

High Force Education

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	High Force Education Green Lane CE Primary School Green Lane Barnard Castle DL12 8LG
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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by an additional inspector 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. High Force Education was established in 2001 by a board of headteachers to tackle a local shortage of newly qualified teachers. High Force Education trains approximately 28 trainees each year and aims to meet the regional needs of schools in County Durham, North Yorkshire and Darlington.
4. High Force school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provides training towards the PCGE qualification (post graduate certificate of education) in primary education. At the end of the course, successful trainees are awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) by attaining the Teacher Development Agency's Standards. These are referred to in the report as the Standards. The course comprises of two major elements. The first element is the centre-based training when trainees are all together in the training base in the early part of each

week and the second is school-based training towards the end of each week. Each trainee is placed in five different schools during the year. There is a diverse range of schools within the partnership, including those that serve urban and rural communities; those that are very large (720 pupils) and very small (40 pupils) schools; local authority community schools; and those that have a denominational status, including Church of England, Roman Catholic and Methodist. The overwhelming majority of tutors on the course are staff from partnership schools and some of the centre-based training makes use of different classes and year groups from schools. The SCITT uses designated rooms allocated from accommodation belonging to Green Lane CE Primary School.

Provision

Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
 - the excellent coherence between the high quality personalised centre- and school-based training, which enables trainees to make very good progress from the onset of the course
 - the outstanding structure and content of the course, that systematically builds trainees' skills knowledge and understanding of teaching and education
 - the very high quality of trainees' personal reflections and evaluations, which prepare trainees outstandingly well for their future development and enable them to transfer their skills and knowledge to unfamiliar situations
 - the exceptionally high quality communication, commitment, involvement and accountability throughout the partnership to maintain and improve trainees' achievement
 - the highly effective and skilled leaders and managers, who have an excellent understanding of what each trainee needs to succeed
 - the excellent selection procedures that result in trainees being recruited who have the potential to make good teachers.

Recommendations

6. In order to improve the ability of trainees to teach in a diverse society:
 - ensure trainees have a very good understanding of how to teach and support pupils from different backgrounds and cultures.
7. In order to raise trainees' attainment to outstanding:
 - ensure improvement plans at all levels have a greater focus on raising trainees' attainment against the Standards.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

8. There is a very clear and well understood rationale for the course: to recruit high quality trainees with the potential to be employed in local schools. High Force Education recruits and selects a higher than average proportion of trainees from under represented groups such as males, trainees from minority ethnic heritages and trainees from low socio-economic areas. The recruitment procedures are excellent. They enable senior leaders to identify the trainees with the resilience, skills, knowledge and the potential to teach. Consequently, a high proportion of trainees are retained on the course and gain employment and the majority are employed in local schools.
9. Trainees are highly reflective. They evaluate their understanding and knowledge at the start of each centre-based training session and then reflect on what they have learnt and what they need to learn next. They also write an extensive evaluation at the end of each lesson they teach and reflect on how well pupils in their classes have learnt and made progress. Professional tutors use the evaluations very well, as a basis for discussion, in regular tutorials with trainees. School-based mentors use them constructively, in weekly meetings, with trainees to set targets for improvement and to evaluate trainees' progress. Centre-based tutors use the evaluations to make adjustments to the course to meet trainees' needs. In interviews with inspectors, trainees were able to answer questions about aspects of education they had not come across yet, drawing on their reflections and prior learning. Trainees have good subject knowledge and their knowledge of letters and sounds in teaching reading is very good. The national survey of newly qualified trainees rated trainees' preparation to establish and maintain good behaviour in their classes as well above the national average. Trainees have a very clear understanding of how to establish good learning environments and of the link between behaviour and good learning. They understand and evaluate the successes and pitfalls of using different methods of managing behaviour. Trainees have a very good working knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum in each subject because of the input from highly skilled and knowledgeable tutors.
10. Trainees make very good progress from their starting points. One reason for this is the structure and content of the course which intertwines school- and centre-based training. The course is exceptionally coherent and consistent and builds progressively over the year to increase trainees' skills, knowledge and understanding. Each week the teaching builds upon the skills and knowledge trainees have already acquired. Another reason for trainees' rapid progress is that training is highly personalised, models very good classroom practice, and is highly practical and interactive. Trainees commented through their evaluations and in their discussions with inspectors about how the training provides the necessary practical skills and knowledge for teaching. They were particularly complimentary about the training in physical education, mathematics, art and design, and history. Each trainee is placed in five different partnership schools. These placements are often targeted so a trainee

