

Programme Specification

Award and title:	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Primary
<i>School:</i>	School of Education, Languages and Psychology
<i>Subject area:</i>	Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University ITE Partnership
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University and Partnership Schools
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Teaching Regulation Agency (QTS award) Ofsted (quality assurance)
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (ProfGCE) Primary (Level 6) Postgraduate Certificate in Education Studies (Level 7) (PGCert) Graduate Certificate in Education Studies (Level 6) (GCert)
	<i>Please note that only the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE and Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (ProfGCE) carry a recommendation for the award of QTS.</i>
<i>UCAS code / APPLY / other:</i>	Refer to appendix
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	NA
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	QAA Education Studies Other: DfE Teacher Standards 2012 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards Ofsted framework for the inspection of ITT https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-education-inspection-handbook
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Full time for 1 academic year
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i>	Yes - Placements within schools are an inherent part of the programme

Introduction and special features

York St John University's heritage is anchored in teacher training and education. York St John, established in 1841, developed into a teacher training college and later a University and has a successful history of educating and training outstanding student teachers. We have a strong record of contributing to our local and national teaching community. We strive for our graduates to become transformative professionals as they enter the teaching profession and many of our graduates are now mentoring current student teachers within our partnership schools and are in leadership positions.

Our PGCE Primary programme is committed to developing education and training that is current and relevant and that provides excellent opportunities for student teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of their subject and wider educational issues. This will ensure you are equipped to be outstanding teachers and leaders with both a strong subject and wider professional identity.

There are currently two routes for the PGCE Primary programme; a University centred route and a school centred route. Both routes are full time and involve at least 120 days in school starting in September and ending in June/early July. Both routes are academic and integrate theory with practice. On successful completion of the programme, you will gain the PGCE academic award and be recommended for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The main distinction between the two routes is that on the school centred route you will be in school from the beginning of your programme and are released from school throughout the year to undertake academic study and training. On the University based route there is still significant school experience but you will start the programme with a number of weeks in University, completing both academic study and school experience placements in blocks. This suits students who might benefit from a more graduated approach to school experience.

Partnership is at the heart of our PGCE Primary programme. We work collaboratively with school partners in the development of our PGCE Primary programme that reflects our wider ITE vision. The YSJU ITE partnership is driven by a strong belief that teaching is a challenging, complex, intellectual and ethical endeavour. The partnership recognises the civic duty involved in developing teachers to fulfil a fundamental need in society for our children and young people to have access to high quality education. The profession requires teachers who are committed to the education of children and young people to ensure they acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to develop and achieve their ambitions and improve their life chances. We believe that the lives can be transformed through education. Hence, it is crucial that student teachers receive high quality initial teacher education that is underpinned by quality research and evidence. The partnership is committed to developing student teachers who are:

- competent and confident professionals who learn that intellectual endeavour, criticality, and personal reflection are key to developing outstanding teaching practice.
- epistemic agents who act as independent thinkers, searching and critiquing a wide range of theories and research that can underpin, challenge or illuminate their practice.
- able to engage in enquiry-rich practice and are intellectually curious about their work in order to be innovative, creative and receptive to new ideas.
- responsible professionals who embody high standards of professional ethics, acting with integrity and recognising the social responsibilities of education to create a more social just world.

Overall, we currently have over 500 student teachers within ITE, across all of our teacher training and education programmes and work across the region with over 450 primary and secondary schools in 20 local authorities. YSJU is the largest provider of ITE in the region with subject specialist staff for all curriculum areas across the primary offer, ensuring that you have the very best teachers leading your sessions and supporting your professional development. Our recent Ofsted report (2022) indicated that *'there is something special about York St John trainees. They are diligent, kind, caring and self-reflective'* and that *'leaders run a genuine partnership between schools and the university'*.

We have a highly experienced team of staff who work alongside colleagues in partnership schools to ensure our programmes are current and reflect the latest evidence and research. Ofsted (2022) indicated that *'Centre-based staff undertake continuous research to support their decisions and show trainees how to do the same'*.

We have a strong record of our student teachers being recruited to local, regional and national schools with Ofsted (2022) indicating that *'the partnership makes a valuable contribution to meeting local and national need for the supply of knowledgeable, resilient and confident teachers'*.

