive frequent, challenging and high-quality verbal and written feedback, and excellent advice and guidance. School-based mentors complete excellent reviews at the end of each term which effectively assess participants' attainment in relation to the QTS Standards and clearly identify precise targets for the next steps in their training. There is, however, scope to further improve the quality of the targets set following lesson observations to ensure they are as sharply focused on participants' development needs.
62. Effective mentor training and frequent visits to schools, by Teach First regional subject and professional tutors, strengthen relationships across the regional partnership and support the effective sharing of high-quality coaching and mentoring practice. Excellent guidance and documentation is provided to record and monitor participants' progress. Very effective systems, including highly effective internal and external moderation, ensure that the assessment of participants' progress and attainment is accurate across the partnership.
63. The regional partnership values and respects diversity and shows an exemplary commitment to promoting inclusion and equality of opportunity. This ethos underpins the provider's caring and personalised approach to individual needs and participants' well-being. There are no discernible differences between the outcomes for different groups of participants. Participants feel secure in reporting any areas of concern informally or more formally through the staff participant liaison committee. A strong emphasis on equality and diversity

permeates all aspects of provision and plays a key role in challenging participants' attitudes and values, and developing their inclusive practice.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 1**

64. The regional provider demonstrates outstanding capacity to sustain high-quality outcomes and to take the actions required to secure further improvements where necessary. There is a marked trend of improvement in the outcomes for participants, although these have always been high. The provider has a very accurate understanding of its strengths and any aspects it needs to continue to improve. Highly effective quality assurance processes and accurate and incisive analysis of data result in extremely robust self-evaluation and excellent improvement planning. This rigorous analysis of data is extremely effective. It enables the regional provider to monitor participants' progress and provide well-targeted interventions, measure the impact of planned improvements and benchmark provision with that of Teach First nationally and other secondary teacher training providers. Success in planning and in taking action for improvement is clearly demonstrated by the fact that any minor inconsistencies in the quality of provision, identified during the inspection, were already known to the provider.
65. There is a very strong commitment to self-evaluation and improvement; the quality of the provision is constantly reviewed. The regional quality assurance framework provides outstanding procedures designed to monitor and maintain the high quality of the training programme and to promote consistency across the partnership. As a result, remarkable levels of consistency exist. The robust evaluation process includes all involved in the programme, and places a strong emphasis on the outcomes for participants and an increasing emphasis on the impact they have on the students in their schools. The regional provider is highly responsive to informal and formal feedback from participants and schools. Schools feel that their views are listened to and indicate that changes happen as a result.
66. The regional provider has a very close relationship with its partner schools and knows them well; the strength of the partnership enhances the provider's capacity for further improvement. Extensive support is provided for schools that are new to the Teach First programme. For example, the recent expansion of the regional partnership to a third sub-region in Burnley has been managed particularly well. Excellent systems are in place to quality assure participants' experiences and training. Professional mentors are particularly appreciative of the impressive quality assurance visits, made by school liaison tutors, and indicate how significant they are in helping schools to improve the quality of the training they provide. All those involved in the partnership are very clear about their roles and responsibilities, and adhere to the terms of the partnership agreement. School-based subject and professional mentors are committed to, and involved in, developing the programme further through their

sharing of best practice at regional events and through the work of the school advisory groups. A number of mentors are also involved in the national pilot of the mentor recognition framework developed within the region. This is specifically designed to enhance the quality of subject mentoring.

67. Very strong regional leadership and management at all levels anticipate and make highly effective refinements to provision. These have a very positive impact on improving the outcomes for participants. For example, all participants, not just those training to be English teachers, have received valuable sessions on the teaching of early reading and systematic synthetic phonics. This approach enhances the quality of the provision, improves participants' confidence and supports the needs of schools in the partnership extremely well. The regional provider is highly flexible and responsive. There is a strong sense of regional collaboration and teamwork. This is fostered by positive relationships, excellent communications and an extensive blend of skills and expertise amongst the tutors involved.
68. Leaders and managers are relentless in their drive for continuous improvement; the provider's effectiveness in planning and taking action for improvement is outstanding. There is a very strong link between the robust evaluation and review process, priorities and actions in improvement plans, and local, regional and national priorities. Improvement planning is extremely detailed and thorough. All available resources are deployed very effectively to sustain high-quality outcomes for participants and to secure further improvements to the quality of provision where necessary. Careful piloting and detailed evaluations of innovative solutions to particular issues have led to further refinements to an already high-quality programme in the region and the sharing of good practice with other Teach First providers, and with providers of initial teacher training nationally and internationally.

Provision in the Yorkshire and The Humber region

Context

69. The Yorkshire and The Humber Teach First regional teacher training provider is a collaborative partnership between Sheffield Hallam University, the University of Huddersfield and the University of Hull. Sheffield Hallam University acts as the lead provider, with all participants enrolled on a PGCE programme validated by the university. The region offers training in the 11–16 age range in citizenship, English, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science (biology, chemistry and physics). The partnership involves schools covering a wide geographical area, with most placements in Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield. At the time of the inspection, there were 57 first year participants on the programme, based in 22 schools. The first group of participants in the region began their training in 2009. From 2011, the programme will include schools in Hull.

