

Portsmouth Primary SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address

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Unique reference number

70061

Inspection number

363145

Inspection dates

14 – 18 March 2011

Lead inspector

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a specialist 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. Portsmouth Primary SCITT offers initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualified teacher status in primary and the Early Years Foundation Stage education. In both courses trainees complete a one-year full-time programme of training which includes central training and three school placements in two different schools or early years settings. Both courses lead to a postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) which is validated by the University of Portsmouth. The SCITT, which is located in Portsmouth Local Authority's professional centre, works in partnership with 21 primary or infant schools in the Portsmouth area. At the time of the inspection there were 24 trainees on the primary course and five trainees on the early years course.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
 - the outstanding leadership and management which involves all partners in shaping, evaluating and developing the training to meet the needs of all trainees
 - the excellent central and school-based training which provides a seamless cohesion between theory and practice
 - the outstanding attention to the personalised learning needs of each trainee
 - the significant strengths in the trainees' confidence and skills in managing pupils' behaviour, teaching early reading, including phonics, and planning for pupils who speak English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - the committed, enthusiastic and confident trainees who are fully prepared for their futures as potentially outstanding teachers
 - the full involvement of partnership schools from recruitment and selection to the training and assessment of trainees
 - the excellent retention and ongoing employment of the trainees
 - the excellent ongoing training for new and experienced mentors which enable them to be very successful trainers.

Recommendations

5. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:
 - clarify the detail of trainees' experiences of the age ranges and the contrasting schools in which they have taught in their records of professional development
 - fine tune pre-course and course reading lists so that trainees are clear about the level of importance of each text.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

6. The overall effectiveness of the provider is outstanding because the training, assessment and quality of the provision across the partnership are of the highest quality, enabling trainees on both the primary and early years courses to make excellent progress and to achieve good or outstanding results. Trends in trainees' attainment have steadily improved over the past three years and in 2010, 62% of trainees achieved the highest grade with less than 10% achieving the satisfactory grade. At the time of the inspection, the current cohort was achieving at a similar level as the previous cohort at this stage in the year, indicating that such outstanding outcomes for trainees continue to be secure.
7. The recruitment and selection of trainees are outstanding because rigorous procedures are extremely successful in selecting high quality trainees. In the last three years, only one trainee has withdrawn from the course and between 90% and 100% gained employment as teachers, many in local schools. Information events and leaflets for prospective candidates are very effective in attracting suitable applicants; in the most recent cohort there were 200 applicants for 30 places. The two-day selection process, which takes place both at the centre and in partnership schools, is extremely thorough. It includes a wide range of very well-considered activities that are very well suited to identify candidates with the potential to become good or better teachers. These include observing candidates sharing a book with pupils, very detailed subject knowledge tests and audits, a personal interview and a presentation by the candidate on 'the teacher that I would like to become'. Interviewers, who include headteachers, tutors and mentors, are very well prepared for the selection process. Selection criteria are concise, clear and consistently applied. Detailed records are kept to inform feedback to both successful and unsuccessful candidates. A key strength is the way in which the training manager and early years course leader assure the quality, fairness and consistency of the process by taking part in each interview. Recruitment from minority ethnic groups is similar to that found nationally and the percentage of men successfully completing the courses is well above average. Information gathered at selection is used extremely well to provide personalised and comprehensive pre-course tasks so that trainees are fully prepared for the course. However, the extensive reading lists are not prioritised to indicate clearly the most important texts to study prior to the start of the training.
8. The quality of training on both the primary and early years course is outstanding. This is because training is very effectively personalised to the needs of each trainee. Assessment and tracking systems are exemplary and the outcomes used consistently well throughout the training to accelerate the progress and raise the standards of each trainee's professional skills. Central to this is the use of a 'bridging the gap' programme which assesses specifically what trainees need to do to improve their grades, identifies targets and clear and concise actions to achieve this, and then reviews the outcomes. Trainees are highly motivated by this system and it is a significant factor in raising attainment over recent years.

9. Central training is very well planned and structured. Sessions are developmental and consistently model good primary practice. Training in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a particular strength because very good use is made of the ethnic minority achievement service and a local special school to enhance central training. Training in phonics and early reading is outstanding. Extensive central training is followed by all trainees observing a highly skilled teacher during a phonics lesson. All trainees are then observed teaching phonics and undertake a child study which includes this aspect of pupils' learning. Following this any weaknesses are identified and personalised training activities are put into place. In addition, trainees, mentors and tutors attend the same training in phonics to ensure consistency in practice across the partnership. This represents outstanding practice and, as a result, trainees and newly qualified teachers observed or interviewed during the inspection demonstrated high levels of confidence and competence in these areas.
10. Tutors are very well qualified with recent and relevant experience. They inspire trainees and work very closely with schools to ensure excellent cohesion between central and school-based training. For example, subject tutors routinely observe a sample of trainees teaching their subject to evaluate the impact of central training on trainees' classroom practice and adjust it accordingly. Additionally, for example, extra information and communication technology (ICT) sessions were put on when trainees demonstrated uncertainty in teaching in an ICT suite. Link tutors provide excellent support to trainees and mentors. Because the trainee keeps the same link tutor throughout the course and usually has the same mentor in the first and third school placement, this provides excellent continuity of support for each trainee. School-based tasks and assignments are extremely well designed to further cement theory and practice, although the extensive reading lists for tasks are not prioritised. Schools provide high quality training venues because mentors are very well trained, and training activities are supported across each school. End-of-placement assessments, agreed by mentors, tutors and trainees, are rigorous, detailed and accurate and clearly identify future targets which link well to subsequent placements and the 'bridging the gap' programme. Trainees keep meticulous records of their professional development and progress towards meeting the Standards, although there is some lack of clarity as there is no summary sheet of school placements and age groups that they have taught during the course.
11. As a result of highly effective training, trainees display great enthusiasm for teaching, reflect in depth on their own practice and demonstrate high levels of professional skills, attributes, knowledge and understanding. As one newly qualified teacher commented: 'Being trained at the SCITT was a "badge of honour".'
12. The provider is very well resourced and trainees have access to an extensive library at the centre and in the University of Portsmouth, in addition to well-equipped training rooms. ICT resources, in particular software, support training extremely well. Deployment of human resources is outstanding and