is matched to a particular school or mentor to enhance and speed up their progress towards attaining the Standards. The relatively large number of placements is advantageous because it gives trainees direct experience of different types of school.

11. Communication throughout the partnership schools is outstanding. There is a rapid response to any issue, which means tutors and managers, at all levels, are able to instantly intervene where necessary and deploy extra resources. The virtual learning environment is an excellent tool to enable all trainees and schools to have access to training notes, materials, resources and further reading. Headteachers and school-based mentors are highly committed and involved in the training and in the management of the course. School-based mentors are highly trained and skilled, they attend compulsory training each year. Induction of new schools and mentors into the partnership is impressive. Information, expertise and skills are shared openly across partnership schools and this has a reciprocal benefit on broadening the skills and knowledge of partnership staff. There is a shared accountability for trainees' achievement across the partnership, coupled with high expectations of their teaching.
12. The allocation, deployment and use of resources are outstanding because they have a significantly beneficial impact on trainees' achievement. Trainees, through their evaluations and comments to inspectors, said they had the books and resources they needed for their academic work but also for their teaching. The number of professional tutors has increased since the last inspection, as a result of suggestions made by trainees. This has increased the proportion of trainees completing the course; increased the number of tutor visits to raise trainees' attainment; and has further improved the systems to assure the quality of the training. The management team bought in an external specialist in the teaching of English and new subject tutors because this was a priority for improvement. As a result, English is highly rated by trainees and tutors provide high quality and effective training.
13. The SCITT's policies for equality and diversity are clear, comprehensive and cover an extensive range of diversity. There have been no recorded incidents of harassment, bullying or racism. A strength of equality and diversity is the requirement for all school-based tutors, professional tutors and subject tutors to complete an interactive commercial package to train and extend their own understanding of diversity issues and the law. Trainees' evaluations, newly qualified teacher survey results, data showing trainees' attainment against the Standards, and trainees' work all indicate that they have a good understanding of how to cater for pupils of different backgrounds in their classes. This understanding, however, is not outstanding because they are less knowledgeable about how to teach and cater for pupils who are eligible for free school meals; pupils of different faiths; pupils who may become lesbian, gay or bisexual; and pupils who are disabled. In the training sessions observed by inspectors there were some missed opportunities to make trainees think about how they could adapt their teaching to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. However, the training has provided them with the skills and

understanding of how to apply the skills of inclusion to all pupils in their classes.

14. Trainees are assessed in detail and frequently by professional tutors, school-based mentors, the training manager and subject leaders. The assessment is used well for future planning, to plan future sessions and to set precise targets for improvement.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 1**

15. The cycle of evaluation, leading to continued improvement in the course is outstanding. Subject leaders, tutors, school staff, trainees and senior leaders evaluate the impact of the training on trainees' outcomes frequently and in depth. The management team also evaluates the course comprehensively by taking into account the evaluations provided by consultants, external agencies, external examiners, employing headteachers and local authorities and by taking into account national developments in education. Consequently the provider's self-evaluation is accurate and has a strong evidence base for its judgements. The quality of external examiner and other reports could be improved further with a stronger emphasis on how well the trainees are achieving against individual and groups of Standards.
16. Subject leaders make immediate refinements to the course based on information they collate about the skills, knowledge and understanding of each cohort of trainees. The subject leader for mathematics, for example, has observed trainees teaching mathematics and met with school-based tutors to identify how well this year's group of trainees were teaching the subject. This enabled her to amend the course to have a greater focus on how well trainees scaffold, explain and model mathematical concepts to pupils in their classes. All subject leaders collate and collect information, from a wide range of sources, at key points throughout the year, for example through lesson observations; trainees' files; trainees' school-based tasks and assignments; and discussions with class teachers, professional tutors and school-based mentors. The quality assurance systems are impressive and have improved since the previous inspection. Trainees suggested introducing paired observations of their teaching in order that any judgements could be moderated immediately and frequently between the class teacher and the professional tutor. The high quality evaluation enables leaders, managers and staff at all levels, within the partnership, to have an excellent understanding of what each individual trainee needs to be able to succeed.
17. Leaders and managers at all levels are highly skilled and highly effective. They have excellent up-to-date knowledge and understanding of teaching in the classroom, of national developments in education, and of recent and relevant research. The subject leaders told inspectors about the current thinking and debates in their particular subjects. The subject leader for art and design, for example, had an excellent understanding and knowledge of the research

