



# **Effective practice for special educational needs and/or disabilities content in initial teacher training**

**Catherine Carroll, Anthony Russell, Karl Wall and Aimee Shaw – UCL Centre for Inclusive Education**

**April 2019**

# Contents

Acknowledgements	3
List of figures	4
List of tables	5
Summary	6
1. Introduction	11
2. Background	12
The aims and objectives of the project	13
3. Overview of research methodology	14
3.1 HEI and SCITT ITT programme website content analysis	14
3.2 ITT Ofsted report analysis	15
3.3 Provider selection and interviews	16
3.4 NQT survey and NQT/RQT focus group	17
4. Findings	18
4.1 HEI and SCITT ITT programme website content analysis	18
4.2 Summary of thematic findings	22
4.3 Provider case studies	26
5. Summary and recommendations	63
5.1 Key findings	63
5.2 Recommendations	65
Annex 1: Case Studies – Participating Providers	67
Annex 2: Figures and Tables from HEI and SCITT website content analysis	68

## **Acknowledgements**

Whole School SEND and UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE) would like to thank the representatives of the 20 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers who, individually and through their organisations, generously gave of their time for the interviews and review of the case studies. We are grateful to the members of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Unit and Initial Teacher Training teams at the Department for Education, for their direction, guidance and collaborative approach while managing this project.

## List of figures

Figure 1: Number of HEI ITT programme websites that make some generic reference to SEND, by qualification (N) .....	19
Figure 2: Number of SCITT ITT programme websites that make some generic reference to SEND, by qualification (N) .....	21
Figure A2.3: Inclusion of SEND in HEI ITT website programme content, by mode of delivery and qualification (N).....	68
Figure A2.4: Mode of SEND placement (optional, compulsory and short) in HEI website programme content, by type of qualification (N) .....	68
Figure A2.5: Mode of SEND placement (optional, compulsory and short) in HEI website programme content, by region (N) .....	69
Figure A2.6: Inclusion of SEND in SCITT ITT website programme content, by mode of delivery and qualification (N).....	69
Figure A2.7: Mode of SEND placement (optional, compulsory and short) in SCITT website programme content, by type of qualification (N) .....	70
Figure A2.8: Mode of SEND placement (optional, compulsory and short) in SCITT website programme content, by region (N) .....	70

## List of tables

Table A2.1: HEI programmes leading to QTS, by region (N)	71
Table A2.2: HEI programme websites with some generic reference to SEND, by region (N & %)	72
Table A2.3: Inclusion of SEND in HEI ITT website programme content, by region (N)	73
Table A2.4: SCITT programmes leading to QTS, by region (N)	74
Table A2.5: SCITT programme websites with some generic reference to SEND, by region (N & %)	75
Table A2.6: Inclusion of SEND in SCITT ITT website programme content, by region (N)	76

All tables can be found in Annex 2

# Summary

## Introduction

UCL Institute of Education undertook research to provide an in-depth understanding of effective SEND practice in initial teacher training (ITT) provision in order to inform the development of policy and practice in this area. This is part of the Whole School SEND programme, funded by the Department for Education (DfE), to help embed SEND into teacher training, CPD and School Improvement. Specifically, this project aimed to review how the SEND content, as set out in the ITT Framework, is being delivered in practice by HEIs and school based providers by

- assessing the extent to which providers indicated the content of SEND in their initial teacher training (ITT) details on programme websites;
- gathering and presenting case study and documentary evidence on the extent and quality of SEND provision in ITT and
- gathering and presenting views on ITT provision from new and recently qualified teachers.

## Approach

This project collected and analysed data from five sources to investigate effective practice for ITT SEND:

- SEND content on higher education institution (HEI) and school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) ITT programme websites in England;
- SEND references in 193 Ofsted ITT inspection reports from September 2015 to August 2018;
- telephone interviews with 20 HEI and SCITT ITT providers from across England identified by Ofsted as having good SEND ITT practice (presented in the report as case studies);
- an online survey of 130 Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and
- a focus group with 13 new and recently qualified teachers.

## Key findings

### Key Finding 1

**Effective practice for ITT SEND starts with a clearly defined and shared SEND ethos** across a partnership which underpins the structure, content and delivery of a programme. This ethos includes a commitment to inclusive education in schools and colleges, and the commitment of partnership leaders to create and deliver ITT programmes that not only have a common core of SEND but are also personalised and responsive to the professional requirements and interests in SEND of individual trainees.

### Key Finding 2

**All the providers in the case studies were delivering an embedded and explicit SEND curriculum as part of their ITT programmes.** There was an importance placed on strategically planning for SEND in ITT using resources such as the National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) ITT SEND Toolkit.<sup>1</sup> The providers adopted an approach and curriculum that embodied SEND as just *one element of normal ITT practice*. Their practice demonstrated planning for progression and consistency in SEND across the curriculum throughout the year; allowing for multiple opportunities to assess trainees' knowledge, understanding and application of learning. They facilitated and shared SEND reflective practice and ensured that curriculum content was current and evidence informed.

### Key Finding 3

During their trainee year, **NQTs highly valued the opportunity of accessing different types of SEND placements, as well as teaching pupils with a range of SEN and/or disabilities in mainstream settings** to develop their knowledge and skills. **Effective practice was characterised by flexible and tailored SEND opportunities for trainees** that took into account previous SEND experience and allowed for additional opportunities for those trainees who wanted to specialise in SEND.

---

<sup>1</sup> NASBTT (2019). *SEND toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/send-toolkit/>.

#### Key Finding 4

Placements in SEND settings were offered by all of the providers and varied greatly in number and duration, whether compulsory and/or optional and whether a formal SEND pathway was an optional element of the programme. **The research identified four common models of SEND placements:** a core model of short placements; a core block SEND placement model, an optional formal SEND pathway model and a multiple placement model that offers a common core block SEND placement, an optional formalised SEND pathway, opportunities for further tailored personalised placements and the flexibility to move into and out of the SEND pathway as required.

#### Key Finding 5

**Effective practice for ITT SEND relies on collaboration between all members of an ITT partnership.** A number of providers spoke of the importance of the collaborative process between schools and university partners at the programme planning, delivery and evaluation stages. Partners also include the parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities<sup>2</sup> and the children and young people themselves. Many providers had specifically built in opportunities for trainees to meet and hear the lived experiences of pupils and their families. The partnerships work in very different contexts from one small urban local authority to the whole of a geographical region of England. Shared mentor and tutor training, online-centralised resources and annual SEND Conferences supported some very strong collaborations. It was possible to identify activities and arrangements that supported good working relationships such as a SEND Conference held annually for all partnership colleagues, centralised schemes of work and online centrally held SEND resources.

#### Key Finding 6

Although, primarily a form of scoping exercise for the main research, **the website content analysis showed variation in SEND provision, by programme and region, and in many instances a lack of documented provision,** for preparing ITT trainees to teach

---

<sup>2</sup> The term SEN and/or disabilities is used when linked with an individual child or group of children.

pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. University programme websites, compared with SCITT programme websites described more frequently and in more detail how provision in relation to SEND was an element of their programmes. The findings are just an account of website content and may not accurately represent the full SEND offer to trainees.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

Providers described how trainees are on an *initial* training programme and that it was not possible for them to ‘know all there is to know about SEND’ at the end of the ITT year. Neither is it possible to prepare trainees for the different ways that schools and colleges ‘implement’ SEND in their settings, which was another theme from the focus group. **Guidance on SEND ITT learning outcomes would enable a greater understanding and consistency of expectations for trainees, ITT providers and the wider community.**

### Recommendation 2

There was considerable variation in the provision of SEND between the programmes delivered by the case study providers. This variation was evident, for example, in SEND content, time spent on SEND, the way in which sessions were delivered and whether SEND assignments were a compulsory element of a programme. **It is important that providers have the autonomy to create ITT programmes appropriate for their communities, but further evidence-informed guidance on the content, structure and delivery of SEND in ITT would ensure greater consistency across programmes.**

### Recommendation 3

The findings showed very convincing support for the importance and benefits of SEND placements in preparing trainees to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in special and mainstream settings. However, there was evidence of variation in terms of time spent in SEND settings from one day in the trainee year to one term in a SEND setting as a main placement. **Further research into the structure and impact of SEND placements would help to establish an ‘optimum’ SEND placement experience for all trainees and which could be extended for those who seek to specialise in SEND.**

#### Recommendation 4

The content analysis of the programme websites showed considerable variation in how all providers report SEND as part of their programmes. Even if not an accurate picture of provision, at the very least prospective trainees are unable to establish an informed perspective of what programmes have to offer in relation to SEND from the content on programme websites. This is also in a context, according to the case study providers, of many more trainees expressing an interest to specialise in SEND. Therefore, we recommend that **all providers, but particularly SCITT providers, review their reference to SEND on their programme websites.**

# 1. Introduction

UCL undertook research to provide an in-depth understanding of effective SEND practice in initial teacher training (ITT) provision in order to inform the development of policy and practice in this area. This was part of the Whole School SEND programme, funded by the Department for Education (DfE), to help embed SEND into teacher training, CPD and School Improvement.

This project collected data from multiple sources and perspectives including ITT provider websites; Ofsted; interviews with providers and a survey and focus group with new and recently qualified teachers. We hope that this report will be a helpful resource for all representatives of school-based and university-based ITT providers and other organisations committed to building the skills of teachers working in all education settings to deliver an inclusive education for all children and young people.

## 2. Background

According to the Newly Qualified Teachers Annual Survey,<sup>3,4</sup> 81% of NQTs in England in 2016 and 2017 rated the overall quality of their ITT as seven out of 10 or higher. As part of this survey, NQTs are asked to rate how well ITT prepared them for different aspects of teaching; lesson planning, maintaining good behaviour and teaching pupils across a range of academic abilities. However, NQTs reported that they felt less prepared to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities (2016=52%, 2017=53%) compared with many other aspects of teaching such as taking responsibility for safeguarding, lesson planning and maintaining good behaviour. Secondary NQTs reported feeling slightly more prepared than primary NQTs to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

This discrepancy between teachers' perceptions of teaching pupils with SEN and/or disabilities and other aspects of teaching continues at the in-service stages of teachers' professional development. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013<sup>5</sup> reported that on average 20% of teachers across 25 participating Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries found that special needs training emerges as the highest need area expressed by teachers among 14 TALIS professional development areas. In England, a recent exploratory survey of early career teachers (ECT) (defined as 2–3 years of teaching) and mid-career teachers (MCT) (defined as 5–10 years of teaching) reported that SEND was one of four main development priorities at the start of their induction year.<sup>6</sup> Thus, increased and improved provision for teaching pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in ITT might contribute to reducing the lack of preparedness that appears to persist as teachers continue into their careers.

---

<sup>3</sup> J. Pye, R. Stobart, & L. Lindley (2016). *Newly Qualified Teachers: Annual Survey 2016*. Retrieved from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/570147/NQT2016\\_National\\_Survey\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/570147/NQT2016_National_Survey_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> S. Ginnis, E. Pestell, E. Mason & S. Knibbs, (2018). *Newly Qualified Teachers: Annual Survey 2017*. Retrieved from [https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/32135/1/NQT\\_2017\\_survey.pdf](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/32135/1/NQT_2017_survey.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> OECD (2014). *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*. Retrieved from [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis-2013-results\\_9789264196261-en#page1](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis-2013-results_9789264196261-en#page1).

<sup>6</sup> M. Walker, S. Straw, J. Worth & H. Grayson (2018). *Early Career CPD: Exploratory Research*. Retrieved from [https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/32429/1/Early\\_career\\_CPD-exploratory\\_research.pdf](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/32429/1/Early_career_CPD-exploratory_research.pdf).

## **The aims and objectives of the project**

Within a national and international context of a self-reported lack of teacher preparedness with teaching pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, this research aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of current effective practice for SEND content in ITT provision in England in order to inform the development of policy and practice in this area. Specifically, this project aimed to review how the SEND content, as set out in the ITT Framework, is being delivered in practice by HEIs and school based providers by:

- assessing the extent to which providers indicated the content of SEND in their initial teacher training (ITT) details on programme websites;
- gathering and present case study and documentary evidence on the extent and quality of SEND provision in ITT and
- gathering and presenting views on ITT provision from new and recently qualified teachers.

### 3. Overview of research methodology

The project used a mixed methods approach with data collected and analysed from five sources to investigate effective practice for ITT SEND:

- the SEND content on HEI and SCITT ITT programme websites in England;
- SEND references in 193 Ofsted ITT inspection reports from September 2015 to August 2018;
- telephone interviews with 20 HEI and SCITT ITT providers from across England identified by Ofsted as having good SEND ITT practice (presented in the report as case studies) from December 2018 to January 2019
- an online survey of 130 NQTs from December 2018 to January 2019
- a focus group with 13 newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and recently qualified teachers (RQTs) drawn from secondary school in the south east of England in January 2019.

Each data collection method is described in more detail in Sections 3.1 to 3.4 and discussed in the sections below.