Key strengths

70. The key strengths are:

- the recruitment of participants with the expertise to make a strong contribution to meeting local and regional needs in schools in challenging circumstances
- participants' ability to use a wide range of teaching approaches to promote students' learning
- the high levels of support provided for participants' personal and professional development that contribute to the outstanding retention and attainment
- the coherence of the different elements of the training programme that enables the overwhelming majority of participants to make good or better progress against challenging expectations
- the frequency of lesson observations that ensures that the progress of participants is rigorously monitored and assessed and which contributes to their outstanding achievement
- the programme's focus on equipping participants with the understanding and skills to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners very effectively
- the management of the programme that takes full account of the views of participants and other stakeholders to support the outstanding capacity to sustain high quality and make further improvements where necessary.

Recommendation

71. In order to further improve participants' progress and attainment, the provider should consider how to:
- ensure that all participants undertake their complementary school experience and primary visit well before the end of the course.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

72. The overwhelming majority of participants successfully complete the first year of the programme to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) and their attainment is outstanding. The national selection processes are very effective in ensuring that participants allocated to the region have strong personal qualities and these underpin their good or better progress against challenging expectations throughout the training year. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of participants; this is monitored very carefully by the provider.
73. Participants pick up new ideas quickly, learn from their mistakes, have a very positive work ethic and show exceptional commitment to improving their students' learning. They have excellent written and verbal communication skills that help them to give clear explanations and present ideas accurately in their teaching. They make rapid progress in developing their professional skills. They are able to use a broad range of teaching approaches and understand the impact of their teaching on learning. They use a range of creative teaching and learning strategies, including imaginative use of the interactive whiteboard. Participants make excellent progress in managing behaviour in their lessons, due to strong initial training that is reinforced well in their schools during the year. They create a positive learning environment through regular use of praise and rewards and the quality of their teaching.
74. Many participants show excellent initiative and introduce new activities to the school. For example, one organised a trip for a group of students to Cambridge University to raise their aspirations, while another introduced a junior mathematics challenge competition. Others take on responsibilities or join in with professional development working groups within the school. One participant is part of a team adapting the Key Stage 3 scheme of work to cater more effectively for the needs of the least-able students.
75. Participants in all subjects are aware of their role in developing students' literacy skills, including with those who speak English as an additional language. For example, one participant made very good use of a support teacher through sharing future lesson plans and discussing how to include students fully in the lesson. In another example, a participant was able to explain a range of strategies she would use to support a poor reader. Other participants have applied their training within the school's own programme for promoting literacy across the curriculum: for example, one contributed through

being part of the school's Key Stage 3 literacy intervention team. Participants have a very good understanding of how to adapt their lessons for the needs of different learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are clear about their responsibilities for promoting 'e-safety', including preventing cyber-bullying.

76. Training at the summer institute models best practice and offers a strong grounding in educational theory; participants are able to relate this to their own practice. They value highly the six subject training days that are distributed through the year, when they learn about additional resources and teaching approaches particular to their subject. They also benefit from the opportunity to network with and provide mutual support to their peers, and strengthen their links with national subject communities. For example, the subject days for participants in English have included visits to key national resources such as the British Library's 'Evolving English' and the English and Media Centre. The series of assignments is planned well and effectively matches participants' needs at each stage of the first year of the programme.
77. Teach First regional tutors and school-based mentors communicate well and work collaboratively to monitor participants' progress, including carrying out joint observations of the participants' teaching. Tutors observe lessons regularly, with records emailed to all trainers to ensure that the progress of participants is rigorously monitored and assessed. The quality of oral feedback on participants' lessons is good and in some cases exemplary; written feedback is similarly detailed, practical and formative. The reflective journal provides a very effective structure to the training; it is an extremely useful record of the participant's professional development and contributes strongly to the coherence of the training. Strong working relationships between all members of the partnership help all concerned to feel involved and to feel that their contribution matters. Regular meetings enable mentors to share good practice.
78. The provision promotes equality of opportunity and values diversity outstandingly well. The programme's key focus on addressing educational disadvantage and improving students' achievement is well understood by participants. A large proportion of participants have a broad experience in schools that serve cosmopolitan communities and, as a result, they are fully prepared for teaching in a diverse society. The small proportion of participants who work in schools where there is little diversity in the school population gain additional experience through well-managed visits to other schools during the early summer institute and/or through another school placement. Participants use the complementary school placement effectively to broaden their experiences to include, for example, sixth-form teaching, work with gifted and talented students, and seeing how differently another school may operate. However, this provides only limited opportunity for some participants to develop their teaching skills in another context. For a small minority of participants, the complementary and the primary school experience are too late in the year, limiting their opportunities to apply the lessons learned.
79. The national selection arrangements are very effective in supporting high-quality outcomes for participants and school-based mentors are very positive