are the main reason why trainees do so well. Leaders and managers are rigorous in ensuring that the best use is made of all available resources and that funding allocations are open and transparent across the partnership. As a result, all trainers feel valued and are motivated to provide the best possible training.

13. The partnership is a real strength because of the exceptionally high level of commitment by all stakeholders. Schools work closely with the provider and many mentors and headteachers support central training. Mentor training is outstanding for new and experienced mentors and ensures that every mentor has a clear understanding of their role. Every new mentor has three half days of detailed training and all mentors have a half day of training with trainees and tutors before each placement. Link tutor support provides further bespoke mentor training as necessary. Supportive documentation is of an exceptionally high quality.
14. Inclusion is a significant strength. All policies and procedures on equalities and diversity are securely in place and rigorously applied with outcomes being constantly evaluated by managers. Support for the individual needs of trainees, especially those with disabilities, is exemplary. Trainees are very confident and fully prepared to teach pupils with wide ranging needs in a socially, culturally and ethnically diverse society because of numerous opportunities that they have to match theory with practice. For example, one trainee was observed demonstrating excellent practice in including a pupil with a profound hearing impairment in a phonics lesson on letters and sounds.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

15. A key strength is the way in which the leadership and management of the provision involve all partners in shaping, evaluating and reviewing the impact of the training on outcomes for trainees. Highly effective management systems are well established to ensure that both the day-to-day running and the longer term management of the strategic direction respond effectively to need and are fit for purpose. Leaders and managers at all levels have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision because communications across the partnership are excellent and all stakeholders are keen to play their part in ensuring the ongoing success of the provision. The management and executive committees are widely representative of the partnership and are very well informed and operate efficiently. They are proactive in supporting and championing the provision as well as in holding managers to account. The leadership team of the training manager, early years course leader and course coordinator work exceptionally well as a team. They know trainees and partnership schools very well and are tireless in ensuring that training is of the highest standard and matches the needs of all trainees.

16. Detailed and regular evaluations from trainees and trainers, rigorous monitoring of trainees' progress from the point of selection onwards, detailed scrutiny of data and external examiners' reports ensure that training is kept under constant review. Trainees interviewed during the inspection expressed great appreciation for the rapid response to issues when they arise for both individual trainees and the whole cohort. For example, additional workshops in guided writing and assessing pupils' progress were arranged at short notice to successfully address an emerging weakness in these areas.
17. Quality assurance systems are rigorous and effective. Joint observations, triangulated end-of-placement assessments and combined link tutor and mentor training help to ensure the accuracy of judgements on trainees' progress towards meeting the Standards, including their final assessment. The programme manager undertakes annual quality assurance visits to each partnership school and core tutors closely monitor the impact of their training. External examiners' reports are detailed and helpful especially with regard to specifically commissioned reports on priority areas. For example, phonics training was observed by an external examiner and judged as 'very good, giving trainees an excellent example of phonics teaching in a Year 1 class'.
18. The provider is both reactive and proactive in responding to change. It is providing excellent training in the national priorities and the result is that trainees are confident in these areas and have a good or better level of professional understanding in, for example, behaviour management and teaching early mathematics. A particular strength is how the provider responds to local need. For example, the early years course was developed as a direct response to a need identified by local headteachers. The provider has also supported local schools' continuous professional development and has ensured that trainees, many of whom gain posts within the local authority, have a good understanding of local issues such as improving boys' writing and using comparative data across the local authority to help them understand how to make comparative assessments. As a result, trainees are highly regarded by local schools.
19. Strategic planning at all levels is very well informed by extensive evaluations, feedback and accurate data analysis. There is a well-defined annual cycle of improvement which involves the whole partnership and contributes not only to improving the provision, but also to partnership schools' improvement generally. The resulting improvement plan identifies clear priorities and targets with well-timed and resourced actions to achieve them. Measureable success criteria help to ensure that the pace of change is brisk. A strong feature is the way in which improvement planning both in the short term and strategically is rigorously measured against the impact on trainees' performance. Because of the close links across the partnership, individual schools have benefited directly from strategic planning. In many partnership schools Initial Teacher Education features strongly in their own strategic and professional development planning because they are able to benefit from shared training. For example, mentors have cascaded the training that they have received in phonics back to their own schools.

Overall effectiveness

		Primary
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		1
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?	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?	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?		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

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