#### 3.1 HEI and SCITT ITT programme website content analysis

As an initial step to establish a preliminary understanding of the national context of SEND provision in ITT, and inform further stages of the research, the ITT programme websites of all HEI (N=66) and SCITT (N=127) providers in England were analysed for SEND content in September 2018. Specifically, the project sought to establish how SEND was incorporated into programmes including programme structure, content and SEND placements. We acknowledge the limitations of this approach, namely, that the findings **should be read as an analysis of website content rather than what providers might actually offer**. However, the analysis did provide a national context and informed the content of the subsequent interview, survey and focus group data collection instruments. The UCAS website was used to identify all current HEI and SCITT (School Direct salaried and non-salaried) providers offering Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) programmes including

Primary Education BA with QTS and primary and secondary postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) programmes.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2 ITT Ofsted report analysis

In order to support identification of current effective practice for ITT SEND, inform the sampling of providers for the case studies and, in part, the content of the data collection interview and survey schedules, Ofsted reports for ITT providers from September 2015 to August 2018 were analysed for references to SEND. The rationale for the dates chosen was twofold. Firstly, the 'SEND code of practice: 0 to 25' came into force on 1 September 2014, with an updated Code published in January 2015.<sup>8</sup> By starting with Ofsted reports from September 2015, schools and ITT providers would have had one year to consider the impact of the SEND reforms for their programmes. Secondly, it was important that practice captured in the case studies was current and in place at the time of the publication of this report.

The following data were gathered from the Ofsted ITT reports, coded and analysed in Excel:

- Provider route (HEI or SCITT);
- Region;
- Name of provider;
- Overall grade awarded by Ofsted (1–3);
- Whether SEND had been identified by Ofsted as a 'strength of the provision' (1=yes/2=no);

---

<sup>7</sup> The data were coded and analysed separately using the SPSS statistical package.

<sup>8</sup> DfE (Department for Education) and DoH (Department of Health) (2015). SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25. Retrieved from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf).

- Whether SEND had been identified by Ofsted as an 'area for development for the provision' (1=yes/2=no); and
- Descriptions of achievements and activities related to SEND.

The number of Ofsted reports identified by this scoping exercise was almost equal for secondary and primary programmes (Early Years = 6, Primary = 88, Secondary = 85, Further Education = 14) and totalled 193 reports. The findings were analysed thematically with the other data collection findings.

### **3.3 Provider selection and interviews**

The final selection of 20 providers (Annex 1) for inclusion in the case studies was based on the following criteria:

- Practice in SEND had been identified as a strength by Ofsted between September 2015 and August 2018
- School-based providers outweighed university-based providers, reflecting the greater number of school-based providers nationally
- As a cohort, the providers offered ITT that covered Early Years to further education
- As a cohort, there was coverage across the different regions of England.

It is acknowledged that this approach to sampling has limitations in terms of generalising findings and that there will many other school and university-based providers currently delivering effective practice for ITT SEND. Nevertheless, using Ofsted findings as one of the selection criteria offered an 'independent' perspective. Moreover, the three-year report window and its relevance to national SEND reforms in schools (Section 3.2) went some way to addressing the limitations of the case study approach. Each case study includes an overview of the provider's context.

The UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE) research team contacted the final sample of providers by email and telephone to request their participation in this project. Those who agreed to participate were interviewed by telephone. The interviewer used a semi-structured interview schedule based on themes drawn from: the university and school-

based programme website analysis; the Ofsted ITT report analysis and the wider policy and research literature. The key topics in the interview schedule included:

- Curriculum content (examples of prompts – child and adolescent development, tensions in the inclusion/SEND debate, the SEND Code of Practice, categories of SEND and barriers to learning);
- Subject specific pedagogy related to SEND;
- Provision and perspectives on special school placements;
- Working with others (examples of prompts – parents, TAs and external agencies); and
- Support for, and guidance by, mentors.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis by two of the research team. Each case study is based on a particular theme in order to highlight all the relevant aspects of practice as well as providing an overview of their overall provision for SEND. Providers were sent the write ups of the case studies for final approval for publication.

### **3.4 NQT survey and NQT/RQT focus group**

To gather the trainees' perspective on effective practice for ITT SEND, the twenty case study providers were asked to share a link to an online short survey to any current NQT who had participated on their ITT programme in the previous year. The purpose of the survey was to elicit NQT views as to what forms of SEND practice in ITT had been the most helpful in preparing them to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. One survey question adopted a 1–10 Likert scale and the other was an open question with the text thematically analysed based on the findings from the provider interview.

In addition, a focus group of seven NQTs and two RQTs was held in one secondary school in the south east of England to explore some of the initial findings from the provider interviews. None of the members of the focus group had trained with the case study providers.

## 4. Findings

The findings are presented in three parts. The first part examines the content analysis from the HEI and SCITT ITT programme websites (supplementary Figures and Tables in Annex 2). The second part presents the thematic analyses of the Ofsted ITT reports, provider interviews, NQT survey and NQT/RQT focus group. The analysis yielded four main themes related to effective practice for ITT SEND: ITT programme ethos and SEND; an embedded and explicit SEND curriculum; models of SEND placements and collaboration on SEND across the ITT partnership. Each theme is described in more detail in Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.4. Section 4.3 presents the 20 provider case studies. Each case study highlights an aspect of the provider's practice that helps illuminate one element of effective ITT SEND practice in relation to the four main themes, as well as an overview (not an exhaustive list) of the rest of the SEND provision in their ITT programme.

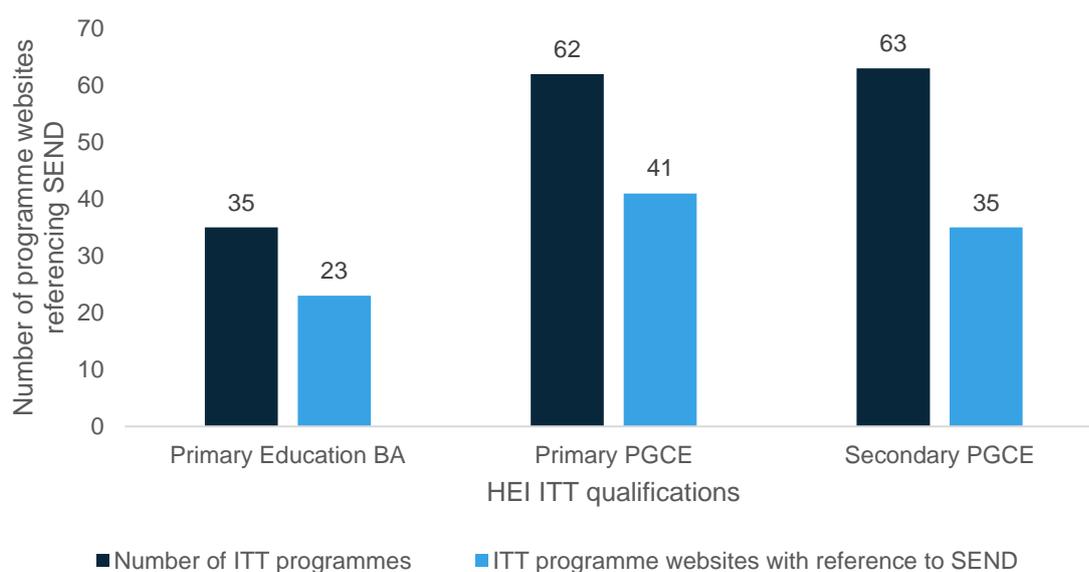
### 4.1 HEI and SCITT ITT programme website content analysis

The HEI search **found 160 programmes** (Primary Education BA, PGCE Primary and PGCE Secondary) leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) across all nine UCAS regions of England **delivered by 66 HEI providers** (Figure 1).<sup>9</sup> The search uncovered an almost equal proportion of primary (N=62) and secondary (N=63) PGCE programmes, 35 were Primary Education BA undergraduate degrees leading to QTS. Of the total 160 programmes, 99 (62%) made some generic reference to SEND on their websites.

---

<sup>9</sup> Providers could offer one, two or three types of programme

**Figure 1: Number of HEI ITT programme websites that make some generic reference to SEND, by qualification (N)**



Base 160 programmes

Source: HEI programme websites via UCAS

Analysis of programme website content revealed that the most common reference to SEND was as part of a module, usually within a ‘Professional Studies’ module (N=42). This accounted for approximately a quarter (26%) of courses across all three qualifications (Primary Education BA, Primary PGCE and Secondary PGCE). Some programmes included a compulsory module on SEND or inclusion (N=24), with the majority of these compulsory modules being part of Primary Education BA programmes (N=18). A small number of programmes offered a SEND distinct pathway (N=13). Information on the programme websites about SEND placements was limited. Some form of SEND placement was found in 20 programmes (Figure A2.3). Placements in a SEND setting included optional main placements (N=10), six programmes included a SEND placement as a compulsory element and optional short placements ranging from a day to a week (N=4). Finally, as part of the curriculum, a very small number of programmes offered activities described variously as SEND Week (N=4), focus days/enhancement sessions (N=2) and one programme offered a SEND Special Interest Group (SIG) (Figure A2.4).

### **Regional breakdown of HEI programme website analysis**

The distribution of ITT programmes across the regions ranged from 28 in London to nine programmes in the Eastern region. The balance between Primary PGCE and Secondary PGCE programmes was broadly even within each region (Table A2.1). A reference to

SEND was found on over half of all programme websites across all regions apart from in the South East. The distribution of references ranged from 86% to 46% with an average of 61%. Most references made on programme websites were found in the London region (86%) followed by the West Midlands (67%) and the North West (67%) regions. The least references to SEND were on programme websites in the Eastern (50%) and South East Regions (46%) (Table A2.2).

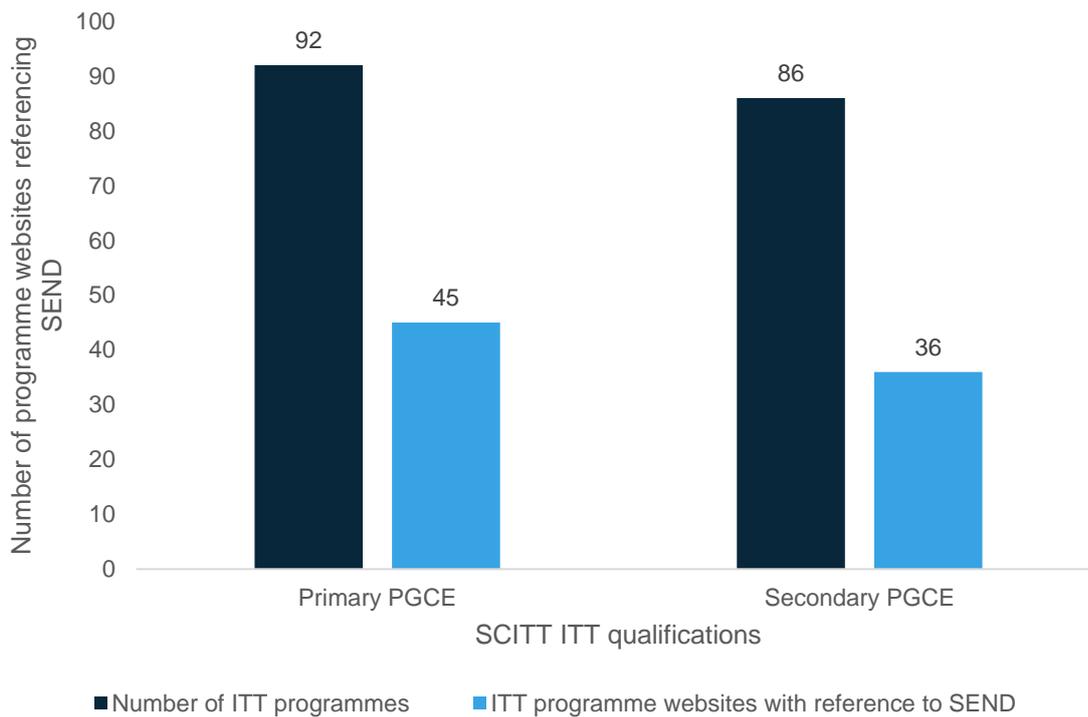
The most common reference on HEI programme websites described SEND delivered as part of a module, with seven of the nine regions describing this form of provision. All regions had at least one programme, which suggested that a SEND module was a compulsory element of the programme, with the majority of these part of a Primary Education BA programme. Programme websites across six of the nine regions described offering a SEND pathway as part of its provision with the most instances recorded in the East Midlands region (Table A2.3).

Placements in a SEND setting was not a common reference on websites and there was little evidence of variation across the regions. The least number of programme website references to SEND placements were made in the North West (N=1), South West (N=1), North East (N=1) and Eastern (N=1) regions (Figure A2.5).

### **SCITT ITT programme website analysis**

The **SCITT** search found 178 programmes (Primary PGCE and Secondary PGCE) from 127 providers across all nine regions leading to QTS status (Figure 2). The search identified a similar proportion of Primary (N=92) and Secondary (N=86) PGCE programmes. Of these programme websites 81 (46%) made some reference to SEND.

**Figure 2: Number of SCITT ITT programme websites that make some generic reference to SEND, by qualification (N)**



Base 178 programmes

Source: SCITT programme websites via UCAS

Analysis of website programme content revealed that the most common reference to SEND was as the offer of a specialist pathway (N=10), followed by as part of a module such as a ‘Professional Studies’ module (N=7). Unlike the HEI analysis, the search did not find any compulsory modules in SEND on any SCITT programme websites (Figure A2.6). Information on SCITT programme websites about placements in a SEND setting was more frequent than on HEI websites (although there were more SCITT programme websites). Some form of placement in a SEND setting was found in 35 programme websites. The most common reference was to short placements/visits, described as anything from one session to two/three days (N=15). In addition, eleven programmes included a placement in a SEND setting as a compulsory element of the course and nine programmes offered a voluntary main placement in a SEND setting (Figure A2.7).

