

Thames Primary Consortium SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Runwell Primary School Canewdon Gardens Wickford Essex SS11 7BJ
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Lead inspector	Julie Winyard HMI

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspector supported by specialist inspectors in accordance with the *Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008-11)*.
2. The inspection draws upon evidence from all aspects of the provision to make judgements against all parts of the inspection evaluation schedule in the framework. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the training in supporting high quality outcomes for trainees and the capacity of the partnership to bring about further improvements. A summary of the grades awarded is included at the end of this report.

Key to inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Explanation of terms used in this report

Attainment is defined as the standard reached by a trainee at the end of their training.

Progress is judged in terms of how well a trainee has developed professionally from their starting point to the standard reached at the time of the inspection or at a suitable review point.

Achievement is judged in terms of the progress made and the standard reached by a trainee at the time of the inspection or at a recent assessment review point.

The provider

3. The Thames Primary Consortium SCITT is located in the south east of England. It is now in its eleventh year of initial teacher training (ITT). The consortium is run by a group of 25 south Essex schools and was created as a response to prolonged teacher shortages in the south Essex area. The headteachers of the schools form the management group of the consortium. The size of the cohort has gradually increased and currently 30 trainees are being trained to teach across the primary age range with some degree of specialisation in either Key Stage 1 or 2. The course leads to professional graduate certificate of education (PGCE) and qualified teacher status (QTS) awards.
4. Since the last inspection a new course director has been appointed. She took up her post in May 2010. A new lead school was also designated in May 2010.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
 - trainees' attainment is outstanding, especially in their ability to teach pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, manage pupils' behaviour and teach phonics (letters and the sounds they make)
 - outstanding leadership by the course director who has made a detailed and accurate analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision
 - excellent voice development programme for trainees which has reduced their absence, escalated their progress and supported their behaviour management in class and their teaching of phonics
 - outstanding centre-based training that prepares trainees very well for their first year of teaching, especially through the accessibility of all subject tutors
 - trainees' excellent use of information and communication technology for a wide range of purposes.

Recommendations

6. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
 - improve the consistency of mentoring processes across the partnership by ensuring that:
 - the 'grow model' of mentoring is used by all mentors
 - trainees reach aspirational targets
 - there is a whole partnership approach to tracking trainees' progress against the Standards for QTS
 - improve the engagement of all headteachers in the partnership in the leadership and management of the SCITT

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

7. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good and rapidly improving. All the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed fully and good improvements have been made to the training programme.
8. The inspection team agrees with the provider that based on the data for the last three years and validated data for the current cohort, the attainment of trainees is outstanding. Headteachers from the partnership who employ trainees confirm that trainees are well prepared to teach when they start their first year of teaching.

9. Trainees demonstrate strengths in all areas of the Professional Standards for QTS. Their behaviour management is outstanding because the course has given them a wide range of strategies to ensure pupils listen and behave well during lessons. For example, the use of an agreed signal for pupils to listen to further instructions was particularly effective. This is supported by good relationships with pupils. Trainees have good, and in some cases outstanding, subject knowledge and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and effectively, for example in a science lesson where Year 4 pupils were helped to understand the concept of viscosity. Lesson planning is detailed and includes how learning objectives are differentiated for at least three different levels of ability. Most trainees also provide different success criteria according to the needs of pupils, giving middle and lower achievers the opportunity to aspire to achieve at a higher level. Most tasks are matched well to the ability levels of the pupils and there is an appropriate challenge for all abilities. Trainees manage pupils with special educational needs and disabilities exceptionally well during lessons and give excellent guidance to additional adults supporting them. Most also check how these pupils are progressing during, and at the end of, lessons and adjust tasks if necessary.
10. The provider has developed exceptionally rigorous recruitment and selection procedures. This is confirmed by the very high course completion and employment rates. All trainees who complete the course gain employment in partnership schools or schools within the local area. The provider supports trainees exceptionally well when difficulties arise. For example, one trainee who had experienced considerable issues improved their performance in lessons from satisfactory to outstanding due to the dedicated support of the personal tutor, school mentor and programme director. A wide range of interview approaches are used to ensure trainees' suitability to teach and trainees say that the interview day is very intense. In the words of one trainee, 'You have to stay on the top of your game for every activity. They help you to feel at ease but you know you are being carefully watched throughout.' Headteachers make detailed notes against the Standards so that only those candidates with a clear potential to be good or outstanding teachers are selected. Grades given following interview have proved to be good predictors of trainee outcomes. The numbers of males recruited is above average as is the numbers of trainees from minority ethnic groups.
11. Most trainees make good progress from their starting points and overall they make good progress in achieving suitably challenging targets because the training meets their needs. For example the audits which are part of the interview process are used well to identify specific subject knowledge gaps that need to be filled. These are followed up by core tutors and trainees have structured personalised targets for skills development. Subject tutors remain accessible to trainees in their newly qualified teacher (NQT) year as do school mentors. The trainees find this very helpful in supporting their continued development as teachers for example in their subject knowledge. Centre- and school-based staff are involved in assessing trainees' progress from the start of the course but there is no whole partnership approach to recording and tracking trainees' progress against the Standards. Although it is evident that trainees keep track of targets they are working on and these are discussed at weekly

mentor meetings, there is no one document which clearly shows the record of progress from the trainees' starting point.