identifying cultural differences between the drawings of Key Stage 2 pupils. The subject leader for English, in a training session observed by inspectors, referred trainees to the education white paper "*The importance of teaching*" and the latest Ofsted report into reading by the age of six. As a result trainees have a very good understanding of education as a whole, as well as the practicalities of teaching and learning.

18. The training manager provides excellent direction and leadership to the course. She is new in post as are many of the subject tutors. It is testament to the management committee that the overall strengths of the SCITT have been maintained throughout the changeover in staff. This, in part, is because the systems and procedures for managing the course are so strong. It is also because of the exceptionally high level of commitment and involvement of partnership headteachers. Each headteacher has a place on the management board and each makes a vital and highly valued contribution to the success and consistency of the SCITT. Each school invests heavily in the course. Headteachers commented to inspectors that there is a reciprocal impact on improving the skills, knowledge and expertise of their own staff in school.
19. The national survey of newly qualified teachers in 2009 indicated, in most areas, High Force Education prepares its trainees excellently to be teachers. In most areas the results were above, or well above, the national average. Newly qualified teachers, however, rated their preparedness to teach reading and to teach pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs as similar to the national average. Trainees at the end of the course in 2010 only rated their training in these aspects as satisfactory. Senior leaders decided both should be key priorities for improvement in this year's action plan, particularly as they were also school and national priorities for improvement. All trainees have been prepared in how to use the special educational needs toolkit. They have also received training, in every subject, in how to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of pupils who have disabilities and special educational needs. In physical education for example, tutors ask a trainee to pretend to be sight impaired, or in a wheelchair, to challenge trainees in how to adjust the lesson to meet pupils' needs. As a result of the improved training, trainees have a good understanding of how to use pupils' individual education plans; how to plan lessons so the lower ability pupils are taught by the teacher rather than being the sole responsibility of the teaching assistant; and how to teach pupils who have special educational needs. Owing to an improvement in trainees' skills and understanding, they can apply their knowledge to meet the needs of different pupils. There has also been an improvement in trainees' ability to teach early reading, letters and sounds. This is because there is highly practical training in how to blend and segment sounds and in how to teach comprehension and sounds to pupils of different ages. As a result trainees were able to compare and discuss different teaching strategies and systems for teaching letters and sounds.
20. The cycle of rapid and strategic improvement in the course indicates the SCITT's capacity for further improvement is outstanding. The proportion of trainees attaining a rating of outstanding, at the end of the course, has risen in

each of the last three years and other outcomes, such as the proportion of trainees from under represented groups, have risen. The quality and frequency of subject specific advice and training for trainees have improved since the last inspection. There is still some improvement needed to ensure there is rigorous analysis of how well trainees attain the Standards over time. This process has already begun because senior leaders have bought into a web-based program which will help them to analyse the achievement of individuals and groups of trainees against specific Standards.

21. The main course action plan is detailed and highly effective. It identifies priorities for improvement, responsible staff and budget implications. The staff responsible for monitoring the progress of the plan are different to those evaluating the success criteria. There is however, still a way to go to ensure all subject leaders' action plans have a focus on improving specific outcomes and raising the attainment of trainees.

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?		1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2
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?	1
	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?	1
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	2

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?		1
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1
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?		1

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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