## Regional breakdown of SCITT programme website analysis

The distribution of ITT programmes across the regions ranged from 26 in Yorkshire and the Humber to 13 programmes in the North West region. The balance between Primary PGCE and Secondary PGCE programmes was even within six of the regions but there were noticeable differences in the North West, North East and the West Midlands (Table A2.4). Compared with HEI programme websites, overall, there were fewer references to SEND on SCITT programme websites. The distribution of references ranged from 86% to 21% with an average of 46%. Most references made on programme websites were found in the South East (86%) and the East Midlands (81%) regions; the least number of programme references were in the North East (25%) and Eastern regions (21%) (Table A2.5). Ten SCITT programme websites across seven regions made reference to the availability of a specialist SEND training pathway. There were fewer references made to SEND being part of a module (N=7 across five regions). No SCITT programme website described a SEND full module as a compulsory element of the programme (Table A2.6). Five regions had programme websites offering optional main placements in a SEND setting for interested trainees, four regions had compulsory placements and five regions had providers offering a shorter placement in a SEND setting as an element of the programme (Figure A2.8).

## 4.2 Summary of thematic findings

### 4.2.1 Theme 1: ITT programme ethos and SEND

A feature of the ITT programmes from all the case study providers was a clearly defined SEND ethos that underpinned the structure, content and delivery of each programme. One provider described a shared expectation that trainees are assessed on the **difference they make to each and every child in their care and that trainees are responsible (with support) for the learning and progress of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities** they teach in the classroom. This was a theme mirrored in the ITT Ofsted report analysis which could be summarised as **trainees demonstrating a strong commitment to the education of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities**. Moreover, 69% of NQTs in the online survey gave a rating of 7 out of 10 or more for how well their ITT had prepared them in understanding their responsibilities as a class teacher for pupils with SEND and/or disabilities.

Secondly, in recognition of the diversity of trainees' personal and professional backgrounds and interests in SEND, effective providers understood the need to create **programmes that were personalised and responsive to the professional requirements and interests in SEND of individual trainees**. An RQT from the focus group spoke of how, 'I thought I knew SEN until I met a group I have this year ...' which stresses the fact that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can face varied and multiple barriers to learning. Many providers described how trainees are on an *initial* training programme and that it was not possible for them to 'know all there is to know about SEND'. Neither is it possible to prepare trainees for the different ways that schools and colleges 'implement' SEND in their settings, which was another theme from the focus group. Therefore, the aim of a programme is more to ensure that trainees, even when (not if) a particular barrier to learning or setting's procedure is new for them, have **the confidence and competence to approach the situation as a professional**, to enable pupils and parents to feel supported and how and where to seek further information and/or advice.

#### **4.2.2 Theme 2: An embedded and explicit SEND curriculum**

The element of SEND practice most commonly referenced in the ITT Ofsted reports was the high quality of SEND provision delivered by SCITT and university tutors. Much has been written on the need for SEND in ITT to be 'bolt in, not bolt on' and one aim of the project was to try to develop our understanding of what this phrase means in practice for ITT SEND. Every provider, either at or near the beginning of the interview, spoke of how SEND was integrated throughout the programme and returned to on a regular basis, either explicitly and/or implicitly, as a subject across the year. The theme that best describes this approach is one where all providers were delivering an **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** as part of the ITT programme.

Key elements of an embedded and explicit SEND curriculum include:

- **Strategically planning for SEND in ITT** using resources such as the National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) ITT SEND Toolkit;<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> NASBTT (2019). *SEND toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/send-toolkit/>.

- Taking an approach that sees **SEND as just one element of normal ITT practice**, such as, for example, a standard element of lesson planning and observations;
- A curriculum that allows **for progression and consistency**. Many providers, for example, start the programme with an overview of the SEND Code of Practice, but regularly return to the more complex and challenging duties in the regulations, such as the application of the graduated approach to SEND in the classroom;
- **Embedded and explicit approaches to assessing trainees' SEND knowledge and skills** through, for example, compulsory SEND assignments, such as an 'Impact Study' of pupils' achievement and progress and opportunities to select SEND as a focus for other tasks;
- The requirement of trainees to incorporate **supported and shared reflective practice on SEND** throughout the programme through, for example, the use of diaries and online forums and
- Trainees being introduced to, and supported with, implementing **evidence informed SEND practice**.

#### 4.2.3 Theme 3: Models of SEND ITT placements

One of the two main questions in the NQT survey was an open question that asked respondents what had been the most effective and/or helpful elements of their ITT programme in supporting them to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. The overwhelming common theme across their responses was their experience of a placement in a SEND setting.

*'Working with the staff at Ashfields School, alongside pupils, and the delivery of key learning of SEND provision by senior staff from the school was exceptional. The level of knowledge, expertise and the effectiveness of the way these were communicated made the material accessible and enjoyable.*

*The days during which we experienced working with young people with vastly different needs was invaluable in understanding their situations and developing the knowledge and skills for teaching them.'* Newly Qualified Teacher

The positive impact of SEND placement experiences was also one of the six themes relating to effective SEND practice identified in the ITT Ofsted reports.

It was evident from the provider interviews and validated by the survey responses, that although SEND placements were offered by all of the providers, these varied greatly in number and duration, whether compulsory, optional or a formalised SEND pathway was an element of the programme. However, it was possible to identify four models of SEND placement which were:

- A **common core model of short placements** that could include; one visit to a SEND setting or up to three rotation days in different SEND settings, such as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), a resource base in a mainstream school and a hospital school;
- A **common core block SEND placement model**, often comprising two weeks in the spring term with opportunities for further tailored personalised placements;
- An **optional formalised SEND pathway model** that trainees often apply for before and/or at the start of the programme; and
- A **multiple placement model** that offers a common core block SEND placement, an optional formalised SEND pathway, opportunities for further tailored personalised placements and the flexibility to move into and out of the SEND pathway as required.

#### **4.2.4 Theme 4: Collaboration on SEND across the ITT partnership**

Effective practice for ITT SEND relies on collaboration between all the partners in an ITT partnership. A number of providers spoke of the importance of the **two-way collaborative process between schools and university partners at the planning, delivery and evaluation stages.**

*'... the relationship that (name of professional) leads with Northumbria University is phenomenal ... the university is a core partner in the design, development and teaching of all this curriculum, and is really supportive...'* Teach First Tutor

Another important collaborative partner in the ITT partnership, mentioned by some providers and NQTs from the survey analysis, were the **parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities.** As part of their placements, trainees were encouraged to attend meetings with parents, including, for example, Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

meetings. Other providers, as part of the taught sessions, invited parents to come in and meet with trainees to help trainees get some understanding of the lived experience of a child and a family with a SEN and/or disability and how the trainees and teachers can better support their children and young people.

The ITT providers interviewed for the project were often situated and working in very different contexts, ranging from one small urban local authority to the whole of a geographical region of England. However, it was possible to identify activities and arrangements that supported good working relationships such as a **SEND Conference held annually for all partnership colleagues, centralised schemes of work and online centrally held SEND resources.**

Endings were seen as important as beginnings and some providers ran specific end of year '**SEND summary**' events for whole groups but also **individual drop-in SEND sessions** for trainees. The purpose was to identify any relevant issues before their NQT placement, which was quite often in an ITT placement school/college where the pupils with SEN and/or disabilities may have been known to a trainee. Finally, trainee progression with SEND was often supported into the NQT year with tutors from ITT often involved in the delivery of **NQT SEND professional learning and development programmes.**

## **4.3 Provider case studies**

### **4.3.1 Theme 1: ITT programme ethos and SEND**

#### **Case Study 1: Developing trainee confidence and competence to support pupils with SEN and/or disabilities**

##### **Teaching London: London Diocesan Board for Schools SCITT**

##### **Provider context**

Teaching London: London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) SCITT was founded by a consortium of Church of England head teachers in 1998. The partnership comprises 83 schools across London, Surrey and Kent. There are 14 lead schools, including three lead secondary schools, working with local primary and secondary clusters. The partnership offers a one-year full-time course leading to the award of qualified teacher status (QTS). Successful completion of the course also leads to the award of a PGCE validated by Plymouth Marjon University.

In 2017, Ofsted highlighted several strengths of the programme: contrasting placements across the partnership; the organisation of additional school visits as appropriate; high-calibre outside speakers, internal training and visits to special schools meant that trainees and NQTs were very well prepared to teach pupils with a range of abilities and needs and that trainees' familiarity with strategies that support learning for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was a particular strength.

### Practice Highlight

Across the partnership and reflected in the programme is a shared expectation that trainees are assessed on the '**difference they make to each and every child in their care**' and that trainees are responsible (with support) for the learning and progress of pupils they teach in the classroom. The ethos of the programme is to ensure that trainees have '**the confidence and competence to approach any situation as a professional**' and to ensure that pupils and parents feel supported. This is in recognition that ITT is an *initial* training programme and that it is not possible to have encountered all types of SEND. Therefore, from induction, trainees with their mentor and link tutor select a '**focus pupil**' with SEN and/disabilities and during weekly observations and mentor meetings, critically reflect, through the lens of pupil learning and progress, how the trainee is making a difference for that child. This element of the programme includes meetings with parents and external agencies.

### Practice across the programme

The provider demonstrates an **embedded and explicit curriculum** is offered through, for example:

- A spiral curriculum where SEND is revisited throughout the time and in all areas of the programme;
- A Masters level assignment and presentation on SEN and/or disabilities halfway through the course, drawing on practice and research;
- A SEND week which includes a visit to a special teaching school, in London and centre based sessions delivered by external specialists; and
- An additional and optional assessed two-week placement in a special school.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- An emphasis on SEND issues in the combined development programme for mentors and link tutors and
- ‘Localised Twilight’ professional development sessions for trainees, mentors and linked tutors on a category of need common to a group of schools.

## **Case Study 2: Personalised and flexible SEND opportunities for trainees**

### **Cornwall SCITT ITT Partnership**

#### **Provider context**

Cornwall Secondary School SCITT consists of 23 secondary schools, a special school, an alternative provision multi-academy trust and a tertiary college. The training is school-led with a balance of practical classroom experience in at least two partner institutions. On completion, trainees are awarded QTS with the option to study the PGCE validated by the University of Cumbria.

In 2016, Ofsted noted the skilful way in which trainees and NQTs modified their teaching to meet the needs of all the pupils, including those who had specific learning difficulties. Both trainees and NQTs found the input from specialist speakers on subjects such as dyslexia and autism particularly helpful to understand the challenges involved with these specific needs. Experience in special schools, primary schools and post-16 providers gave them a breadth and depth to their training.

#### **Practice Highlight**

As the types of entry route into the teaching profession have expanded and changed, so has the profile and backgrounds of trainees. To illustrate this development, trainees on the Cornwall programme ranged from 22 to 55 years of age and many of them had experience of working with potentially vulnerable pupils as TAs in schools. In **recognition of the diversity of trainee backgrounds**, the SCITT leaders and partners have created a programme which is **personalised and responsive to the professional requirements and interests of trainees in teaching pupils with SEN and/or disabilities**. To illustrate this ethos a former police officer was supported to build on their

previous professional learning and experience to support pupils in alternative provision. Another example was the flexible timetable provided for a school direct SD salaried musician who was already employed in a special school but needed to have access to mainstream music classes to meet the programme requirements. The trainee went for one day a week for two terms to mainstream schools in the partnership and additional mainstream placements over the next two terms to get a breadth of experience across Key Stages 2 and 3. However, the partnership is mindful of ensuring that ITT requirements do not take precedence over the continuity of education for the pupils.

### Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- Asking trainees at interview for a place on the programme about their SEND experiences and potential SEND opportunities during the programme;
- Trainees being asked at pre-entry to read literature provided on inclusion in preparation for the first assignment topic in September;
- SENCOs from the partnership meeting with trainees in September to begin awareness-raising sessions and then return in January and the summer term to focus on practice;
- Specialists in SEND, such as dyslexia and in alternative provision, meet with trainees throughout the programme;
- Trainees, in the spring term, sharing learning from a case study pupil with SEN and/or disability shadowed in the autumn term;
- Supporting progress and attainment for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities being an implicit part of sessions on planning, assessment, data and differentiation;
- One day, two to three week and up to one whole term placements in different SEND settings; and
- Programme leaders ensuring that SEND runs throughout the subject specialist sessions such as literacy in geography and scaffolding in physical education (PE).

