

Church of England

Church of England Education Office, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ

Inspection dates

14 to 17 May 2024

Inspection judgements

National professional qualifications (NPQs) 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 NPQ participant at this lead provider?

Participants benefit greatly from the exceptional training they receive from highly skilled and expert trainers, facilitators and coaches. Each participant is known well by staff. Coaches use this understanding to precisely pitch the training programme to each participant's prior experiences and their starting point. This enables participants to develop as leaders in their current roles and prepares them extremely well for their next stage of career progression.

The Church of England's vision of establishing a 'common good' for the whole community is at the centre of the lead provider's work. Not only does the training develop a participant's leadership knowledge and skills, but it provides them with highly valuable opportunities to reflect on how to carry out their work ethically and morally. Programme leaders, trainers and coaches model well how to manage workload and promote well-being. This helps participants reflect on how they should do similar in their own settings.

Participants develop highly attuned professional behaviours that align to the lead provider's vision, 'called, connected and committed'. This enables participants to articulate their own vision and build effective partnerships with learning communities. They show a relentless conviction to continuously improve their own leadership skills and, in turn, the schools that they lead. As a result, participants flourish as leaders.

Information about this lead provider

- There are 3,500 participants undertaking one of the lead providers seven NPQ programmes.
- Delivery of all but the NPQ in executive leadership takes place across the country through one of 28 delivery partners.
- Delivery partners include teaching school hubs, multi-academy trusts, trusts affiliated to the Church of England, the Catholic Education Service and those with no religious affiliation.
- The Church of England also provides direct delivery to participants who are on the national professional qualification for executive leadership programme.
- Several other NPQs are also delivered nationally through direct delivery to leaders in small schools.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by six of His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors. The inspection was carried out through in-person meetings, online meetings, on-site visits to nine delivery partners, and an online visit to one delivery partner. Two focused reviews of the Church of England's centrally delivered programmes were also conducted. Inspectors also held meetings with leaders and participants from a range of additional delivery partners.
- Inspectors met with the lead provider's representatives, including the chief executive officer, executive director for education, head of professional learning and a range of other senior staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the National Society Council and NPQ Governance Group, which is a sub-committee of the National Society Council.
- Inspectors carried out focused reviews in six NPQ programmes that are provided by delivery partners, as well as the one delivered directly by the lead provider. For each focused review, inspectors met with delivery partner leaders, facilitators and coaches, discussed training with groups of participants, met with headteachers and senior leaders from participants' schools and educational settings, reviewed exemplified training materials and scrutinised documentation.
- The inspection team considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for NPQ participants, delivery partners and school leaders.

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

The professional development and training provided is exceptional. Training materials are highly accessible. Resources are precisely matched to the 'learn that' and 'learn how to' statements in the NPQ Frameworks. Expertly designed teaching cycles provide a highly effective delivery structure for each programme. These cycles help participants to prepare for learning, activate any prior knowledge, engage with new content, practise and refine

their understanding through coaching, and apply their new skills. There are rich opportunities for participants to engage with research, allowing them to apply the principles that they have learned to different scenarios, and therefore broadening and enriching their own experiences even further.

There is a rigorous selection process for trainers and coaches. The lead provider continually develops trainers' expertise. They robustly quality assure both trainers and coaches to ensure that they use their expertise and experience to consistently train participants to be very well prepared for their next leadership role.

As a result of a skilfully crafted curriculum, and of the expert trainers, participants securely learn the knowledge that the lead provider intends. Exemplification materials and carefully constructed activities help participants theorise how they could apply this learning in their future leadership roles. Coaches are on hand to encourage participants to think deeply about what they are learning. This challenges participants to evaluate their initial thoughts and consider wider factors in readiness for future roles. School leaders overwhelmingly state that participants apply their knowledge with conviction and confidence as a result of the training they have received during their NPQ programme. This, in turn, consistently benefits their school communities.

Trainers skilfully use formative assessment. This enables them to reshape aspects of training to suit individual participant's needs. Coaches and trainers use this information, as well as their knowledge of the participant's prior experience, to address any gaps in understanding. As one trainer explained this allows them to 'probe and prod any beige responses' to ensure that each participant fully understands the core concepts that are delivered.

The lead provider is relentless in its determination that current and future leaders from all backgrounds should be able to benefit from the most appropriate NPQ programme on offer. It welcomes diversity and actively promotes the programmes widely. This includes promoting the programmes to prospective participants in very small schools and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. The lead provider ensures that reasonable adjustments are made to support participants who have additional needs.

Safeguarding is of the highest priority for the lead provider. Policies and procedures to promote participants' understanding of safeguarding, and of equalities, are carefully implemented and monitored right from induction through to the end of the training programme. There is a clear consideration for participants' pastoral support as they undertake NPQ programmes.

The lead provider has a strong ethos of continuous improvement. It is tenacious in ensuring that individual participant's views, and those of other stakeholders, are considered when making purposeful and precise adjustments to the curriculum and to maximise the quality of each participant's experiences.

Lead provider details

Unique reference number	2679913
Inspection number	10326117

This inspection was carried out by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) and Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) in accordance with [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	NPQ
Date of previous inspection	N/A

Inspection team

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