

Best Practice Network

Newminster House
27–29 Baldwin Street
Bristol
BS1 1LT

Inspection dates

22 to 25 May 2023

Inspection judgements

Early career framework (ECF) inspection

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of professional development and training

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

N/A

What is it like to be an early career teacher (ECT) at this lead provider?

ECTs gain the extensive knowledge and skills they need to thrive in the early stages of their teaching careers. This is because the lead provider prioritises the development needs and starting points of individual ECTs and their mentors, ensuring that the programme is tailored exceptionally well.

ECTs study an ambitious and expertly designed curriculum. Specialist facilitators forge strong links between this curriculum and mentor training. From early in the programme, ECTs learn the importance of effective pupil relationships and behaviour strategies. In the second year of their programme, ECTs are guided to use action research skills expertly. This enables them to become highly reflective practitioners who are extremely well-prepared for the realities of teaching.

Enhancements, such as visits to other schools, positively impact on ECTs' classroom practice. They access and use well-thought-out materials, which purposefully link to the phase and subject that they teach. For example, all ECTs learn that 'they are teachers of literacy'. Through meticulously sequenced sessions and high-quality self-study materials, they understand the importance of using a systematic synthetic approach for phonics and the impact of teaching important vocabulary to pupils.

ECTs benefit from the high-quality pastoral support offered by the lead provider, as well as within their delivery partnership. As a result, ECTs are more than ready for the next steps in their career.

Information about this lead provider

- There are 6070 ECTs undertaking the lead provider's ECF programme. Of these, 3336 are in their first year of the programme and 2734 are in their second year of the programme.
- Best Practice Network works with 36 delivery partners, who deliver training to 5428 ECTs.
- The lead provider works with a range of delivery partners. This includes teaching school hubs, multi-academy trusts and other education establishments.
- Best Practice Network provides direct delivery to 642 ECTs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was completed by seven of His Majesty's Inspectors. The inspection was carried out through in-person meetings, on-site and online visits to delivery partners.
- Inspectors spoke with the lead provider's representatives, including the managing director, the director of ECF, the head of quality and safeguarding, the head of partnerships, the e-learning manager and senior facilitators. The lead inspector also met with representatives of governance from the advisory board and SEG group.
- Inspectors visited 10 delivery partners on site and two delivery partners remotely. A further four delivery partners were spoken with as part of the inspection. The direct delivery national group were also spoken with.
- Inspectors carried out 13 focused reviews as part of the ECF programme, within the primary and secondary programmes. For each focused review, inspectors met with delivery partner leaders and facilitators, discussed training with a group of mentors and ECTs, met with headteachers and induction tutors, watched online training, reviewed exemplified training materials and scrutinised documentation. Inspectors also attended live training events.
- Inspectors took into account responses to the Ofsted surveys for ECTs, mentors, school leaders and delivery partners when making their judgements.

What does the lead provider do well and what does it need to do better?

At Best Practice Network, leaders' values to 'strive for excellence' and 'inspire learning' are fully realised. Delivery partners are proud to work with the lead provider and feel valued. Leaders seek the views of stakeholders regularly to ensure that they continue to sustain a high-quality programme. For example, this feedback has led to well-written case studies

that thoughtfully support ECTs and mentors within their phase. Governors routinely check the impact of leaders' work.

Leaders are tenacious in their approach to continuing programme improvements. They have clear systems to quality assure impact. To complement the frequent checks on effectiveness, leaders also provide regular briefings and surgeries to support all stakeholders in their work. They care deeply about the workload and well-being of ECTs and mentors. They do what they can to streamline systems. As a result of these checks and support, ECTs understand how to manage their own workload.

Leaders have designed a well-connected curriculum for ECTs and mentors. They ensure that they maintain fidelity to the ECF, while making deliberate and well-considered sequencing choices. For example, irrespective of when ECTs start during the year, they learn quickly how to manage approaches to behaviour. As a result of this ambitious curriculum, ECTs deepen the knowledge and skills that they need to be highly effective practitioners.

Enhancements, along with leaders' approach to wider reading and 'inquiry', complement the programme further. For example, ECTs in year two of their programme engage in research linked to their subject and phase with high levels of critical reflection. Facilitators and mentors expertly guide these ECTs in this work, so there are demonstrable improvements to their teaching. Some headteachers commented that this work is 'invaluable' and develops 'highly resilient' ECTs.

The lead provider, through their well-thought-out systems and meticulously planned curriculum, ensures that ECTs have a sharp and accurate view of their strengths and weaknesses. 'Module audits' perform an important role within this. ECTs are well guided in using these audits to build on prior knowledge and celebrate their successes. Facilitators diligently use what they know about ECTs and mentors to adapt future training and support. This is because the work of the lead provider ensures that facilitators are skilled and have expert knowledge.

Leaders identify mentors' roles and responsibilities. They share these with their partners clearly. Mentors attend highly effective training, which includes successful coaching strategies. Most mentors who responded to the Ofsted survey shared that they have high levels of confidence in their roles because of this work. They say that they are fully prepared with the knowledge and skills they need to support ECTs highly effectively.

Leaders fully understand their statutory responsibilities, including safeguarding, equality and inclusion. Staff are trained to support ECTs if they raise any concerns. The lead provider works diligently to offer thoughtful modifications to support disabilities.

Lead provider details

Unique reference number 2679896

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This inspection was carried out by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) in accordance with the [early career framework \(ECF\) and national professional qualification \(NPQ\) framework and handbook](#).

The framework and handbook set out the statutory basis for ECF and NPQ inspections in England.

Lead provider programmes offered ECF and NPQ

Date of previous inspection N/A

Inspection team

Donna Briggs, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Janette Walker	His Majesty's Inspector
Harry Ingham	Senior His Majesty's Inspector
Alice Clay	His Majesty's Inspector
Damian Loneragan	His Majesty's Inspector
Marcus Newby	His Majesty's Inspector
Rakesh Patel	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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