### **4.3.2 Theme 2: An embedded and explicit SEND curriculum**

#### **Case Study 3: Strategically planning for SEND in ITT**

##### **Kirklees and Calderdale SCITT ITT**

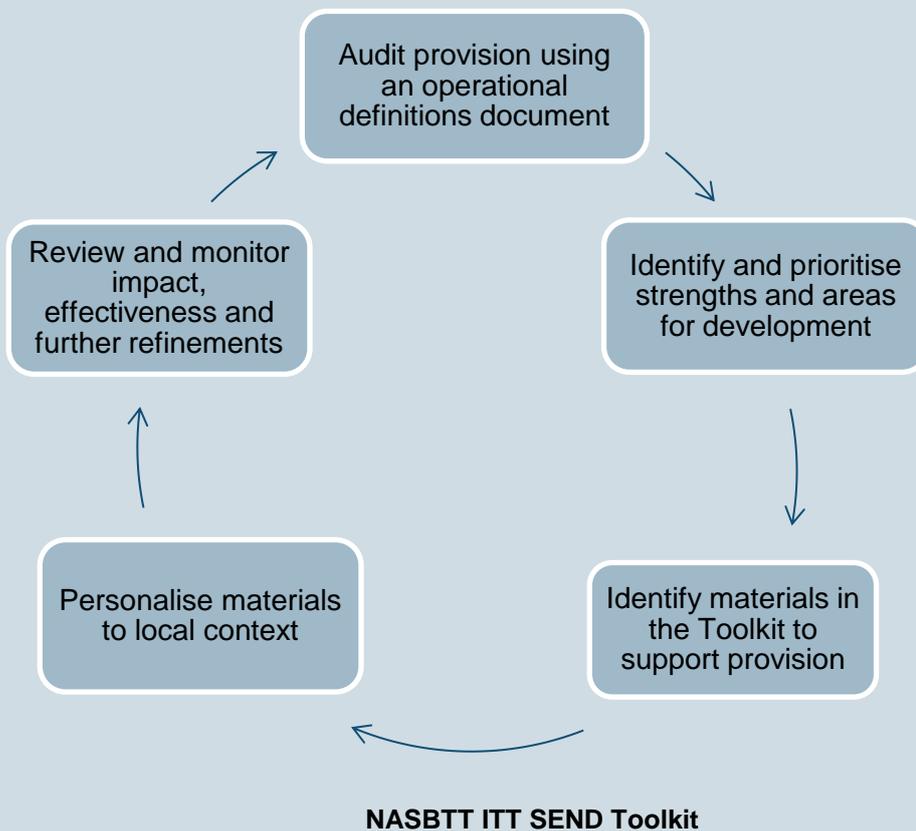
###### **Provider context**

Kirklees and Calderdale ITT partnership provides primary and secondary initial teacher training. The partnership offers a number of different training routes to gain qualified teacher status. Both primary and secondary training routes include SD, SD (salaried), QTS and QTS with a PGCE from Huddersfield University. A small number of trainees follow a primary special school training route.

In 2016, Ofsted reported that trainees demonstrated good techniques for assessing pupils' progress and a sophisticated understanding of pupils' different learning needs. Trainees knew how to plan appropriate tasks and activities to promote good learning. High quality training on the needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, coupled with the experience of visiting a special school prepared the trainees very well to meet pupils' specific and additional needs.

## Practice Highlight

To ensure a greater strategic approach to planning for the provision of SEND in their ITT programme, Kirklees and Calderdale SCITT used the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) ITT SEND Toolkit to inform and guide their practice. The Toolkit, launched in 2017, uses a five step process:



## Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit SEN and/or disabilities** curriculum is provided through:

- An emphasis on High Quality Teaching (HQT) linked with SEND throughout the time of the programme;
- Group tasks linked to SEND including research informed presentations on different categories of need;
- Focused observations in the autumn term that include how teachers support pupils in SEN and/or disabilities in the classroom;

- SEND being implicit in subject specialisms such as looking at space, task and adaptive equipment and the Inclusion Spectrum in PE;
- The core SEND programme including external speakers cover topics such as the 'Code of Practice' and 'Role of the SENCO';
- Visits to special schools that include, for example, collaboration with TAs in the classroom;
- Extended placements in special schools offered for interested trainees; and
- Extended placements in mainstream schools for trainees working in special schools.

Future developments:

- As teachers are faced with more challenging needs in mainstream settings, the provider is looking to work with PRUs to equip trainees with the skills required to assist pupils to develop and thrive in mainstream settings.

## **Case Study 4: SEND – just one element of normal practice**

### **Alliance for Learning SCITT**

#### **Provider context**

The Alliance for Learning partnership offers early years ITT and primary and secondary training in conjunction with settings, schools and sixth-form colleges across a number of local authorities in the North West region. On completion of the programme, trainees are recommended for QTS and gain a PGCE from the University of Manchester. The partnership offers postgraduate and school direct training in both phases.

In 2017, Ofsted described the partnership as placing a strong emphasis on equality and diversity. In the Early Years, trainees had a good understanding of how to adapt their teaching to support pupils with SEN and/or disabilities and to work closely with children's families when specific concerns about a child's development arose. Secondary trainees gained valuable practical experience in a special school and a pupil referral unit. They had a good understanding of potential barriers to learning and ensured that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities made at least expected progress.

### Practice Highlight

Much has been written about the need for SEND in ITT to be 'bolt in and not bolt on'. An embedded and explicit SEND curriculum was a characteristic of all provision in this project. Alliance for Learning described how "SEND must not be seen as bolt on, it must be seen as **just one element of normal practice, a thread that runs through** the programme from beginning to end, which you **come back to regularly.**" In doing so, it was felt that any barriers that trainees may face, such as, fears due to a lack of knowledge and understanding, could be overcome. SCITT Leader

### Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- An emphasis on High Quality Teaching (HQT) linked with SEND throughout the time of the programme;
- An emphasis on supporting trainees to know how to 'scaffold learning to the top' for all learners including all pupils with SEN and/or disabilities;
- A teaching and learning manual provided for trainees, with examples of scaffolding, to support subject specialisms;
- Structured peer observations using templates, early on in course and throughout;
- A reflective journal kept by trainees throughout the programme with inclusion a fundamental element and learning shared with mentors and peers;
- SEND Conference Days throughout the year;
- Theory-based sessions on different elements of SEND are delivered throughout the year quickly followed up by opportunities to visit relevant settings such as a PRU and a special school and
- An optional SEND main placement for trainees.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- Ex-trainees with a Teaching Assistant (TA) background incorporated as a resource to help all trainees engage with the deployment, preparedness and practice of TAs, and
- Shared 'expectations' of trainee performance and SEND as part of mentor training.

## **Case Study 5: Programme content and progression**

### **Basingstoke Alliance SCITT**

#### **Provider context**

The Basingstoke Alliance SCITT partnership was established in 2014 and combines central and school-based training; trainees follow SD, SD (salaried) or core tuition routes to QTS. There are currently 12 secondary schools in the partnership, which offers enhanced training in SEND, based at a special teaching school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The ethos that underpins the ITT provision comes from the lead school in producing teachers who are educational problem solvers, rather than just curriculum knowledge teachers, to think about individual children in their classes.

In 2016, Ofsted reported that trainees valued the series of training sessions about SEND and behaviour management. A particular strength of the trainees was their planning for teaching that took into account the diverse needs and abilities of pupils, particularly those who had SEN and/or disabilities.

## Practice Highlight

For the leaders of the Basingstoke Alliance **'progression and consistency'** are integral to the SEND ITT provision. The current structure and content of their programme is a result of experience and expertise from the lead school, Dove House, responding to feedback from trainee surveys and after completion of the NASBTT SEND ITT Toolkit. Eighteen days are explicitly set aside for SEND, but SEND is as embedded across the curriculum in, for example, the subject specialism sessions and assignment tasks across the year. This case study is reporting on the explicit SEND elements of the Basingstoke Alliance ITT programme.

An introduction to SEND (development of the whole child, progression to adulthood, reforms and current regulations) starts as part of the three-day induction before the autumn term begins and is led by the head teacher of the lead SEND school and the Programme Manager. The 18 days include four days delivered across the year by an experienced specialist in SEND. Day 1 builds on the introduction during induction and extends this to: understanding different learning profiles, (including categories of SEND), how to begin to identify barriers to learning and the range of external agencies that work to support pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Then, having 'sowed the seed', in the spring term, it is felt that trainees are better prepared and have more classroom experience to: return in more depth to specific barriers to learning (based on the four categories of need); the strategies that can be used to support learning and the importance of 'breaking down' learning into small achievable steps to support progress and achievement. In the summer term, the main topics of the third and fourth days include: partnership with parents; the deployment, preparedness and practice of TAs and approaches to reducing the differences in outcomes between pupils with and without SEN and/or disabilities from national, whole school and classroom perspectives. This is complemented by the school's professional themes programme in the spring and summer term which supports the trainees putting the theory into practice.

These four days in central training are planned alongside school experience days. At the end of the first half term, there is a SEND mainstream school experience day and a special school day. The SEND mainstream looks at collaborative and corroborative co-productive approaches to ensure all pupils' needs are met with a focus on the graduated

approach, the individual support plan, and the external agencies that the schools use to support the pupils in their particular setting. In the special school day, observations of numeracy and literacy lessons are completed, as well a learning walk with a focus on behaviour for learning. One outcome from the day is that trainees are asked to work in groups to produce a leaflet for one of the four categories of need for a fellow trainee to use in the classroom. Trainees also have a whole school data day which focuses on the use of data to assess, identify needs, refine and revise provision to support the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes.

In the summer term, trainees return to the special school to focus on differentiation, personalisation, stretch and challenge and how Dove House uses positive reinforcement strategies to support motivation and resilience in learning.

## **Case Study 6: Embedding SEND within the wider curriculum: The Impact Study**

### **North Manchester ITT Partnership SCITT**

#### **Provider context**

North Manchester ITT Partnership SCITT works in partnership with 38 secondary schools and 14 primary schools across greater Manchester, Merseyside and neighbouring local authorities in the North West. At the end of the two-year programme, successful trainees achieve QTS and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education is awarded from Manchester Metropolitan University.

In 2016, Ofsted reported that trainees planned effectively to ensure that different groups of pupils, including those with SEN and/or disabilities made at least good progress. They were clear in demonstrating their expectations of pupils that enabled all pupils to access learning.

#### **Practice Highlight**

A key assessed element of the North Manchester ITT programme is the 'Impact Study' which all trainees complete across the first year of the programme. Trainees select one of their classes and, at the end of the year, present to a panel of deputy heads, professional mentors and university colleagues, findings that demonstrate the impact of

their teaching and how this impact was achieved, supported by evidenced gathered over the year and the wider research evidence base. An element of the presentation includes how they identified barriers to learning for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, what they did to reduce the impact of those barriers and then to demonstrate how the pupils made progress over the year.

*'What we really, really push is it's not just about the data. It's not about the labels given to children, it's about the relationships that our trainees build. That is what we encourage. So it's about learning the children as individuals.'* SCITT Lead

The Impact Study is assessed and a second purpose of the panel presentation is to take the opportunity to publicly celebrate the achievements of the trainees.

### **Practice across the programme**

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- Focused observations and tracking of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in the autumn term;
- Specialist staff from across the partnership, including Manchester Metropolitan University, involved in SEND training on topics such as: child and adolescent development; the SEND Code of Practice requirements; mental health and wellbeing and revisiting these subjects throughout the year in training; and
- One day in a special school and alternative provision, with flexibility with a view to expanding this experience.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- An audit for mentor training that includes SEND, and
- Mentors supporting trainees in secondary settings to meet with the designated SEND lead in their subject specialism.

## Case Study 7: Embedding SEND within the wider curriculum: postgraduate assignments

### Teach First North East

#### Provider context

Teach First North East provides primary and secondary employment-based ITT, delivered in partnership with Northumbria University and schools in 12 local authorities within the North East region. At the end of the two-year programme, successful trainees achieve QTS and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education and Leadership.

In 2016, Ofsted reported on the professionalism of trainees and the unrelenting focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and demonstrating effective support for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Primary trainees visited a special school for children with complex learning needs and some secondary trainees completed contrasting school experiences in special schools and pupil referral units. Centre based training in SEND was extremely well planned, of high quality and delivered by university staff and school practitioners.

#### Practice Highlight

**In 2016, the Teach First PGCE included a module assignment looking specifically at meeting the needs of specific pupils in their classroom.** This has been built on and developed as part of the new Postgraduate Diploma, where trainees complete four modules across the two years. Three of the four **module assignments address, in part (dependent on the elective focus of trainees), the education of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.** The first module is about trainees' emerging philosophy of teaching, models of pedagogy and theories of learning, with a focus on disadvantage, including the subject of SEND. The second assignment asks trainees to reflect on leading learning in their communities with a closer examination of the pupils they teach as individuals, understanding family contexts and the wider setting of the community within which they are working and thus includes the education of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. The final module asks trainees to focus on extending their impact, with a project proposal and implementation on an area of their own choice; some trainees will address SEND.

## Practice across the programme

An **embedded, explicit and carefully sequenced curriculum** is offered through:

- SEND being introduced as part of the five week Summer Institute before the teaching element of the programme begins and subsequently returned to throughout the two years;
- An emphasis on HQT for *all* pupils and how to be a 'great teacher'. This underpins programme approach;
- Additional school placements planned to respond to trainee needs – some of these are undertaken in special schools or PRUs; and
- PGCE modules including a case study task of an intervention for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities that includes developing, implementing and evaluating an intervention for the pupils.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- Specialists from within and beyond the partnership delivering training – especially from university tutors, and
- Mentor training that includes SEND and 'localised' to school context.

