

Wandsworth Primary Schools' Consortium

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address

Swaffield Primary School
St Ann's Hill
London
SW18 2SA

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of 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. Wandsworth Primary Schools' Consortium was formed in 1996 to provide teacher training within the London Borough of Wandsworth. It works in partnership with 18 schools to offer a PGCE route to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for the age ranges of 3–7 and 5–11, with an Early Years 'Pathway'. At the time of the inspection there were 34 trainees.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
- the high retention of trainees on the course who go on to be successful teachers
 - the trainees' increasing knowledge and understanding of how to teach early literacy skills using a systematic synthetic phonics approach, which is enhanced by trainees being able to observe excellent practice, for example, leading partners in literacy schools
 - the trainees' ability to link theory with practice, which is consistently developed within their school placements
 - the trainees' good knowledge and understanding of teaching pupils from diverse backgrounds within an inner-city environment
 - the trainees are highly committed to the course and their future development and this is nurtured by partnership schools who share a common purpose.

Required actions

5. In order to improve the quality of provision, the partnership must:
- improve the administration of selection processes by:
 - checking information on trainees more rigorously
 - recording and analysing the outcomes at interview to inform trainees' individual training plans from the outset.
 - ensure self-evaluation provides robust information to support action planning that is focused on improving trainees' outcomes.

Recommendations

6. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
- improve the quality of assessment by ensuring that targets provide good levels of challenge for all trainees to enable them to reach their full potential.
 - strengthen the quality-assurance role of link tutors to guarantee the consistency of assessment across the partnership.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

7. The provider is successful in its aim to prepare trainees to teach in local schools. This is because the practical nature of the course combined with a strong focus on the promotion of inclusive practice ensures that trainees are well prepared to teach in this inner-city area. Trainees are recruited from a range of diverse backgrounds to fully reflect the local cultural diversity. This diversity is mirrored in above average numbers of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds and numbers of men recruited into primary schools. The overall success of the provision is reflected in the very large majority of trainees who meet the Standards for QTS.
8. Modifications to the recruitment process have been implemented to facilitate the selection of trainees with the potential to teach. Retention rates are very high and the overwhelming majority go on to be successful teachers. Headteachers play an effective role in both interviewing and selecting trainees. The process includes an appropriate range of activities to ensure that the correct candidates are selected for the course. Taking the last three years into account, the proportion of trainees from under-represented groups reflects the local population well. The interview and selection procedures are insufficiently robust to ensure that the previous experiences of all trainees are fully investigated before a place is offered. Criteria for the initial grading of trainees are used appropriately to predict the final grade and to track individual progress. Furthermore, outcomes of selection provide a satisfactory basis for the identification of strengths and areas for development which are acted upon in schools and by link tutors. However, direct links between these selection procedures and training programmes are unclear and do not fully ensure clear diagnosis of areas for trainees to personalise trainees' training plans.
9. Inspection evidence confirms that about a half of the current trainees are likely to attain outstanding levels of competence by the end of the course. This is representative of the good or better performance seen in previous years. Trainees demonstrate good levels of subject knowledge for teaching, and particularly so for those following the Early Years course. As a result of improvements in the course structure, trainees demonstrate good knowledge and understanding in the teaching of phonics. For instance, trainees can talk confidently about how they might use a range of different schemes to teach phonics systematically and how they might use drama and role play to support early reading and writing development. Furthermore, they exhibit a growing level of understanding about how to teach pupils who speak English as an additional language.
10. All trainees build positive relationships quickly with pupils and staff. Effective behaviour management strategies are applied positively. The vast majority of trainees make good use of relevant prior experience in schools and of theoretical learning within the course to manage pupil behaviour.

Consequently, they quickly engage pupils in learning activities during school placements. Scrutiny of trainees' files confirms that trainees can plan work for pupils with different needs in a series of lessons. Trainees make effective links between theory and practice because of the good levels of coherence between the taught and school-based programmes. They develop a range of suitable assessment skills. However, there are some inconsistencies in how trainees use evaluations of their teaching to plan further work.

11. The incremental nature of the course allows trainees to develop their teaching skills and competencies progressively at an increasingly rapid rate. The balance between school placements and the timing of the taught course is good. Trainees value this because it gives them a good opportunity to put new learning into practice. Good attention is paid to addressing the individual needs of trainees and mentors provide clear guidance to trainees on what to do next. The match of school placements to trainees' needs is good to provide experience in a wide range of schools, subjects and phases.
12. Very well-taught sessions on phonics, letters and sounds and school-based tasks are used effectively to reinforce trainees' understanding of teaching early reading and writing. Excellent use is made of two leading partner in literacy schools for all trainees to observe excellent practice. Effective use is also made of those mentors and teachers who demonstrate high levels of expertise in the teaching of phonics and early literacy skills within the taught programme. This approach is also used to support the development of the trainees' good understanding about teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
13. Assessment is good overall. Assignments are practical as well as based on good theoretical input. They effectively enable trainees to put theory into practice when on placement. Trainees find feedback on these assignments constructive as it helps them to make good progress from assignment to assignment. However, the feedback from some lesson observations and targets set in mentor meetings is variable in quality. In the very best examples, targets are chosen very carefully to extend trainees' development and carefully tracked to measure progress in the next lesson observation. However, not all trainees are set challenging targets and there are examples of targets being too imprecise and set in isolation of the trainees' overall development. As a result, the overall outcomes for some trainees are not as good as they could be.
14. The quality, range and use of resources to support trainee development are good. Trainees make very good use of the wide range of local resource centres, the very good facilities at the base school, a local museum and library facilities at Kingston University. This impacts positively on the ability of trainees to engage pupils in active learning. For example, one trainee borrowed posters and set them up in the playground as part of a practical mathematical game. Another used a loaned resource box for teaching aspects of 'The Fire of London'. Good use has been made of a lead literacy school to produce an excellent training video to support the teaching of phonics. However, there are missed opportunities to use mentors' skills and the expertise of link tutors to ensure all trainees make the best possible progress.