12. Mentoring is good overall. School mentors and personal tutors are particularly effective however there is some variation in the quality of class mentors especially where they are new to their role. The provider has recognised this and has taken action to put in place differentiated mentor training. There is excellent attendance at termly meetings partly because partnership schools are subject to a financial penalty if they do not release staff for essential training and development. Trainees receive detailed feedback following lesson observations which is clearly focussed on pupils' learning and how trainees have supported this. However, not all mentors are using the 'grow model' required by the provider. This is a process whereby mentors ask the trainee to explain what they think about their lesson before the mentor gives their assessment. Mentor feedback is not always focused on the Standards.
13. The Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status are embedded within the centre- and school-based aspects of the course. Trainees collect a good range of carefully annotated evidence to exemplify how they have achieved the Standards.
14. Resources are used exceptionally well to ensure the outstanding outcomes for trainees. There is excellent training for early reading including systematic phonics and this is reflected in trainees' lesson plans and in the teaching observed during the inspection. The leading literacy school supports this training highly effectively. There is outstanding teaching at centre-based training and excellent support in school-based training. This was evident in all teaching observed during the inspection. Trainees appreciate the effective links made between theory and practice that the course provides. For example trainees spoke very highly of the lectures they have about managing pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All trainees make exceptional use of information and communication technology including electronic whiteboards. They have an excellent understanding of when to use technology and when this is not appropriate. For example impressive use is made of visualisers to enable all pupils to see a piece of writing immediately and comment on how it could be improved. They are very creative in their use of the resources available to them at their school placements. For example one trainee made excellent use of the outdoor classroom to teach phonics.
15. There is a high level of commitment from partnership schools in terms of trainee providing placements and employment, where possible, of trainees for their NQT year. There is also a high level of interest from teachers within the schools to be class mentors. However, not all schools are as highly committed to taking an active role in the leadership and management of the provision.
16. The good training promotes outstanding equality of opportunity for all trainees and values diversity. All groups of trainees achieve equally well from their starting points. The provider ensures that trainees have a good understanding of what it is like to teach in a diverse society including pupils whose first language

is not English. It is evident from their files and lesson plans that trainees respond well to the specific training given.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

17. Self-evaluation across the partnership is good because it leads to an accurate identification of strengths and areas for development that are focussed on how to further improve outcomes for trainees. However in some areas the self-evaluation judgements are over-generous because they do not take fully into account the recognised inconsistencies in mentoring or the lack of full engagement by all partnership headteachers in the leadership and management of the provision.
18. The course is responsive to trainees' needs because evaluation is continuous, rigorous and is quick to respond to an identified need. There are good systems in place for quality assurance. This is because of the way in which the role of the personal tutor has been developed over the last year. For example they carry out joint lesson observations with school and class mentors to ensure consistency of judgements. External moderation of provider judgements takes place twice a year informing judgements made about trainees' attainment and progress. The partnership group is not yet fully engaged in evaluating the effectiveness of the provision and have not produced guidance for partnership schools on how to develop a whole school approach to ITT.
19. Due to the outstanding leadership of the course director all aspects of the provision have been thoroughly and rigorously analysed and evaluated. This has resulted in highly perceptive and accurate view of how to improve the provision further. This was not reflected in self-evaluation grades because the provision was reflecting its intention to be outstanding rather than the current position. All policies and procedures have been updated and roles and responsibilities of course personnel reviewed and made clear. Trainee data for the last three years has been re-evaluated which has rightly secured the outstanding judgement for trainee attainment. Middle leaders have been given excellent training which has enhanced their skills to carry out their roles as course tutors, personal tutors and school mentors even more effectively. Their enthusiasm and expertise combined with the excellent support for the training given by the headteacher of the lead school, has greatly improved the capacity of the provider to anticipate and drive change and to take timely and effective action to respond to national changes and local initiatives. For example, the outstanding voice management programme is led by national leaders in this field and trainees say that this training has reduced trainees' absences due to sore throats and other voice problems as well as improving their teaching of phonics and their ability to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Clinics have been set up so that trainees can access expert help for pupils in their classes with special educational needs and disabilities have been very well attended and trainees value this help as an excellent additional support for meeting the needs of these pupils.

20. Improvement planning is now sharply focused on actions to improve outcomes for trainees. The current committee structure of the partnership means there is good representation of the views of most partners, including trainees, course tutors, personal tutors and school mentors, in constructing the key priorities in these plans. Trainees have a particularly strong voice on the quality improvement committee; the course director is very quick to respond to any concerns they raise and very helpful changes have been made to the course in response to these. Monitoring and evaluation are woven into the plans. However, quality assurance processes do not yet include all members of the partnership group. Resources are targeted very well to meet priorities.
21. There are well defined terms of reference for each of the current partnership committees. All trainees have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check before they start the course. The outstanding attainment of trainees is evidence of the effectiveness of provision. Recent improvements in improvement planning demonstrate that the provider has a good understanding of how to improve outcomes further. For example, the recommendations for further improvement identified by the inspection team had already been recognised by the course director as key priorities for improvement.

Summary of inspection grades¹

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

		Primary
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	1
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

	Primary
To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?	1
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?	2

¹ The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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