## Case Study 8: Nurturing reflective SEND practitioners

### University of Newcastle

#### Provider context

The partnership offers postgraduate training in the primary and secondary phases. All trainees work towards the achievement of a PGCE and qualified teacher status. Provision includes an SD route for both primary and secondary teacher training.

In 2017, Ofsted reported that for the primary programme, training was enhanced by staff from local schools with particular expertise in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Trainees and NQTs demonstrated effective skills in adapting their teaching to meet the needs of this group of pupils aided, in part, by their learning during a placement in schools catering specifically for pupils with complex needs. At the secondary phase,

trainees and NQTs were effective in meeting the needs of pupils because school placement experiences, along with centre and school-based training, enabled them to develop their skills effectively.

### **Practice Highlight**

‘At Newcastle we are nurturing very reflective practitioners’. Developing confidence and competence in providing a teaching and learning context that enables all pupils, including pupils with SEN and/or disabilities to thrive academically and socially, requires **trainees to incorporate reflective practice on SEND throughout the programme and beyond**. The ITT programme at the University of Newcastle supports trainees in this process, in three explicit ways across the programme. Firstly, in the primary programme, trainees maintain a learning journal. As part of this process, trainees reflect back on their work with pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in the classroom and what this means for adapting their practice going forward and to write about the evidence they base these changes on. Trainees are encouraged to write in a professional way, but equally journals are also personal to them, in the sense that they can comment about what is important to them in their development. Guidance is provided by tutors in the writing process and trainees are encouraged to share aspects of their journal with their mentors in school. On the secondary programme, trainees complete online weekly reflective diaries, which include: the progress made by pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in their lessons; the strategies used and adapted with and for individual pupils to support this progress and commentaries on how their practice as trainees changes over time.

Secondly, all trainees complete programme evaluations at two points in the year, which asks trainees to reflect on how prepared they feel to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. The responses are a prompt for trainees and their mentors to identify, in this instance, additional knowledge, skills and experience they need in relation to SEND and which is added to the trainee’s ongoing training plan; the third tool for reflection.

## Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- SEND is a theme included from the start of the taught programme and in schools, for example, trainees meet with the SENCO to gain an insight into how SEN policy and practice is undertaken in individual settings;
- Lesson plans and mini presentations require trainees to show how they have scaffolded and adapted teaching for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Subject tutors for secondary students include SEND in their sessions;
- Taught SEND content is quickly followed by practice through school visits and/or placements;
- Two SEND Conference days are held each year and include input from local authority representatives;
- Specialists in different categories of need contribute to taught sessions; and
- All trainees have at least one day in a SEND setting and trainees can opt for longer assessed placements which is increasing in popularity.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- Practitioners from special schools support in the delivery of the programme, and
- On-line and face-to-face training for school mentors includes SEND.

## Case Study 9: Evidence-informed SEND practice

### University of Exeter

#### Provider context

The partnership provides ITT in the primary and secondary phases. There are approximately 300 schools and colleges involved in the partnership across the South West region and London. The university offers a postgraduate route towards PGCE with QTS in both phases.

In 2017, Ofsted reported that primary trainees were confident, skilled at creating high-quality learning environments and demonstrated a secure knowledge of how to adapt teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. In the secondary phase, the training offered was described as thorough, comprehensive, and included expert centre-based learning from specialist providers.

### **Practice Highlight**

Underpinning the ITT programme at the University of Exeter is a strong theoretical framework; integral to which is an emphasis placed on **evidence-informed SEND practice**. In particular, the use of theoretical and empirical research is used to support the development and practice of trainees on topics such as; inclusive and special pedagogy and collaborating with TAs. Lecturers from the ITT and wider Graduate School of Education programmes present and discuss their own research and current projects with trainees. Many of these lectures are recorded and uploaded, with research papers and relevant resources to the University's virtual learning platform for all trainees and NQTs.

### **Practice across the programme**

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- SEND running as a thread throughout the programme;
- Trainees completing tracking and case study tasks for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities;
- SEND being incorporated into subject specialism days and school based professional studies programme;
- Structured templates to support observation and reflection of SEND; and
- An optional offer of a SEND second placement for trainees.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- SEND coordinated by one member of staff across the programme who has oversight of how SEND is embedded into the different programme elements including the curriculum, placement experiences and mentor training, and
- Annual combined mentor training with course subject tutors that includes SEND.

### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Models of SEND ITT placements**

#### **Case Study 10: Flexibility in placement models**

##### **East Midlands Teacher Training Partnership**

###### **Provider context**

East Midlands Teacher Training Partnership provides SCITT in the primary and secondary phases and began in 2015/16. The partnership includes 62 schools across Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. The partnership provides both core training and training through School Direct. All trainees follow the same programme, which leads to QTS and a PGCE awarded by the University of Nottingham.

In 2018, Ofsted reported that trainees received significant and high-quality experiences of teaching within a SEND context as a consequence of a particularly productive link with a local special school. This enhanced their understanding and their skills, particularly when planning learning to meet pupils' individual needs. A large proportion of trainees successfully sought employment within special school settings, including within the partnership. Trainees are knowledgeable and committed to promoting good achievement for pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and are skilled in providing resources which ensure equality of access.

###### **Practice Highlight**

Providers offered four different models of placements in special schools and settings. One of the fundamental principles of effective practice in relation to SEND placements, whatever model was implemented, was the need for providers and schools to be flexible in the experiences they offered to individual trainees. This was a particular feature of

practice at the East Midlands Teacher Training Partnership. The partnership has an agreement with the special schools in the partnership, that they will take trainees who are interested in SEND throughout the year.

*'We ask fairly regularly for trainees to let us know if they are interested in going down the SEND route and then we bespoke the placements for them a little bit and give them more access to special needs so that they're then in a stronger position to plan for their next year ... this year 10% of our trainees have had discussions about moving into the SEND teaching sector rather than mainstream'. SCITT Tutor*

### **Practice across the programme**

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- A programme of session led by specialists including partnership SENCOs;
- A SEND Reflections document to complete throughout the year; and
- A two week placement in a special school for all trainees.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- An online centralised bank of resources, and
- A transition plan for all trainees to take into their NQT year which includes SEND.

### **Case Study 11: Model 1 – common core model of short SEND placements**

#### **The Sutton Park SCITT**

##### **Provider context**

The Sutton Park SCITT, established in 2015, provides secondary teacher training for graduates. There are 11 secondary and special schools in the partnership in Birmingham, Sandwell, Solihull, Staffordshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Walsall. Trainees who successfully complete their training are recommended for QTS and have the opportunity to gain a PGCE in teaching and learning from Birmingham City University.

In 2018, Ofsted reported that contrasting placements ensured trainees were well prepared to promote equality for different groups of pupils. NQTs securing posts in special schools had been trained effectively to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. NQTs spoke positively about the impact of this element of the training on their practice, particularly those who intended to work in the field of SEN and/or disabilities.

### **Practice Highlight**

A number of trainees at the Sutton Park SCITT undertake their main placement in a special school and a number of this group go on to teach in special schools. However, it is important to the leaders and members of the partnership that, whatever the background or main settings of the trainees, there is a '**common core**' to the SEND ITT placement experiences. Therefore, on three consecutive Fridays in February and March, The Sutton Park SCITT organises three placement **rotation days** for all trainees. The three settings in 2018 were: a special school; a resource base for pupils with physical disabilities in a mainstream setting and a school where there is a strong focus on English as an additional language. The rotation days offer an insight into education provided in each of the settings, for example, in the resource base there is a session led by a TA during which trainees use wheelchairs to move around the school to begin to experience some of the barriers to academic, social and physical learning faced by the pupils.

### **Practice across the programme**

An **embedded and explicit curriculum** is offered through:

- An underpinning philosophy across the partnership that ensures trainees understand the right of each individual child to access the curriculum they offer in the classroom;
- Trainees completing tracking and case study tasks for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Sessions in SEND are delivered across the year, including four sessions led by SENCOs from the partnership and another session led by a Higher Level TA with expertise in SEND and who also looks at how trainees might collaborate with TAs in the classroom;

- To support SEND in subject specialisms, trainees and tutors have access to NASBTT materials;
- Main teaching placements are offered in special schools and those trainees working in special schools have one term in a mainstream school; and
- On three consecutive Fridays, called 'rotation days', rather than all trainees gathering together in one place for training as is the case for each other Friday on the course, the trainees are divided into three groups and go to three different venues, rotating across them so that each trainee visits them all: (1) a school which is able to provide specialist guidance on working with children with English as an additional language; (2) a school which is a resource base for children with physical disability and (3) a special school.

## **Case Study 12: Model 2: A common core block SEND placement**

### **University College Birmingham**

#### **Provider context**

University College Birmingham (UCB) offers four routes towards QTS in primary education: PGCE, SD, an assessment only route, and a teacher apprentice route. Postgraduate trainees specialise in either the 3–7 or 5–11 age range. The partnership works with 121 schools and EYS settings, including special schools, in a range of locations in the Birmingham area.

In 2016, Ofsted reported that the SEND content of the programme was a particular strength of UCB's provision. The university enjoyed a strong partnership with a number of special schools which enabled all trainees to experience an enhanced two-week placement to observe high quality teaching. Trainees spoke with enthusiasm about this programme element which they and NQTs agreed was a valuable and very beneficial experience. It provided them with effective opportunities to develop their understanding of teaching pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Consequently, many had chosen to begin their teaching career in special schools. Those teaching in mainstream schools gained much from this opportunity too, enabling them to effectively plan and deliver lessons which were well-matched to the learning needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

## Practice Highlight

UCB have included in their programme a two week (non-assessed) SEND placement in a special school since 2005, which takes place the week before and after the spring half term. The purpose of the placement is to experience, observe and engage with the special school environment including pupils, practitioners and the wider school community. Trainees are provided with a guidance booklet to structure and direct their learning and development across the two weeks. During the second week of the placement, trainees deliver teaching activities. Trainees are visited by a member of the PGCE team, at some point in the placement, to monitor progress and provide individual support if required. For many of trainees, it is their first encounter with the barriers and, sometimes considerable, challenges faced by pupils with SEN and/or disabilities and their families. In the week following the placement, trainees and tutors come together to share experiences. This learning is used to inform the second half of the ITT experience. Since 2005, all trainees on the programme have completed the whole two week SEND placement.

*'What's a real, real strength of this, is some students will come out saying that was absolutely brilliant and I now know that actually a special school is not for me and likewise, we will also have students who come out and say, that was the most amazing experience of my life, so could I please have a placement in a special school'.*

*'We ask them to come up with a final word, to describe the whole of their experience and each year, in our booklet, we produce a word wall of all these words, from the students and I've got it here ..., beneficial, inspirational, individuality, priceless, incredible ... insightful, it has taught me to understand the complexities some children face on a daily basis ... communication is far more important than I ever realised ... I have learned a range of techniques that will impact on both me and my practice forever'. PGCE tutor*

## Case Study 13: Model 3 – an optional specialist SEND pathway

### Bath Spa University

#### Provider context

Bath Spa University offers many postgraduate routes into early years, primary and secondary teaching including: a one-year full-time and 16 month part-time, PGCE route with QTS, SD, Teach First, EYITT, school-centred ITT and assessment only. It works with over 50 LAs and over 500 schools and settings. The partnership includes multi-academy trusts, teaching school alliances, diocesan boards of education, clusters of schools and individual schools. Trainees applying for the primary route can opt to specialise in teaching pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

In 2015, Ofsted reported that primary trainees and NQTs were well prepared and confident to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. In particular, NQTs who had chosen to specialise in the subject had developed a very secure understanding of the specific needs of the pupils they taught including skilfully making use of other adults in the classroom to give good support to pupils' learning. In the secondary phase, trainees benefited from an extremely well organised programme that combined theoretical training with practical experiences including SEND.

#### Practice Highlight

Bath Spa University offers a 30 place, oversubscribed SEND pathway to trainees on the primary programmes. There are **selection criteria for the pathway**, but those trainees who apply often have experience of SEND in schools or in other settings, or are considering a career in special education either to ultimately work in a special school or to be a SENCO in a mainstream school. Trainees have two placements for their two key stages in a mainstream school and their final placement in a special school or in a SEND base in a mainstream school. **Whilst on the pathway placement, the expectations are the same as of all trainees on a placement.** Part of the rationale for the selection criteria is that the university team is mindful of the fact that the smaller size classes and the profile of the pupils, require **careful planning about the number and backgrounds of trainees placed in each school.**

**Mentors of trainees in special schools participate in bespoke training** to address, in part, the challenge of ensuring how the trainee in their setting can be supported to meet the teacher standards. This training is facilitated by two highly experienced colleagues in SEND, who also tutor all the trainees on the SEND pathway to help ensure a consistent ethos and approach across the pathway for the trainees, schools and university.

*'All the special schools we work with are just amazing. The quality of mentoring that our trainees get is second to none'. PGCE tutor*

### **Practice across the programme**

An **embedded and explicit curriculum** is offered through:

- Online weekly reflective tasks and reviews that include activities related to SEND such as observing and shadowing a pupil with a SEN and/or disability;
- An ethos of SEND and child and adolescent development as integral to HQT;
- Tutors in the university modelling inclusive teaching practice in their sessions with trainees; and
- University seminars dedicated to SEND on topics such as attachment, resilience and wellbeing, the graduated approach and Education, Health and Care Plans and becoming a SENCO.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- The selection of experienced tutors in SEND;
- Online weekly reviews shared by trainees, mentors and tutors for real time comment, reflection and feedback by all;
- An online 'Training Experiences' document providing a 'bank of ideas' as to how trainees can seek opportunities in schools to 'explore, develop, extend and innovate' practice which includes SEND; and
- Experienced teachers from partner special schools providing additional training on aspects of SEND.

