

Norfolk Teacher Training Centre

Address: City College Norwich, Ipswich Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 2LJ

Unique reference number (URN): 70287

Inspection report: 27 April 2026

1. Primary

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ **Compliance, including safeguarding: standards met**

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders are rightly proud of the positive and supportive culture they have established. As a result of this culture and leaders' actions, trainees feel they are part of a caring community. Leaders are proactive in their approach to widening participation, opening doors to a broad range of trainees to enter and remain in the profession.

From the start, trainees understand how to access help and support. They can raise any concerns or needs at any point of their course, knowing that leaders will act quickly. This reduces the risk of barriers to learning and/or wellbeing impacting negatively on trainees' progress, enabling trainees to stay on track.

Leaders spot trainees' needs at an early stage and respond rapidly. They draw on initial information, regular conversation and input from trainees and mentors to shape individual

support for trainees with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders take practical steps to ensure that trainees can participate fully. Training and placements are adapted where necessary so that trainees with additional needs can succeed. Where needed, trainees are offered specialist services to support their development and wellbeing.

Leaders systematically evaluate their support for trainees and implemented changes where needed.

Professional behaviours, personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders set clear expectations for trainees' conduct, attendance and commitment from the outset. These are reinforced consistently in both centre-based sessions and school placements. Leaders model professional and courteous behaviours, treating trainees with respect and professionalism. Trainees respond very well to this, mirroring leaders' culture of understanding and support in their own teaching practice. School leaders note that trainees conduct themselves with maturity and are well prepared for the expectations of the classroom. As a result, trainees develop into self-directed professionals who take responsibility for their progress and are ready for the pace and expectations of employment.

Pastoral care is very carefully considered. Trainees benefit from highly approachable staff who know them well and respond quickly when issues arise. Trainees value this support and say they feel comfortable raising concerns, knowing they will be dealt with promptly. Staff signpost trainees to highly relevant support when needs arise.

Early input, including induction workshops, help trainees understand how to manage the demands of training. Ongoing support, alongside practical strategies such as planning ahead for assignments, enables trainees to balance workload and maintain their wellbeing. Trainees quickly grow in confidence and professional independence.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Trainees are well supported to achieve qualified teacher status and then go on to secure employment. School leaders recognise that trainees are well prepared for the next stage of their teaching career. Trainees enter the profession able to plan, adapt and respond to the needs of the pupils they teach.

Trainees develop secure knowledge and skills across the primary phase and apply these effectively in classrooms. They grow in confidence in key areas such as phonics, mathematics and managing behaviour. Trainees explain how research informs their practice. They understand and can support a wide range of pupils' needs, including needs that predominate in local schools. Trainees understand how to keep pupils safe and routinely build this into their work.

Trainees have a clear sense of how they are progressing and respond well to feedback from mentors and centre-based staff. For the most part, they reflect thoughtfully on their teaching

and draw on the work of teacher educators who model and provide structured scaffolds to support this. There is, however, some variation in how precisely trainees evaluate the impact of their research-informed decisions on pupils' learning. Leaders are working to strengthen how trainees use research and subject knowledge to justify choices and identify sharper next steps.

Curriculum, teaching and training

Expected standard 

The training programme gives trainees a clear route from early understanding to classroom confidence. Leaders ensure that trainees receive ample instruction in how to teach a range of subjects, including phonics and mathematics. This supports trainees to secure the core knowledge they need, while also exploring wider themes such as educational disadvantage and how teaching can improve pupils' life chances.

Leaders arrange curriculum content carefully and connect this closely with what trainees do in schools so that trainees can build knowledge over time. Leaders ensure that trainees learn about research insights and from worked examples before moving into joint observation, co-planning and teaching. Trainees' intensive training and practice experiences further strengthen the link between theory and classroom teaching. Trainees study carefully chosen examples of effective practice, including video material and expert input, before rehearsing specific techniques in a structured environment. Leaders and mentors ensure that trainees reflect, refine and rehearse newly learned skills. This helps trainees to become fluent in important aspects of teaching and implement them with increasing confidence.