What you will gain

Grounded in contemporary research about teaching and learning in schools, you will undertake a current and relevant programme that is underpinned by both theory and professional practice. You will develop a range of knowledge, understanding and skills in:

- Planning, teaching and assessment of learning for children in the 3 - 7 or 7 - 11 age range
- Managing and organising teaching and learning to promote inclusion for all children from a range of backgrounds and with a range of individual needs
- Ensuring children are safe and healthy
- Promoting good progress in learning for all children
- Appropriate subject knowledge to support teaching and learning
- Using existing research and policy to further develop your own practice

You will gain practical experience in a range of school experience placements, with structured opportunities to learn from experienced teachers and other professionals. You will develop a critical, reflective outlook on teaching and learning, educational policy and initiatives which you will apply in the contexts of school placement and academic assignments, making you a classroom ready professional with a high potential for employability in local and national schools.

Distinctive features of the programme

At the heart of the programme is a commitment to developing strong partnerships and collaborative working practices, underpinned by shared values and a mission to develop outstanding school teachers and leaders in our communities and beyond. This ensures you benefit from high quality learning experiences, capitalising on staff expertise from YSJU and partnership schools. This secures the integration between theory and practice and provides a multitude of enhancement and enrichment opportunities. A special feature of the primary programme is the strong provision of enrichment activities that supports your knowledge and understanding across subject specific knowledge and pedagogy, as well as your knowledge and understanding of wider educational issues. In addition, you will have the following;

- A secure grounding in subject and pedagogical knowledge and the underlying theory;
- teaching and learning opportunities facilitated by a partnership of university-based staff with extensive primary school and university teaching experience;
- school-based staff with a wealth of classroom experience in a wide range of settings;
- opportunities in the programme to make choices about your assessment and personalise your programme;
- a structured journey for you to develop as a researcher as well as a teacher;
- opportunities to develop a secure understanding of the extended role of the teacher and to become immersed in the wider life of the school.

A further distinctive feature of this PGCE Primary programme is that there is a school-centred route where you have the opportunity to be fully immersed within the school setting, as indicated above, with an accompanying timetable of academic sessions that take place in the University and in school. This particularly suits those of you who want to be school based throughout the year. This programme has been carefully written by experienced University staff and our strategic school partners and enables you to gain a thorough understanding of the extended role of a primary teacher, providing an alternative route to our University centred programme. As indicated above the University centred route offers many of the same opportunities but the key difference is that your school experience is completed in blocks between blocks of academic study. On this route you still have about two thirds of the programme time in school. For both routes you will work alongside experienced classroom practitioners and be fully trained by expert university tutors as well as specialist school-based staff. The PGCE Primary programme is carefully sequenced to ensure you develop the necessary confidence and competence to become a knowledgeable and skilled Early Career Teacher and many of our student teachers secure employment within partnership schools. In addition, you will gain experience of local, regional and national educational priorities and be equipped to contribute to school policies.

Upon successful completion you will gain the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and will be recommended for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) recommendation by YSJU and the award by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), will enable you to teach as qualified teachers in a maintained school in England or Wales.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must meet the following entry requirements stipulated by the DfE ([ITT Criteria 2024](#)) for all programmes leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS):

- GCSE in English (or approved equivalent) at grade C/Level 4
- GCSE in Mathematics (or approved equivalent) at grade C/Level 4
- GCSE in Science (or approved equivalent) at grade C/Level 4
- A first degree from a United Kingdom higher education institution or equivalent.

For this programme successful applicants will normally have at least an upper second-class honours degree from a UK higher education institution, or the equivalent, although applicants with a 2:2 are accepted if they can demonstrate certain aptitudes at interview.

In addition to these qualifications, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the intellectual and academic capabilities to train to become a teacher. These include speaking, listening and communication and writing, that are fundamental to a teacher's role. All entrants are required to have the health and physical capacity to train to teach. If you are successful at interview, you will be expected to complete a medical questionnaire in order to assess your fitness to teach.