about the high quality of the participants allocated to the schools in the region. The programme makes a strong contribution to meeting regional needs. Of the 60 participants recruited to start in 2010, half teach mathematics, science or modern foreign languages, subjects where schools often find it difficult to recruit teachers. The programme meets local needs extremely well: almost all schools remain within the programme, and growing numbers of schools are becoming involved as the provision expands. Roughly two-thirds of participants are employed by their school after the two years are completed, many in schools where the recruitment of teachers can sometimes be a challenge. Teach First participants are seen by many school leaders as acting as 'a lever for school improvement'. The proportion of participants from minority ethnic backgrounds allocated by Teach First to schools in the region is below the national average for all providers, but increasing.

80. The deployment of resources has a noticeably beneficial impact on participants' progress. For example, participants benefit from regular support offered by a range of professionals. They are supported not only by the mentors in the school but they also have frequent visits from Teach First regional subject and professional tutors. Many school-based mentors have wide experience of initial teacher training and appropriate expertise in their field. Participants have access to an excellent range of resources, including university libraries. In addition, a virtual learning environment with a wealth of shared resources and online forums helps participants to share their professional expertise.
81. Participants value particularly highly the fact that tutors offer support at all times. Participants who are a cause for concern benefit quickly from additional support and, as a result, some participants have progressed from being at risk to passing the course with good or better attainment. Another example of resources being allocated according to need is the way that the provider instigated a specific action plan to support participants in a school that went into an Ofsted category of concern.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 1**

82. The provider has outstanding capacity to sustain high-quality outcomes and to secure continuous improvement where needed. In the short time that it has been operating, it is clear that high standards have been established and are being sustained. The provider collects data in order to monitor performance over time and this information indicates that provision is improving and that high-quality outcomes are being maintained. For example, revisions have been made to the regional summer institute programme for the most recent intake based on evaluations by the previous cohort. The overwhelming majority of participants successfully complete the first year of the programme; this exceptionally high retention has been maintained in the second year, where there have been no withdrawals. From current data, these high rates of successful completion look set to improve further.

83. The leadership and management of the Teach First provision in the region is strong at all levels. Leaders and managers use data to compare performance with national Teach First benchmarks, as well as sector averages, to monitor the quality of the provision and the impact on the outcomes for participants, and take timely and effective action when appropriate. External expertise is used effectively to support self-evaluation and improvement planning; for example, an independent evaluator provided detailed feedback on the effectiveness of the 2010 summer institute to confirm participants' evaluations.
84. Self-evaluation is sharp and accurate. Leaders and managers evaluate the full range of provision, using evidence from a wide range of sources with a focus on the outcomes for participants. For example, they review all academic modules and take account of evaluations from a range of stakeholders, including current and former participants, school-based mentors, external examiners, tutors, and employing schools. Well-established quality assurance processes at Sheffield Hallam University and the national Teach First team provide a strong framework where evaluation and review form part of a continuous process for improvement.
85. Improvement planning is focused sharply on the priorities arising from evaluation and on improving the outcomes for participants; it includes clear lines of accountability. Leaders and managers consult mentors on possible areas for improvement and these lead to clear actions. For example, as a result of feedback, tutors have restructured mentor meetings using a smaller group model. Written improvement plans are comprehensive and thorough; however, some success criteria are not directly related to measurable outcomes for participants, making review difficult. Key points from the improvement plan were shared at a mentor meeting to ensure that school-based mentors have a clear view about the priorities for improvement.
86. Regional leaders and managers demonstrate the capacity to anticipate and drive change. For example, the provider has anticipated additional demands for language teachers in the region by increasing for next year the number of modern foreign language participants. Course leaders ensure that the professional studies programme aligns closely with national priorities in initial teacher training, such as teaching students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and making use of current classroom-relevant research. As a result, participants are well prepared for recent and potential changes in educational practice. The high-quality workforce is successful in delivering a comprehensive and flexible training programme that helps participants to develop their professional skills quickly and effectively. Managers ensure that trainers attend national Teach First strategy meetings, as well as liaising with their counterparts in other regions, so that all staff have a close engagement in new developments.

Summary of inspection grades¹

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

		Teach First region			
		London	East and West Midlands	North West	Yorkshire and Humberside
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for participants?		1	1	1	1
Participants' attainment	How well do participants attain?	1	1	1	1
Factors contributing to participants attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1	1	1	1
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all participants progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1	1	1	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	1	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1	1	1	1
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1	1	1	1

CAPACITY TO IMPROVE FURTHER AND/OR SUSTAIN HIGH QUALITY

		London	East and West Midlands	North West	Yorkshire and Humberside
To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?		1	1	1	1
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1	1	1	1
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	1	1	1

¹ The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?	1	1	1	1
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