15. The partnership arrangements within the consortium are effective as a result of improvements since the last inspection. Communication between all parties is good and links with the validating university continue to be strengthened. All headteachers of schools within the consortium are committed to its success, participating fully in management sub-committees and annual conferences. The course leader uses her in-depth knowledge of partnership schools, mentors and trainees to achieve a very good match when placing trainees in pairs for their first teaching experience. Similarly, great care is taken with school placements in the second school experience to ensure trainees gain the breadth and quality of experience appropriate for their chosen age phase. Annual conferences for mentors and lead mentors provide good training and opportunities to develop a shared understanding of what is high quality provision. The views of all partners are sought and acted upon.
16. The course promotes equality of opportunity and values diversity well. Trainees benefit significantly from their placements in inner-city schools with diverse cultures, languages and religions and become effective at teaching learners from a range of backgrounds. One summarised it by saying, 'You learn the most from the pupils themselves.' The trainees' understanding of issues related to special educational needs and the teaching of pupils whose first language is not English is good. Resources are carefully chosen by trainees to reflect and value diversity. Full equality of access to training and additional high quality support is provided where necessary to any trainee with a disability. There have been no reported incidents of harassment or racism and all trainees, past and present, stated clearly that they felt valued and extremely well supported by the consortium.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 3

17. Capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Teamwork is a strong feature of the course director, who works closely with members of the consortium board to manage and improve provision. Response to the issues raised at the previous inspection in engaging headteachers more closely in the regular oversight of training provision across the consortium has been effective. Inspection evidence confirms that response to both local and national initiatives is good. However, weaknesses in self-evaluation limit the ability of the consortium to be systematic in improving outcomes for trainees further.
18. The range of procedures used to evaluate the success of the training programme throughout the year is satisfactory overall. However, judgements within the self-evaluation document are overgenerous because monitoring is insufficiently rigorous to ensure an accurate assessment of the provider's strengths and weaknesses in provision. An emerging strength is the good involvement of key stakeholders in the process of self-evaluation. For instance, the annual conferences for both consortium headteachers and mentors provide very useful opportunities for them to engage with centre-based staff. Strengths

and weaknesses in provision are clearly identified and used well to inform improvement planning. Appropriate use is made of monitoring reports by external examiners to address weaknesses in provision. Self-evaluation takes good account of the views of trainees on the quality of the taught course. There is good evidence of rapid and effective response to any issues raised to improve the quality of the future taught programme. Data related to trainee progress are now gathered to facilitate better monitoring of provision across the consortium. However, these data have yet to be used systematically and with rigour to support accurate self-evaluation.

19. The monitoring of provision across the consortium is satisfactory overall. The course director undertakes regular monitoring visits to placement schools. Link tutors undertake regular checks of trainee progress but their role in monitoring the quality of mentoring is underdeveloped. The appointment of a liaison consultant with Kingston University to support quality assurance and a further consultant to provide advice on strategic planning are positive steps forward. However, these initiatives have yet to have a significant impact on overall provision and trainees' outcomes.
20. The consortium responds well to both local and government initiatives. The course director and consortium board work effectively as a team to provide strategic leadership in their quest to achieve improvements to the quality of training provision. The consortium board is quick to respond to local demands and changes to schools within the partnership. The Masters-level components and assignments provide trainees with a greater depth of understanding related to teaching pedagogy and opportunities for more in-depth reflection. Significant improvements have been made to the teaching of phonics both within the taught programme and school experience. Inspection evidence confirms that these are fully reflected in better outcomes for trainees in the teaching of these important early literacy skills. Furthermore, cross-curriculum developments to the programme have provided trainees with a deeper understanding of these curriculum developments, for instance, in the use of museums and other local resources to ensure breadth to the range of learning experiences planned for pupils during the school placements.
21. The overall quality of improvement planning is satisfactory and impacts positively on training provision. Action planning is directly linked to self-evaluation and the most appropriate priorities are correctly identified. Key stakeholders are fully engaged in the process through the activities of the consortium board. Targets for improvement are linked to financial resources where appropriate and set within manageable timescales. Roles and responsibilities are clear and this ensures full accountability. There is some evidence of success criteria set that are measurable against trainee outcomes, for example, in the action plan to develop trainees' understanding of teaching synthetic phonics to pupils. However, other areas for improvement are not so clearly focused on improving outcomes for trainees. Consequently, improvement planning has yet to impact significantly on trainees' outcomes.

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?	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment/selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	3
	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?	2
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?	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?		3
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		3
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		3

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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