## Case Study 14: Model 4 – multiple types of SEND placements

### University of Warwick

#### Provider context

The partnership offers teacher training for EYS, primary, secondary and further education phases. Early years ITT is delivered via three routes: university-led, employer-based and assessment only. The secondary ITT route includes a university-led PGCE core 11–18 programme and school-led PGCE SD training and salaried programmes. Initial teacher training for further education is delivered through two year, part-time in-service courses validated by the university.

In 2016, Ofsted reported in the primary programme that high quality, well targeted and timely ‘serial placements’ and ‘mini-experiential placements’ enabled trainees to focus on meeting the needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. In the secondary programme, all observed trainees demonstrated detailed and thorough planning, and a very good understanding of how to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.

#### Practice Highlight

The University of Warwick offers a SEND pathway, now in its fourth year, as part of the EYS and primary programme. The pathway **is underpinned by an integrated and collaborative approach between the university and school partner** and is co-delivered by a university tutor and head teacher in a local special school, which is also a teaching school. It is the **most popular specialist pathway on the primary programme** with a third of all trainees applying for 35 spaces (N=55/150 people). The pathway runs five days across the year, with taught sessions, practical workshops and a variety of speakers including pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, parents, school staff and external specialists in SEND. The pathway is rated very highly by trainees on all evaluations.

The pathway is not without its challenges. One of the more pressing issues is how to ensure that trainees, who might be working with pupils well below expected levels, meet the requirements of all the Teachers Standards. However, a commitment to inclusion across the partnership and flexibility within and across placements means these potential obstacles are overcome.

In addition to the SEND pathway, all trainees spend a week in a special school. The importance of the week is that such an experience:

*' ... changes attitudes, it changes values and it changes the teacher identity ... It contributes to understanding inclusive practices and quality first teaching ... it helps students (trainees) to understand what disability is and also to have the will and the motivation to do something about it'. PGCE tutor*

### **Practice across the programme**

An **embedded and explicit curriculum** is offered through:

- An approach is adopted where all teaching standards are shown to relate to SEND, and
- SEND/inclusion is one of the university assignments.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- Mentor training delivered regionally and in the university with a focus on inclusion in schools, but also how mentors might adopt an inclusive and individualised approach in supporting their trainees.

#### **4.3.4. Theme 4: Collaboration on SEND across the ITT partnership**

##### **Case Study 15: Parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities as part of ITT**

##### **Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance Cherwell**

##### **Provider context**

The Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) SCITT offers primary and secondary SD and SD (salaried) routes into teaching. On successful completion of the programme, trainees are awarded QTS and some opt to study for a PGCE provided by Oxford Brookes University. The alliance comprises over 200 primary and secondary schools.

In 2018, Ofsted reported that trainees benefited from inspiring training to help them support pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. The sessions about vulnerable pupils confirmed, for many trainees, exactly why they wanted to become teachers. Some former trainees have

taken up posts in special schools for highly vulnerable pupils and are doing extremely well as newly qualified teachers.

### Practice Highlight

In 2008, the Lamb Inquiry<sup>11</sup> was established to investigate a range of ways in which parental confidence in the SEND system of assessment and provision might be improved. One of the principle recommendations, as a result of the review, was an increased focus on outcomes for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. It makes sense, therefore, **that parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities are important collaborators within an ITT partnership**, in being able to contribute insight as to how those improved outcomes can be achieved.

As part of the ITT programme at the OTSA SCITT, **'Super Thursdays'** are run across the year and SEND is an important element of these days. In one session, the whole cohort (approximately 100 trainees) breaks into smaller groups to meet with parents of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities who will talk a little bit about their child and their educational journey. This is then followed by an open conversation between parents and trainees.

*'Obviously they're all parents that we know and have worked with. However, in our end of year evaluations, that's often one of the things that they (trainees) specify as being an incredibly powerful encounter. Parents say, "We're very keen to help and we want this to be a partnership."'* SCITT tutor

### Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

---

<sup>11</sup> B. Lamb (2009). *Lamb Inquiry: Review of SEN and Disability Information*. Retrieved from <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/9042/1/Lamb%20Inquiry%20Review%20of%20SEN%20and%20Disability%20Information.pdf>.

- Trainees sharing their week's study of a pupil with SEN and/or disabilities and their research on the relevant category of need;
- Trainees tracking pupils on placement including a pupils with an EHCP;
- A SEND 'Themed Week' near the beginning of the programme to build confidence and support a mind-set that 'good teaching for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is good teaching for all pupils';
- Subject specialism sessions including SEND explicitly;
- All trainees spending at least one day in a special school with structured preparatory and follow up activities;
- Some trainees experiencing significant placements in a special school depending on their individual pathway; and
- An offer of an optional primary pathway with enhanced SEND.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- Provision of a wellbeing officer to support trainees during the programme, including any emotional aspects that might arise from supporting children with SEN and/or disabilities and their families, and
- Twilight professional development sessions offered by the Alliance which trainees are funded to attend.

## **Case Study 16: Synergy between school alliance and university**

### **University of Derby**

#### **Provider context**

The University of Derby offers various routes (undergraduate and postgraduate with QTS, PGCE, SD and assessment only) into teaching and trains teachers across all phases from EY to further education. Some trainees take an optional SEND specialist route available in the primary programme.

In 2015, Ofsted reported that the secondary programme offered effective opportunities which ensured that trainees were skilled in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. There was a strong focus on inclusion including visits to a specialist resource base for pupils with autism. Trainees and NQTs tailored lesson planning and teaching skilfully to meet pupils' individual needs. Trainees understood their responsibility for identifying the different starting points of the pupils in their classes and were responsive to any potential barriers to learning.

### **Practice Highlight**

The University of Derby collaborates with alliances and schools across five local authorities. Therefore, to ensure that the needs of trainees, schools and ultimately pupils with SEN and/or disabilities are met effectively, there is need for a **genuine partnership between school and university**.

*'I think the way in which we work in genuine partnership with each other is very strong. I mean I very much take my **lead from the special schools** in a sense that we work collaboratively, and I will say to them "Right, this is what I'm thinking, this is what we need to do, how can we best approach this?" ... **but it's a two-way process**'.*

University tutor

An example of this two-way process in the partnership is how knowledge and understanding developed in one context is discussed and reconceptualised in another. How, for example, can research on child and adolescent development be observed and applied in the classroom and conversely, how can behaviours observed in the classroom relate to theory? This type of conversation is ongoing between the University and its partners throughout the planning, delivery and annual evaluation of the programme.

*'When you get genuine partnership working ... nobody has left anything in the planning to each other...for example, with a SEND topic we know where it's going to be introduced ... where it's going to be embedded and where it's going to be developed'.* University tutor

## Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- Keynote lectures on SEND including follow up tasks in school;
- A university lecturer in SEND being present in and contributing to Maths and English core subject sessions;
- An online forum that allows for 'structured conversations' on SEND;
- Opportunities for extended experiences in special schools; and
- A SEND route that is designed for those trainees that have identified at the enrolment stage that they would like to become teachers in a special school.

### Case Study 17: ITT embedded in the community

#### Wandsworth Primary Schools' Consortium

##### Provider context

Wandsworth Primary Schools' Consortium offers a one-year full-time course leading to QTS and a PGCE validated by Kingston University. The consortium consists of 25 settings including nursery, primary and junior schools in Wandsworth, South London.

In 2017, Ofsted reported that the leaders of the SCITT maximised opportunities for trainees to attend contrasting placements across the partnership. In addition, leaders organised additional school experiences appropriately so that trainees gained experience of working with pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Specialist speakers and visits to different settings, such as special schools, enriched trainees' professional studies beyond the opportunities their placement schools could provide.

##### Practice Highlight

Wandsworth Primary Schools' Consortium has been established for over 20 years and the **ITT partnership is embedded in the local community**. Over that time, a core number of very committed partners has developed which contributes to the success of the programme.

*'Although they (schools) are very diverse in their approaches, there's shared principles, shared practices, specifically underpinning their approach to inclusion and SEND, and so that means that wherever students are placed, they're getting the same very strong message which is very important'.* SCITT Programme Director

Many of the trainees live in, or near, the local authority and take up positions in Wandsworth schools on completion of the programme. Therefore, as part of the programme, there is an emphasis on **trainees getting to know and understand the SEND structures in the local authority**, which strengthens their SEND practice in their NQT year. A previous trainee on the SCITT is now head teacher of a local school and, with the SENCO from the school, contributes to teaching on the inclusion elements of the programme. Finally, the lead tutors on the programme come from SEND practice backgrounds which helps to ensure that inclusion and SEND is embedded throughout the programme.

*'There's just a really good continuity of message, clarity of message that's met by the fact that we have this strong, connected partnership school base that we work with'.*

SCITT Programme Director

## Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit curriculum** is offered through:

- The programme starting with a two-week observation in the trainee's placement school which includes a SEND focus;
- Taught sessions having a strong focus on, for example, child development and language and communication, the SEND Code of Practice, HQT, SEMH, assessment for learning and SEND, using Pupil Premium;
- Case study task on three pupils in placement including one pupil with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Weekly reflective tasks, shared with peers, with a SEND focus;

- Completion of an 'Inclusion Log' over the year that explores SEND in trainee's setting, comprising, for example, strategies used by the trainee and in their settings more broadly;
- Two school visits to support trainees' understanding of transition points relating to SEND; and
- One day visit to a specialist setting for all trainees.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- A SEND Special Interest Group established with the university for all trainees and members of the partnership.

### **Case Study 18: ITT embedded across many communities**

#### **University of Central Lancashire**

##### **Provider context**

The University of Central Lancashire, through its Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, works in close partnership with 14 colleges across the North West region of the country. This partnership is a provider of ITT for the further education and skills sector. The partnership offers part-time programmes for both in-service and pre-service trainees and full-time programmes. Trainees enrol on either the PGCE or the Certificate in Education (level 5) programmes, and go on to teach mainly in Further Education colleges, sixth forms, apprenticeship providers and Higher Education, with some also in schools.

In 2015, Ofsted reported that the very effective preparation that trainees received from the partnership, enabled them to work successfully with learners with SEN and/or disabilities.

### Practice Highlight

The further education and skills ITT programme offered by the University of Central Lancashire is taught in partner colleges across North West England. This presents both benefits and challenges for collaboration on SEND within the programme. The University supports collaboration on SEND in three ways. Firstly, to ensure tutors from all the colleges in the programme remain up to date with SEND education, there is regular updating on SEND issues at partnership meetings and in 2018, this included a **SEND Conference for all partnership colleagues**. At the conference, speakers included university staff with expertise in working with young people and adults with mental health issues; a college manager with an update on recent SEND policy developments; a university colleague who is a leading expert in teaching students with hearing impairment and a student who spoke about living with autism. The learning from the conference and resource materials, including video footage of the student presentation, is then integrated into the work of the tutors with the trainees back in their own settings. Secondly, the University team has written **centralised schemes of work**, including a **companion set of carefully constructed SEND case studies**, to act as guidance for tutors in the colleges to adapt for their settings and the specific needs of trainees. Finally, all **SEND resources are held centrally** on SharePoint for ease of access for tutors across the partnership.

### Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- Trainees participating in a simulated case conference in a SEND case, using the companion case studies;
- Taught sessions including speakers with specialist backgrounds and topics, such as adolescent development and inclusive pedagogy for students with a range of different needs and disabilities;
- Paired peer observations to 'fill any gaps' in trainees' needs relating to SEND;
- An action research module that has SEND as an optional focus;

- Twice yearly student self-evaluations which include SEND questions; and
- Trainees accessing optional visits to SEND settings facilitated by the many trainees already working or on placement in SEND settings.

## Case Study 19: SEND drop-in – personalising SEND for trainees at the end of ITT

### Leicester and Leicestershire SCITT

#### Provider context

The Leicester and Leicestershire SCITT ITT partnership provides early primary (3-7) and primary (5–11) SCITT for graduates. Trainees who successfully complete their training are recommended for QTS and gain a PGCE from the University of Leicester. The partnership consists of 70 primary schools within Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities.

In 2016, Ofsted reported that in every classroom visited, positive climates for learning promoted pupils' confidence to 'have a go'. Former trainees felt strongly that they were able to reflect on the progress of pupils and meet their needs. Leaders were aware not only of the intellectual needs but also the personal needs of trainees and placements were carefully considered to suit their learning needs.

#### Practice Highlight

Endings were seen as important as beginnings. Although the end of ITT is in many ways a period of transition into the next phase of early teacher career development, it is time to reflect and 'take stock' for trainee teachers and that includes their SEND learning and practice. SCITT tutors in the Leicester and Leicestershire ITT programme finish the programme with an **end of year summary of SEND**. During this shared session trainees are asked, for example, what they have learnt about communicating with a child with profound and multiple learning difficulties or with a child with autism and how will that transfer that learning to working with pupils with many SEN and/or disabilities during their NQT year. In addition, and in recognition of the need to personalise learning for trainees, as well as pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, tutors run **individual drop-in SEND sessions**.