Other requirements

Places will not be offered on the PGCE Primary programme without a successful interview

Safeguarding

All entrants to the programme will undergo checks as part of our duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As part of this you are required to undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records check and children's barred list. Applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK undergo the same checks as all other student teachers and in addition further checks will be carried out so that any events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

Personal qualities

The YSJU partnership are looking for student teachers with an enthusiasm and passion for teaching children and young people. Successful student teachers are those who combine this enthusiasm with an ability to organise planning, teaching and classroom management; to reflect on their training experience and develop as critical professionals; to integrate their teaching approach and delivery with cross curricular activities; to express ideas clearly and succinctly using language appropriately for a range of different audiences; to show personal initiative and work well with peers, children, tutors, staff and parents; to demonstrate an understanding of wider professional issues within education; to have a love of learning and to communicate this to children.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>). Please note that we do not accept IELTS in lieu of a GCSE in English.

Programme aim(s)

The key aim of the PGCE Primary programme is to deliver a high quality current and relevant programme of training and education that equips you with the professional knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes that you need to become outstanding teachers and leaders in our local and national primary schools.

Working in partnership with schools, the programme aims to:

- Integrate theory and practice throughout the programme to support professional learning, subject knowledge and pedagogy, and to promote the intellectual and professional development of student teachers through engagement with current research and policy in teaching and wider education;
- Through the provision of an enriched curriculum, and high quality ITE partnerships, develop academic and professional standards for new teachers entering the profession underpinned by the development of 'principle-based' values;
- Enable student teachers to become skilled, creative, reflective and transformative professionals equipped to take responsibility for the progress of all children and young people and demonstrate a commitment to continual professional development.

Programme learning outcomes

The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme is a Master's level programme, made up of two Level 7 modules and three school experience modules. If you fail to meet the learning outcomes for Level 7, you are able to be reassessed at Level 6 to achieve a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (ProfGCE)

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 7:

- 7.1 Investigate and demonstrate critical awareness of their own values and educational philosophy and identify influences which may impact on effective learning and teaching
- 7.2 Reflect on the synthesis of theory and practice to create learning opportunities which enhance children and young people's learning
- 7.3 Interpret, compare and apply knowledge and understanding of pedagogy to critically evaluate learning and teaching in order to meet the needs of children/young people
- 7.4 Evaluate and select appropriate research of educational enquiry to investigate an issue drawn from professional practice
- 7.5 Critically investigate how research informs policy and reflect on how this influences practice

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate critical awareness of their own values and educational philosophy and identify influences which may impact on effective learning and teaching
- 6.2 Analyse theory and practice in relation to children's and young people's development and learning
- 6.3 Compare and apply knowledge and understanding of pedagogy to evaluate learning and teaching in order to meet the needs of children/young people
- 6.4 Select appropriate research of educational enquiry to investigate an issue drawn from professional practice
- 6.5 Investigate how research informs policy and reflect on how this influences practice
- 6.6 Meet the standards and competencies required for QTS consistently over a sustained period, meeting all placement expectations and demonstrating the ability to respond effectively to feedback

Programme structure

PGCE Primary University Centred

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
PGC7012M PGC6012M	7	1&2	Learning and Teaching in the Primary Curriculum (PGCE Primary University Centred)	30	C	NC
PGC7013M PGC6013M	7	1&2	The Developing Professional (PGCE Primary University Centred)	30	C	NC
PGC6018P	6	1	School Experience 1 (all PGCE programmes) (Pass/Fail)	0	C	NC
PGC6019P	6	1&2	School Experience 2 (all PGCE programmes) (Pass/Fail)	0	C	NC
PGC6020P	6	2	School Experience 3 (all PGCE programmes) (Pass/Fail)	0	C	NC

PGCE Primary School Centred

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
PGC7014M PGC6014M	7	1&2	Learning and Teaching in the Primary Curriculum (PGCE Primary School Centred)	30	C	NC
PGC7015M PGC6015M	7	1&2	The Developing Professional (PGCE Primary School Centred)	30	C	NC
PGC6018P	6	1	School Experience 1 (all PGCE programmes) (Pass/Fail)	0	C	NC
PGC6019P	6	1&2	School Experience 2 (all PGCE programmes) (Pass/Fail)	0	C	NC
PGC6020P	6	2	School Experience 3 (all PGCE programmes) (Pass/Fail)	0	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 50 in order to progress).