The curriculum equips trainees well to respond to a wide range of pupil needs. Leaders ensure that trainees experience different contexts, including schools with high levels of additional need. Trainees hear directly from specialists, such as speech and language professionals and those working with children in care. This deepens trainees' understanding of the barriers some pupils face. Training also reflects local contextual needs, for example focused input on supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

Leaders thread safeguarding and professional responsibilities throughout the curriculum. Early induction activities set clear expectations. These are reinforced through subject sessions and school experiences. Trainees learn about recognising risks, how to act appropriately and promoting pupils' understanding of healthy relationships.

Staff use assessment well to support trainees to improve. Clear guidance from leaders sets out what is expected at different stages. Typically, feedback from mentors and centre-based staff helps trainees to identify what they have done well and what they need to work on next. This generally supports trainees to develop secure understanding, particularly in areas such as adapting teaching and managing classroom routines.

Leaders have strengthened their support and guidance for mentors. Mentoring is now more structured, with regular guidance, logs, review points and scaffolds to aid developmental conversations with trainees. Typically, mentors deploy the provider's guidance and expectations well. However, there are a few mentors who do not apply the provider's approaches as precisely. In these cases, feedback can lack clarity or drift from the programme's expectations. Leaders recognise this and are taking steps to tighten practice,

including providing additional guidance and holding discussions where mentoring falls short of their expectations.

Leadership

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a clearer direction for the provision, underpinned by a commitment to preparing trainees to succeed in schools. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the provision's strengths and improvement priorities. They have responded to changes in statutory guidance. For example, leaders have designed and refined the delivery of intensive training and practice, linking it to their curriculum and making changes in response to feedback from trainees and mentors.

Leaders appreciate the challenge and specialist input from the provider's well-attended, and recently renewed, steering group. The information leaders share with the steering group ensures transparency and enables effective oversight. Those responsible for oversight support leaders to make informed decisions and sustained improvements that leaders generally implement well. For example, leaders have now strengthened the way in which they support trainees to undertake deliberate practice. Leaders recognise there is more work to do to ensure their response to quality checks more consistently leads to timely and effective improvements.

Leaders are outward-looking and responsive. They draw on national developments, local context and sector expertise to refine the curriculum for trainees. Leaders are proud of their partnership work. They maintain constructive relationships with schools and other stakeholders, including teaching school hubs and local services. These partnerships help to ensure that training reflects the realities of teaching in the primary phase and aligns with the sector's early career expectations.

Leaders ensure that statutory requirements are met, including safer recruitment and apprenticeship requirements. They do this through suitable checks and collaboration with relevant teams.

Leaders are approachable and responsive. This means that staff and mentors know how to seek advice. Concerns rarely occur and are handled sensitively if they do arise.

Next steps

Leaders should ensure their response to quality assurance findings secures consistently high-quality mentoring, including considering how best to support and motivate mentors to apply expectations with precision.

Leaders should strengthen trainees' ability to evaluate the impact of the teaching, drawing on research and subject knowledge to identify specific improvements.

2. Secondary

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ Compliance, including safeguarding: standards met

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders know their local context very well. This helps them to consider how to attract interest from trainees from a range of different backgrounds. As a result, leaders have actively increased the diversity of trainees who study with them.

Trainees feel very well supported. This is because leaders know each trainee well. Leaders have developed a community ethos that is founded on caring and togetherness. This helps trainees feel confident in leaders. A sense of trust ensues from this confidence. Hence, trainees openly share their concerns, or needs. If issues arise during the course, this openness enables leaders to act quickly. This stops emerging challenges becoming barriers to trainees' progress.