*'At the end of the course ... I think it's really important for people to be able to have the opportunity to sit there and ask the questions that they've got, after their experience, moving forward. I think it's that personalisation, we say is good for children ...'* SCITT tutor

## Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit SEND curriculum** is offered through:

- An emphasis on HQT with learning needs of all pupils in mind;
- SEND integral to Maths and English curriculum sessions;
- A 27 hour module entitled *Meeting Individual Needs* – delivered in a special school;
- Opportunities during the module to spend time with pupils in class;
- Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities attending a taught session and talking on their lived experience of SEN and/or disability;
- A research assignment with a SEND focus;
- Trainees visiting an additional specialist setting of their choice, such as another special school, PRU and children's hospital school; and
- The offer of a SEND pathway and/or additional short placements.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- Joint training session for special school teachers and central SCITT staff to ensure that SEND placements enable trainees to meet all the Teachers Standards.

## Case Study 20: SEND in the NQT year

### London East Teacher Training Alliance SCITT

#### Provider context

The London East Teacher Training Alliance (LETTA) is a SCITT partnership based in Tower Hamlets, London. Trainees who complete the course are recommended QTS and can take SD salaried or non-salaried routes. All routes benefit from a PGCE with Masters credits.

In 2018, Ofsted reported that trainees benefited from outstanding training provided by SCITT tutors and by a range of high profile and experienced experts. This included excellent training on supporting pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

#### Practice Highlight

The retention of trainees into the NQT year within the LETTA partnership is very high. Therefore, to support the transition of trainees, many of the **tutors and mentors on the ITT programme also deliver training and support to NQTs**, including a **module on SEND**. This not only contributes to progression with learning and development in SEND for the NQTs but allows for a continuity of ethos and fundamental principles with respect to inclusive teaching and provision in schools. Moreover, **NQTs continue to have online access to all the SEND materials from the ITT year**. Finally, **social media is extensively used to keep trainees informed of SEND** developments within the partnership and nationally.

#### Practice across the programme

An **embedded and explicit curriculum** is offered through:

- A core SEND curriculum that includes child development, barriers to learning, SEND Code of Practice, working with parents and input on specific needs like autism;
- Taught sessions delivered by specialists across the partnership, including SENCOs, speech and language therapists, specialist teachers in vision and hearing impairment, autism;

- Regular Q&A sessions for trainees and NQTs hosted by a panel of SEND specialists;
- All trainees have an experience of at least one day in a special school; and
- Optional placements in SEND settings for trainees and an assessed SEND route from September 2019.

**Collaboration across the partnership** is promoted through:

- A SEND specialist on the quality assurance moderation team for the ITT programme.

## 5. Summary and recommendations

UCL undertook this research to provide an in-depth understanding of effective SEND practice in initial teacher training (ITT) provision in order to inform the development of policy and practice in this area. This is part of the Whole School SEND programme, funded by the Department for Education (DfE), to help embed SEND into teacher training, CPD and School Improvement. The research was set against a backdrop of national NQT data, which shows that, compared with other elements of their practice, NQTs feel less prepared to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. This trend is also reflected in the findings from international surveys of early career and more experienced teachers. Section 5 reflects on some of the key messages from the findings and recommendations for policy and practice.

### 5.1 Key findings

#### Key Finding 1

**Effective practice for ITT SEND starts with a clearly defined and shared SEND ethos** across a partnership which underpins the structure, content and delivery of a programme. This ethos includes a commitment to inclusive education in schools and colleges, and the commitment of partnership leaders to create and deliver ITT programmes that not only have a common core of SEND but are also personalised and responsive to the professional requirements and interests in SEND of individual trainees.

#### Key Finding 2

**All the providers in the case studies were delivering an embedded and explicit SEND curriculum as part of their ITT programmes.** There was an importance placed on strategically planning for SEND in ITT using resources such as the National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) ITT SEND Toolkit.<sup>12</sup> The providers adopted an approach and curriculum that embodied SEND as just *one element of normal ITT practice*. Their practice demonstrated planning for progression and consistency in SEND across the curriculum throughout the year, as well as allowing multiple opportunities to assess trainees' knowledge, understanding and application of learning. They facilitated and shared

---

<sup>12</sup> NASBTT (2019). *SEND toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/send-toolkit/>.

SEND reflective practice and ensured that curriculum content was current and evidence informed.

### **Key Finding 3**

During their trainee year, **NQTs highly valued the opportunity of accessing different types of SEND placements, as well as teaching pupils with a range of SEN and/or disabilities in mainstream settings** to develop their knowledge and skills. **Effective practice was characterised by flexible and tailored SEND opportunities for trainees** that took into account previous SEND experience and allowed for additional opportunities for those trainees who wanted to specialise in SEND.

### **Key Finding 4**

Placements in SEND settings were offered by all of the providers and varied greatly in number and duration, whether compulsory and/or optional and whether a formal SEND pathway was an optional element of the programme. **The research identified four common models of SEND placements:** a core model of short placements; a core block SEND placement model, an optional formal SEND pathway model and a multiple placement model that offers a common core block SEND placement, an optional formalised SEND pathway, opportunities for further tailored personalised placements and the flexibility to move into and out of the SEND pathway as required.

### **Key Finding 5**

**Effective practice for ITT SEND relies on collaboration between all members of an ITT partnership.** A number of providers spoke of the importance of the collaborative process between schools and university partners at the programme planning, delivery and evaluation stages. Partners also include the parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities and the children and young people themselves. Many providers had specifically built in opportunities for trainees to meet and hear the lived experiences of pupils and their families. The partnerships work in very different contexts from one small urban local authority to the whole of a geographical region of England. Shared mentor and tutor training, online-centralised resources and annual SEND Conferences supported some very strong collaborations. It was possible to identify activities and arrangements that supported good working relationships such as a SEND Conference held annually for all partnership colleagues, centralised schemes of work and online centrally held SEND resources.

## Key Finding 6

Although, primarily a form of scoping exercise for the main research, **the website content analysis showed variation in SEND provision by programme and region, and in many instances a lack of documented provision**, for preparing ITT trainees to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. University programme websites, compared with SCITT programme websites described more frequently and in more detail how provision in relation to SEND was an element of their programmes. The findings are just an account of website content and may not accurately represent the full SEND offer to trainees.

## 5.2 Recommendations

This section includes four recommendations that address all of the key findings from the research to inform the DfE, ITT providers and the wider sector about the future policy and practice direction for SEND in ITT.

### Recommendation 1

Providers described how trainees are on an *initial* training programme and that it was not possible for them to ‘know all there is to know about SEND’ at the end of the ITT year. Neither is it possible to prepare trainees for the different ways that schools and colleges ‘implement’ SEND in their settings, which was another theme from the focus group. **Guidance on SEND ITT learning outcomes would enable a greater understanding and consistency of expectations for trainees, ITT providers and the wider community.**

### Recommendation 2

There was considerable variation in the provision of SEND between the programmes delivered by the case study providers. This variation was evident, for example, in SEND content, time spent on SEND, the way in which sessions were delivered and whether SEND assignments were a compulsory element of a programme. **It is important that providers have the autonomy to create ITT programmes appropriate for their communities, but further evidence-informed guidance on the content, structure and delivery of SEND in ITT would ensure greater consistency across programmes.**

### Recommendation 3

The findings showed very convincing support for the importance and benefits of SEND placements in preparing trainees to teach pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in special and mainstream settings. However, there was evidence of variation in terms of time spent in SEND settings from one day in the trainee year to one term in a SEND setting as a main placement. **Further research into the structure and impact of SEND placements would help to establish an 'optimum' SEND placement experience for all trainees and which could be extended for those who seek to specialise in SEND.**

### Recommendation 4

The content analysis of the programme websites showed considerable variation in how all providers report SEND as part of their programmes. Even if not an accurate picture of provision, at the very least prospective trainees are unable to establish an informed perspective of what programmes have to offer in relation to SEND from the content on programme websites. This is also in a context, according to the case study providers, of many more trainees expressing an interest to specialise in SEND. Therefore, we recommend that **all providers, but particularly SCITT providers, review their references to SEND on their programme websites.**

## **Annex 1: Case Studies – Participating Providers**

Alliance for Learning

Basingstoke Alliance SCITT

Bath Spa University

Cornwall SCITT

East Midlands Teacher Training Partnership

Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter

Kirklees and Calderdale SCITT

Leicester and Leicestershire SCITT

London East Teacher Training Alliance (LETTA)

Newcastle University

North Manchester ITT Partnership SCITT

Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance

Teach First North East

Teaching London LDBS SCITT

The Sutton Park SCITT

University College Birmingham

University of Central Lancashire

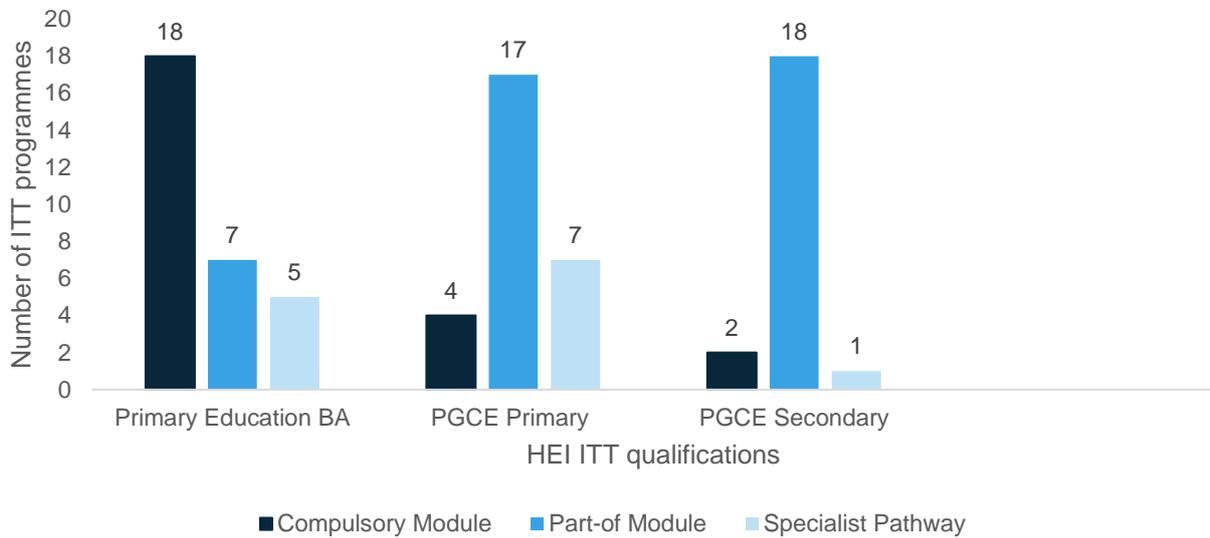
University of Derby

University of Warwick

Wandsworth Primary Schools' Consortium

## Annex 2: Figures and Tables from HEI and SCITT website content analysis

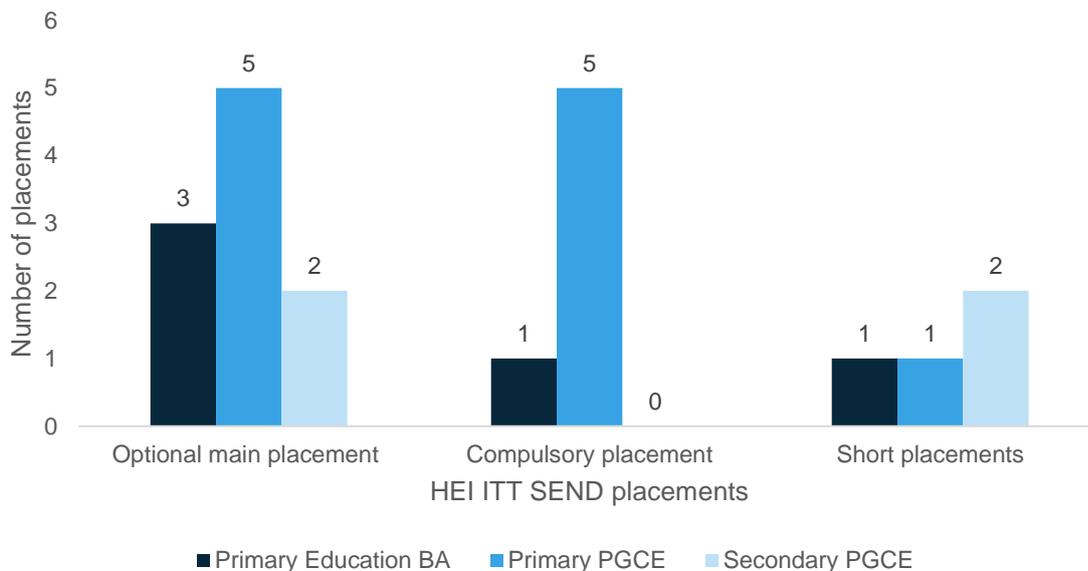
**Figure A2.3: Inclusion of SEND in HEI ITT website programme content, by mode of delivery and qualification (N)**