There are three school experience placements as can be seen from the table above and as per the ITT criteria (DfE 2024) we will ensure you have placements in two different schools. Please note that you are responsible for transport costs to and from placement schools.

The University will be involved in quality assuring school experience, employing the same processes and procedures for all. As part of the quality assurance processes you will have University-based tutor visits and undertake moderated appraisals with subject mentors. The tutor ensures that school judgements are consistent across the partnership and acts to support school-based staff in effective mentoring. This ensures compliance with Ofsted and ITT criteria requirements across all programmes offered by York St John; this is crucial as Ofsted inspections are part of the ITE partnership.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The PGCE Primary programme combines educational theory and practice in developing you as a well-informed, reflective and critical teacher, ready to be responsible for teaching and learning as an Early Career Teacher in primary schools.

You will follow an ambitious curriculum that has been designed in partnership with YSJU and school partners. This is underpinned by the current DfE requirements and YSJ Partnership five key themes. Professional development builds the foundations of the programme by essential theoretical knowledge and current local, national and international research and developments that will support and shape teaching practice. During on-going school experience you will receive feedback and support from an experienced mentor and YSJ/ Lead Mentor. Our school placements are closely aligned to the Work-Related Experiential Learning (WREL) framework. They increase in intensity over time, and together with the staged expectations set out in the School Experience Formative Assessment Continuum, student teachers build confidence, knowledge and skills. This authentic approach ensures that you are classroom ready and supports your transition into employment.

The programme is carefully sequenced to ensure a coherent, layered spiral curriculum which enables you to revisit key concepts and ideas to support developing knowledge, understanding and teaching skills. You will be expected to critically engage with all elements of the programme and develop as a reflective practitioner, to enable you to evaluate and adapt practice to meet the needs of diverse learners in the school classroom. The programme ensures that you fulfil the requirements of the current Teachers' Standards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status,

A range of learning, teaching and assessment strategies are used on the PGCE Primary programme to ensure that you are supported to develop a strong sense of personal and professional identity as subject teachers and are nurtured so you can develop your own philosophy and values about primary education.

The following strategies will provide opportunities for professional development through critical enquiry:

- Whole cohort teaching
- Workshops with a focus on dialogue, discussion, debate
- Group seminars following 'flipped learning' opportunities
- Literature-based research activities, through for example web-based resources and the virtual learning environment (VLE)
- Individual research
- School based tasks
- School based research
- Individual tutorials for academic support

The programme is underpinned by two Master's level modules that reflect current education research and practice and includes a blend of University and school based academic sessions and training. There is one assessment per module and successful completion of these will give you 60 credits towards a full Master's degree. You will have opportunities to develop critical reflection on educational theory and practice, policy and contemporary issues with school experience enabling you to apply theory to practice to support development of pedagogy. In addition, you will have teaching and learning opportunities that support your development as a researcher.

The PGCE Primary programme is full time and involves at least 120 days in school across three school placements, starting in September and ending in June/July. As indicated above, on successful completion of the programme, you will be recommended to the Teaching Regulation Agency for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

Formative assessment is an integral part of each module so that you receive informal feedback on your academic work and development of critical thinking. This may be facilitated by module tutors as well as through peer assessment where appropriate. Formative assessment includes the following:

- Self-review and self-assessment tasks
- Subject knowledge audits

- Micro teaching opportunities
- Individual/group presentations

In addition to academic assessment the school experiences are also assessed. You are required to pass each school experience before you progress to the next school experience. There are three assessed school experiences (SE1, SE2, and SE3) and for each placement there will be formal written reports by school mentors. These will report in line with our School Experience Formative Assessment Continuum which tracks progress over time to ensure that by the end of SE3 the Teachers' Standards are met. It is expected that your practice on each school experience will reflect the learning from the academic/theoretical elements of the programme. In addition to the formal reports there will be on-going feedback during your school experience. Lesson appraisals will be conducted with written reports and in the regular mentor meetings there will be discussion on your progress with formative targets set to support you. There will also be informal observations, advice, support and feedback on a more day-to-day basis.