From the start of the course, staff listen to trainees. This helps leaders develop a deep understanding of trainees' broad range of needs at an early stage. Leaders consider what support will provide trainees with the maximum chance of success. Considered actions then provide support for trainees. This includes adaptations to teaching, practical support or considerations of the geography of placements. Leaders keep mentors in schools informed. This helps them to continue to support trainees when they are in school. Consequently, reasonable adjustments are seamlessly integrated into trainees' experience. As a result, trainees, including those with specific barriers to learning, achieve success.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Trainees achieve well. More trainees succeed and complete the course than in the past. Trainees develop a secure understanding of key pedagogical knowledge which helps them become successful subject teachers. As the course progresses, experts help trainees to break their subject expertise down into manageable pieces for pupils. Trainees successfully apply this subject and teaching knowledge to their classroom practice. Trainees who face barriers to their learning are well supported. They progress well and secure success.

Trainees learn quickly how to set and maintain high expectations in their classrooms. As their knowledge develops, they become adept at supporting pupils learn in calm, purposeful spaces. Trainees understand their role in keeping pupils safe.

Feedback after key assessment points helps trainees understand their strengths and priorities. However, sometimes the feedback which trainees receive is not precise enough to inform meaningful reflections. This means trainees do not always understand what they need to focus on. This hinders the pace of some trainees' progress.

Curriculum, teaching and training

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets statutory requirements. The curriculum blends key knowledge about teaching with subject expertise. Leaders have given careful consideration to the important research that trainees should learn about. Staff support trainees to critically engage with this research. Practical advice then helps trainees to apply it to their specific-subject domains.

Training has been logically ordered to help trainees build their knowledge over time. School-based experiences integrate well with centre-based teaching. This means that trainees can learn, observe, plan and then practice individual aspects of teaching. Centre staff alongside school mentors then help trainees hone and refine these skills. Intensive training and practice experiences are planned and implemented well. These enable trainees to immerse themselves in key aspects of teaching and further enhance trainees' understanding of key knowledge. This enables trainees to develop their teaching skills progressively and with increasing confidence.

The curriculum helps trainees meet the needs of individual pupils. Leaders ensure that trainees understand that some pupils face challenges to learning. Staff teach trainees how specific needs, including social disadvantage, can have an impact on pupils' learning. They use their expertise well to help trainees consider how to adapt their teaching. They help trainees understand how to support pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders ensure that trainees understand how to protect pupils from harm. This starts from the very beginning of the course and is continually reinforced. School-based activities strengthen trainees' knowledge of how to safeguard pupils.

Since the last inspection, leaders have improved the standard of mentoring. There is clear

guidance regarding expectations of mentors. Leaders ensure that mentors know what trainees are learning about each week. As a result, most trainees experience mentoring that helps them improve. However, sometimes mentoring does not help trainees link their practice to theory. In these instances, trainees do not always know how to improve less successful teaching approaches. Regular assessment at key points gives trainees helpful advice. However, sometimes trainees have to wait too long between instances where they get specific feedback. This, alongside the small imprecisions in mentoring, hinders some trainees' progress.

Leadership

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear vision. They have taken the opportunity of recent structural changes to reaffirm this vision with key stakeholders. This has enabled leaders to engage well with their partners which, in turn, helps partners to contribute to the development of teacher training. Leaders and those in partner organisations understand the key priorities for improvement, while reinforcing that trainees remain at the heart of all decision-making.

Leaders proactively check on the quality of trainees' experience. They are beginning to use this information to consider how best to improve the provision. Leaders use the findings from quality systems to inform the professional development of staff. They provide staff with the expertise and knowledge they need. However, sometimes those responsible for oversight do not support leaders to consider improvement strategies as strategically as they could. This slows the pace of improvement.

Leaders ensure that the initial teacher education provision meets relevant statutory guidance. They ensure that staff benefit from an inclusive environment that remains free from bullying and harassment. However, some checks on compliance are not as meticulous as they could be.