Base: 160 programmes

Source: HEI programme websites via UCAS

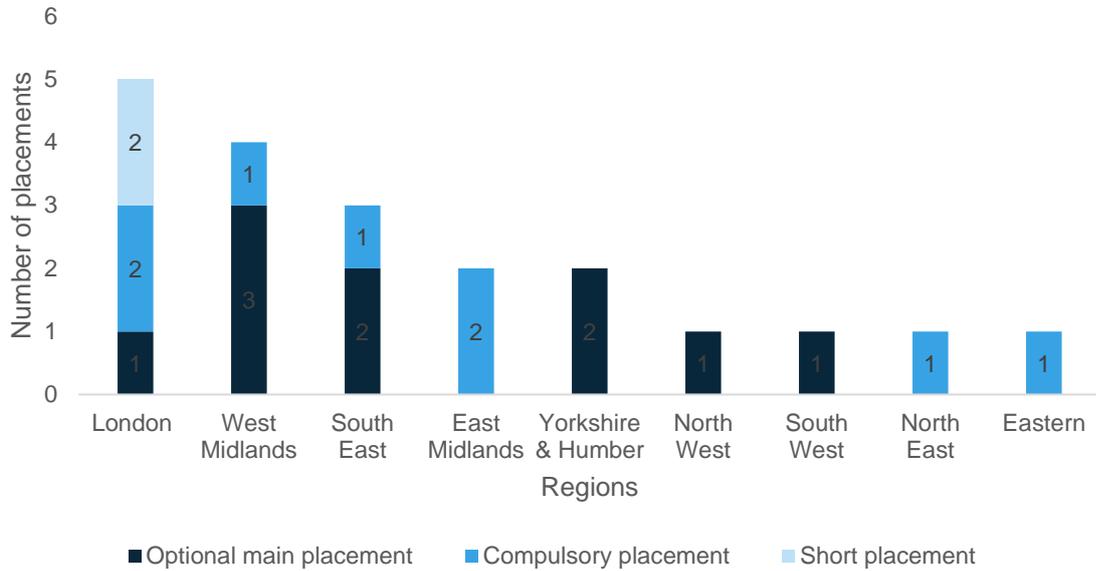
**Figure A2.4: Mode of SEND placement (optional, compulsory and short) in HEI website programme content, by type of qualification (N)**



Base: 160 programmes

Source: HEI programme websites via UCAS

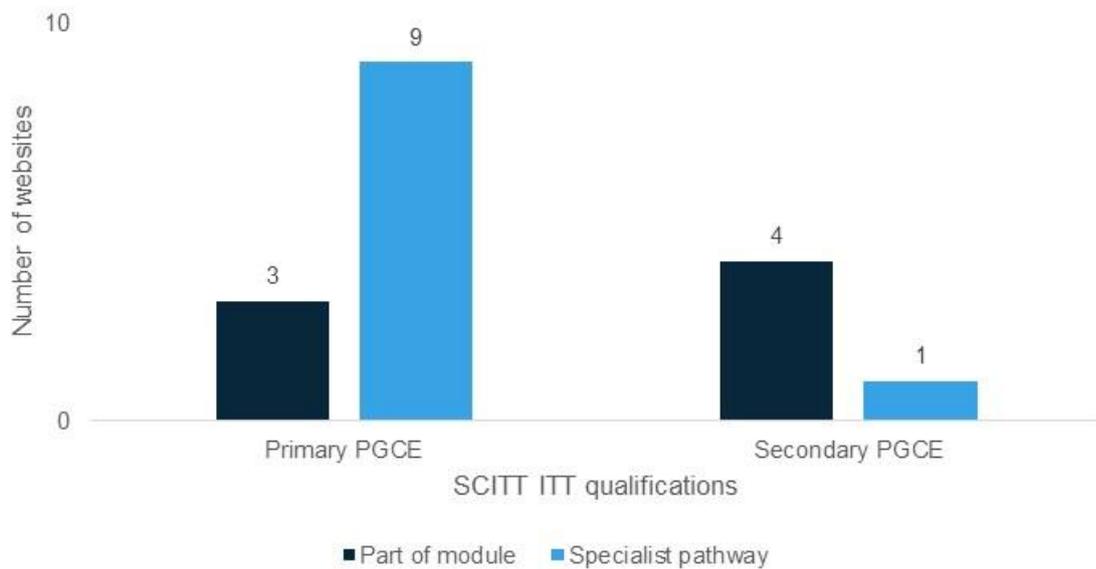
**Figure A2.5: Mode of SEND placement (optional, compulsory and short) in HEI website programme content, by region (N)**



Base: 160 programmes

Source: HEI programme websites via UCAS

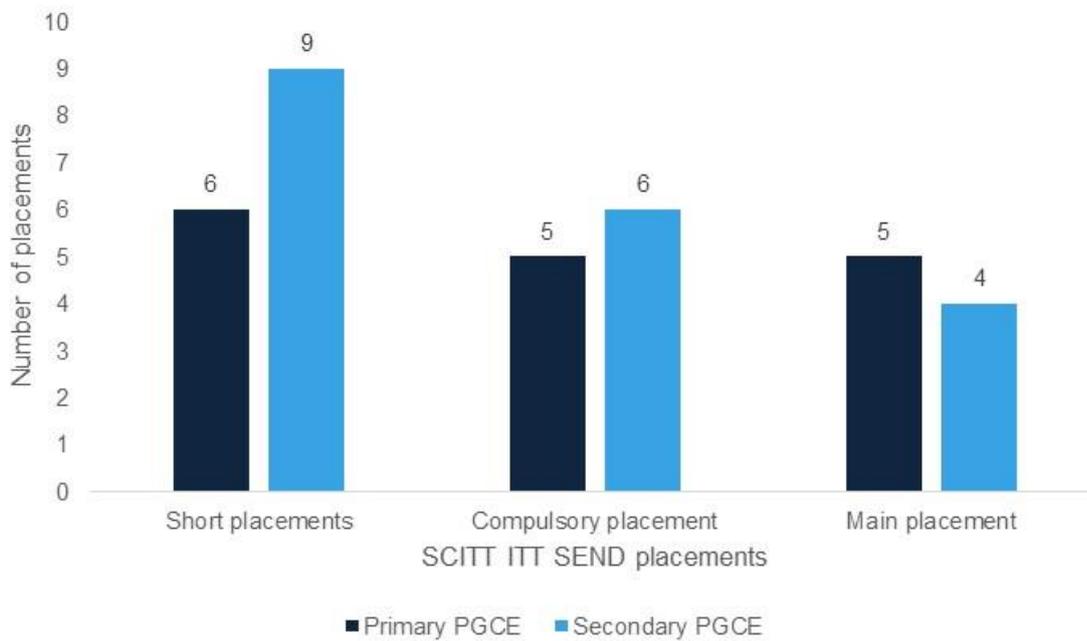
**Figure A2.6: Inclusion of SEND in SCITT ITT website programme content, by mode of delivery and qualification (N)**



Base: 179 programmes

Source: SCITT programme websites via UCAS

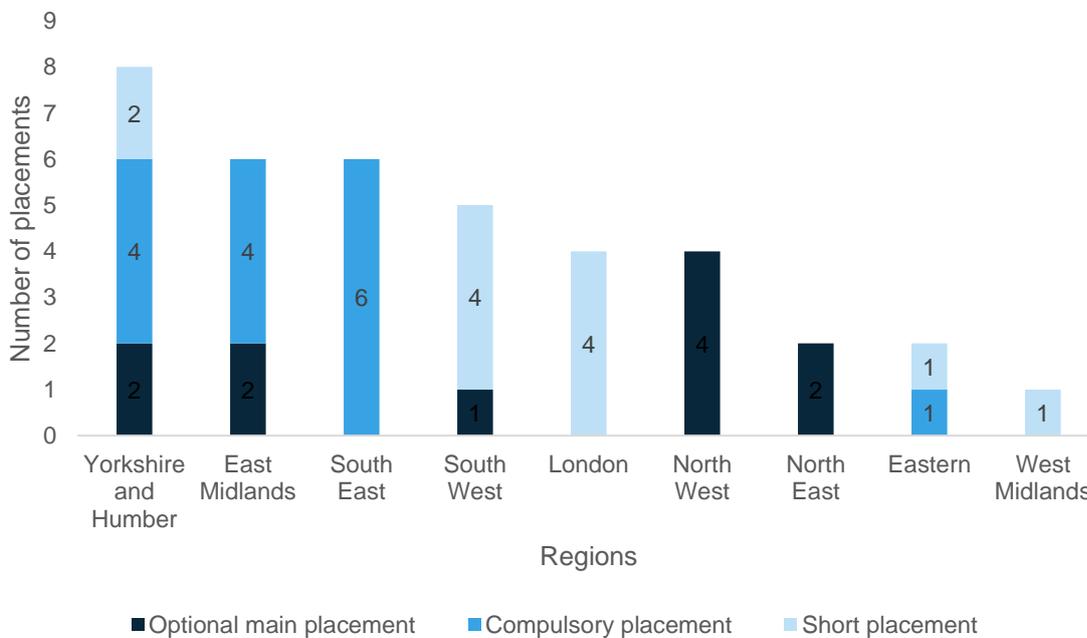
**Figure A2.7: Mode of SEND placement (optional, compulsory and short) in SCITT website programme content, by type of qualification (N)**



Base: 179 programmes

Source: SCITT programme websites via UCAS

**Figure A2.8: Mode of SEND placement (optional, compulsory and short) in SCITT website programme content, by region (N)**



Base: 179 programmes

Source: SCITT programme websites via UCAS

Table A2.1: HEI programmes leading to QTS, by region (N)

Region	Primary Education BA	Primary PGCE	Secondary PGCE	Total number of programmes
London	6	11	11	28
South East	6	10	10	26
Yorkshire and the Humber	6	8	8	22
West Midlands	4	7	7	18
North West	4	7	7	18
East Midlands	4	6	6	16
South West	1	5	6	12
North East	3	4	4	11
Eastern	1	4	4	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>160</b>

Base: 160 programmes

Source: HEI programme websites via UCAS website

**Table A2.2: HEI programme websites with some generic reference to SEND, by region (N & %)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Programme Number</b>	<b>Reference to SEN and/or disabilities on programme website (N/%)</b>
<b>London</b>	28	24 (86%)
<b>North West</b>	18	12 (67%)
<b>West Midlands</b>	18	12 (67%)
<b>North East</b>	11	7 (64%)
<b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>	22	13 (59%)
<b>South West</b>	12	7 (58%)
<b>East Midlands</b>	16	9 (56%)
<b>Eastern</b>	9	3 (33%)
<b>South East</b>	26	12 (46%)

Base: 160 programmes

Source: HEI programme websites via UCAS

**Table A2.3: Inclusion of SEND in HEI ITT website programme content, by region (N)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Total programme number</b>	<b>Part of a module (N)</b>	<b>Compulsory module (N)</b>	<b>Specialist pathway (N)</b>
<b>London</b>	28	15	5	1
<b>North West</b>	18	7	2	3
<b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>	22	6	6	0
<b>South East</b>	26	5	4	3
<b>West Midlands</b>	18	4	2	1
<b>South West</b>	12	3	1	1
<b>North East</b>	11	2	2	0
<b>Eastern</b>	9	0	1	0
<b>East Midlands</b>	16	0	1	4
<b>Total</b>	160	40	24	13

Base: 160 programmes

Source: HEI programme websites via UCAS

**Table A2.4: SCITT programmes leading to QTS, by region (N)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Primary PGCE</b>	<b>Secondary PGCE</b>	<b>Total number of programmes</b>
<b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>	13	13	26
<b>Eastern</b>	13	11	24
<b>East Midlands</b>	11	11	22
<b>South East</b>	11	10	21
<b>London</b>	10	10	20
<b>South West</b>	10	10	20
<b>North East</b>	10	6	16
<b>West Midlands</b>	6	10	16
<b>North West</b>	8	5	13
<b>Total</b>	92	86	178

Base: 179 programmes

Source: SCITT programme websites via UCAS

**Table A2.5: SCITT programme websites with some generic reference to SEND, by region (N & %)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Programme Number</b>	<b>Reference to SEN and/or disabilities on programme website (N/%)</b>
<b>South East</b>	22	18 (86%)
<b>East Midlands</b>	22	18 (81%)
<b>North West</b>	13	9 (69%)
<b>West Midlands</b>	16	7 (44%)
<b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>	26	10 (38%)
<b>London</b>	20	5 (25%)
<b>South West</b>	20	5 (25%)
<b>North East</b>	16	4 (25%)
<b>Eastern</b>	24	5 (21%)

Base: 179 programmes

Source: SCITT programme websites via UCAS

**Table A2.6: Inclusion of SEND in SCITT ITT website programme content, by region (N)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Total programme number</b>	<b>Part of a module (N)</b>	<b>Specialist pathway (N)</b>
<b>Eastern</b>	24	2	2
<b>North West</b>	13	2	2
<b>West Midlands</b>	16	1	2
<b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>	26	2	1
<b>South West</b>	20	0	1
<b>South East</b>	22	0	1
<b>East Midlands</b>	22	0	1
<b>North East</b>	16	0	0
<b>London</b>	20	0	0
<b>Total</b>	179	7	10

Base: 179 programmes

Source: SCITT programme websites via UCAS

**Funded by**



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright (03/2019)

This Effective practice for special educational needs and/or disabilities content in initial teacher training is licensed under the [Open Government Licence 3.0](#)