Inclusion is at the heart of our programme design and we strive to create an inclusive and environment where all student teachers can achieve success. Our student-centred approach, authentic assessment strategies and careful consideration of workload ensure students teachers take ownership of their learning and become engineers of their own progress.

Overall, the PGCE Primary programme takes a rigorous and robust approach to teaching, learning and assessment ensuring that learning opportunities are developed to support you in meeting all programme learning outcomes.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations](#) for postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensable. Please note that all modules in the PGCE Primary programme are compulsory for progression.

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation.

- Student teachers who fail one or more academic module at first attempt are permitted to re-sit at level 7. Level 7 modules must be passed in order to gain the PGCE.
- Student teachers who do not meet level 7 criteria after re-sit will have their work assessed through Level 6 criteria. If the modules are passed at Level 6 students will gain the ProfGCE.
- Student teachers awarded the PGCE or the Postgraduate Certificate in Education Studies will be able to access the MA Education at YSJU with 60 Level 7 credits (subject to successful application to the MA programme).

All school placements must be successfully completed. If you do fail a school experience placement, you may be given an opportunity to re-sit. Decisions about resits are made following University procedures, including fitness to practise procedures. The appropriate panel will only allow a re-sit for school experience placements where it judges there is a likelihood that you will succeed and that a suitable placement can be secured. You will not have more than one re-sit opportunity for a school experience placement. Specific details about school experience placements, including expectations, withdrawals and terminations are fully explained in the PGCE Primary Assessment handbook that reflects university guidelines.

If you pass all three assessed school experience placements and assessed academic work for each module at Level 7, you will achieve the PGCE with QTS. If you pass all three school experience placements but fail to meet Level 7 learning outcomes for the academic assignments you will be awarded the ProfGCE with QTS (Professional Graduate Certificate in Education), provided you have met the learning outcomes at Level 6.

If you fail your final school experience and are not able to re-sit this (either because you are not allowed a resit or do not want to do one) and hence do not achieve QTS, but have passed the academic modules you can be awarded either a Postgraduate Certification in Education Studies (PGCert) (Level 7) or Graduate Certificate in Education Studies (GCert) (Level 6).

All possible awards are indicated in the table below:

Award	Successful completion required in the following:
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Primary with QTS	• School Experience 1 (SE1) • School Experience 2 (SE2) • School Experience 3 (SE3) • Academic assignments for both modules at Level 7 (Masters)
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (ProfGCE) Primary with QTS	• School Experience 1 (SE1) • School Experience 2 (SE2) • School Experience 3 (SE3) • Academic assignments for both modules at Level 6
Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Education Studies	• School Experience 1 (SE1) • School Experience 2 (SE2) • Academic assignments for both modules at Level 7 (Masters)
Graduate Certificate (GCert) in Education Studies	• School Experience 1 (SE1) • School Experience 2 (SE2) • Academic assignments for each module at Level 6

Late result modules

This programme contains the following modules, where the result of the first attempt is not known in time for the June School Assessment Panels (or equivalent level progression point for non-standard entry points). This may delay progression to QTS.

- School Experience 3 (SE3)

The DfE ITT Criteria (2024) sets out the core requirements of all programmes for ITE and is reflected in the required length of the programme.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: November 2023

Programme originally approved: 21 March 2024 (revalidated)

Appendix

PGCE Primary – DfE APPLY codes:

PGCE Primary University Centred:	DfE APPLY code
Postgraduate Certificate in Education Lower Primary FT	X121
Postgraduate Certificate in Education Upper Primary FT	X171
PGCE Primary School Centred:	
Postgraduate Certificate in Education School Direct Primary (Esk Valley - Egton CE Primary School)	2HBH
Postgraduate Certificate in Education School Direct Primary (Campus Tees - Egglescliffe Secondary School)	39TF
Postgraduate Certificate in Education School Direct Primary (Polaris - St Mary's School)	V176
Postgraduate Certificate in Education School Direct Primary (MSTA -Pallister Park Primary School)	25QJ
Postgraduate Certificate in Education School Direct Primary (Wonder Learning Trust)	X726