Since the last inspection, leaders have improved key aspects of the curriculum and the quality of mentoring. Mentors in schools now understand what trainees are learning week by week. This supports mentoring sessions to be more focused. However, the development of mentors' expertise to provide trainees with useful feedback is not as well established. This means that some trainees do not get precise feedback on their teaching. This hinders the rate of their progress.

Professional behaviours, personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have very high expectations of trainees. They clearly set out the professional requirements at the start of the course. Leaders and staff routinely model these behaviours. This helps trainees understand how to demonstrate particularly high standards of behaviour, attendance and engagement. Trainees learn about the importance of professional relationships in schools. They understand how to learn from more-experienced teachers. When trainees contribute to discussions in schools, they do so sensitively and with maturity. As a result, trainees' conduct in centre-based training and in schools is highly effective. Trainees are very well prepared for their careers in secondary schools.

Leaders have increased the rigour of pastoral care. They have secured a fine balance between support and developing trainees' resilience, needed for life in the classroom.

Consequently, the proportion of trainees completing the course has increased and is now close to national averages.

Staff support trainees to develop highly effective strategies to manage their workload. Leaders make adaptations if needed, such as extensions to deadlines. Staff help trainees balance completing their assessments with the demands of teaching classes. Over the duration of the course, trainees become independent, skilled and highly responsible teachers.

Next steps

Leaders should ensure that they act strategically on the feedback from QA processes to continue the increasing number of trainees being retained on the programme.

Leaders should strengthen mentors' expertise in providing regular and accurate feedback to support trainees to rapidly advance their teaching knowledge and skills.

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

Trainees flourish at Norfolk Teacher Training Centre. Trainees value the time that staff at the centre take to get to know them as individuals. There is a family feel at the provider. This makes trainees feel well supported and they secure a deep trust in provider staff. Consequently, trainees feel safe to share how they feel and where they need help. They support each other to overcome the challenges of the course.

Trainees who face specific barriers to success, including those with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive excellent support. Leaders, partnership school staff and trainees work together to make sensible adaptations to the course if they are needed. These include practical actions, such as school placements being arranged around caring responsibilities or travel limitations. If trainees have worries or concerns, that emerge during their studies, they are confident that leaders will help them find solutions.

Trainees benefit from a carefully crafted curriculum. They develop a secure understanding of the key principles that underpin their teaching. Trainees are supported well by subject and phase experts. This helps trainees think about how to break down their expertise to help pupils learn. Primary trainees develop a rich understanding across national curriculum subjects.

Trainees know the importance of being positive role models. They routinely display high standards of professional conduct. Trainees benefit from implementing the strategies they learn to manage their workload. Over time, trainees build resilience that stands them in good stead for the early years of their teaching careers and beyond.

By the end of the course, trainees are skilful in reflecting on the research that underpins effective teaching. They apply their knowledge with increasing confidence in the classroom.

Trainees consider the needs of individual pupils, and craft effective adaptations. Trainees achieve well and progress on to successful careers.

About this inspection

Trainees in the secondary and primary phases are either training with the postgraduate school direct route, or as postgraduate teacher apprentices (PGTA). There are currently 8 trainees in the primary phase and one trainee in the secondary phase on the PGTA route.

Trainees in the primary phase either follow the 3 to 7 pathway or 5 to 11 pathway.

There is currently one secondary trainee on the assessment-only route.

The provider is based at Norwich City College of Further and Higher Education.

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 director, phase leads, subject leads, senior college leaders, mentors, school leaders, trainees and early career teachers who studied with the provider during the inspection.

The provision director and phase leads took up their positions since the last inspection.

Lead inspector:

Dave Gibson, His Majesty's Inspector

Primary phase lead inspector:

Hannah Stoten, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Daniel Short, His Majesty's Inspector

Adam Cooke, 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 27 April 2026

Number of partners and trainees

Education phase	Number of training partners / partner colleges	Number of trainees
Primary	0	20
Secondary	0	15

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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