

Primary Catholic Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of 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. Following the closure of a local Catholic higher education college, the Primary Catholic Partnership (PCP) was given accreditation in 1999 to provide school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) to primarily secure the supply of teachers for Catholic schools. The PCP works in partnership with 30 schools in the central south coast of England and the Diocese of Portsmouth. It provides initial teacher education (ITE) which is based on a Catholic philosophy of education. Until December 2007 the PCP programme followed a calendar year. However, in 2008 the programme was revised and revalidated and commenced in the September of that year to follow an academic year. Trainee numbers increased from 24 to 32.
4. The course provides initial teacher education leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) in the 5 to 11 primary phase. The training programme also offers credits to a master's level degree. These are accredited by St Mary's University College, Twickenham.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
- the highly effective system of selecting trainees capable of making excellent teachers who, as a consequence of the outstanding training, successfully find employment, many within local Catholic schools
 - the high levels of collegiality and commitment that exists across the partnership which results in trainees gaining an extremely rich range of experiences
 - the outstanding pastoral and academic support for trainees which enables them to make rapid progress and gain qualified teacher status
 - the excellent quality of both the central and school-based training which provides an exceptionally effective balance of academic and practical experiences
 - the ability to respond rapidly, and successfully implement local and national initiatives, resulting in trainees who understand how to manage behaviour, teach phonics and support those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - the ability of leaders to manage change and whose drive and determination enable them to deliver a training programme that is outstanding.

Recommendations

6. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
- seek ways to help a few of trainees to overcome colloquial variations in pronunciation so that they can communicate more clearly with children.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

7. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. Trainees attain high standards. They are extremely positive about their training and take pride in their high quality achievements. The exceptional strengths of their personal attributes are a key feature of their achievement. Very early on in their training, trainees become fully involved in

school life and develop outstanding relationships with both pupils and staff. They accurately evaluate the impact of their teaching, focusing on what it is that pupils know, understand and can do. Trainees are very competent in using this information to plan the next lesson and this successfully ensures that all pupils make progress. Trainees prepare lessons that clearly identify how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities will be supported. They are confident in the way they teach these specific groups because they feel that they have received the highest quality training at the PCP centre. For example, the trainees understand that using stimulating and highly visual approaches in lessons motivates pupils who find learning challenging. This was evident in a session where Key Stage 2 pupils gained a good understanding of angles by making different types of triangles using straws with pliable sticking materials. In a Year 2 lesson, dressing up a pupil as a robot, and then asking the class to provide operation instructions, emphasised the crucial impact of accuracy when using technical equipment. Trainees are also extremely knowledgeable about individual education plans and carefully consult them when they are planning lessons.

8. Trainees use information and communication technology well to make the learning exciting for the pupils. This was particularly noticeable when a trainee made a short film clip for his class to give meaning and purpose to their learning. Trainees understand the urgency of learning and lessons move along at a good pace. They have a secure repertoire of ways to assess the pupils' understanding of their learning. For example, agreed procedures, such as 'thumbs up if you understand', are used throughout the sessions to ensure that they are very clear about their learning. Trainees deploy their classroom support with great care. By briefing teaching assistants prior to the lesson and instructing them to complete an assessment on the individuals they have supported, the trainees are able to plan very appropriate learning activities for these pupils. The excellent preparation that trainees have for behaviour management is exemplified in the way that they use a wide range of strategies to ensure that their classroom environments are calm and purposeful. Pupils who exhibit more challenging behaviour are sensitively and positively dealt with. For instance, musical instruments and clapping rhythms are effectively used to gain the attention of the pupils. The extensive training at the PCP centre and at the leading literacy school has enabled the trainees to feel confident about teaching letters and sounds. However, a few do not always communicate as clearly as they could with their pupils. This is because they pronounce certain words colloquially and this turns the intended words into a different meaning. For example, at times the 'h' sound is missed out from words such as 'thing' and 'thumb'. Positive feedback is occasionally lost when the words are incorrectly accentuated.
9. As a result of outstanding recruitment and selection procedures, the partnership secures the highest calibre of prospective teachers who have high expectations. This underpins the effectiveness of the course. The comprehensive website, the partnership's good reputation and word of mouth result in a high demand for places. Rigorous interviews with the headteachers from the partnership schools, selection tasks in English and mathematics, presentations and teaching tasks are used extremely well to identify trainees with the personal skills and potential not

only to meet the demands of the course but also to be effective teachers . Unsuccessful candidates are provided with excellent advice and support so that they may consider applying again in the future. The partnership is particularly successful in recruiting trainees with a wide range of first degrees and those who have had previous experience of working with children. For instance, trainees with degrees in criminology, civil engineering and town and country planning contribute an interesting dimension to their work in school. A number of trainees have also gained qualifications in child development and this supports exceptionally well their knowledge of the overall development of young people. Full advantage is made of the additional training sessions the partnership offers so that specific subject knowledge is improved to a very high standard. Consequently, a high proportion of trainees progress on to a Master's degree. The PCP has an exceptional record of course completion, a high retention rate and it has a 100% success rate in entry into teaching. Headteachers refer to trainees being much better prepared for teaching than other applicants and a few headteachers reported that: 'so many of the PCP trainees become outstanding teachers'. As a result, the partnership now has a high number of schools where former trainees are mentors or have been rapidly promoted to use their knowledge and expertise elsewhere within the schools.

10. The exceptional quality of both the centre-based and school-based training programme is the key to ensuring that the trainees develop into highly skilled professionals who are adaptable to changing requirements and initiatives. Successful applicants receive excellent support and guidance from the moment they are appointed to the course. Consequently, they make very good progress from the outset. Past and present trainees speak exceptionally highly of this aspect of the training, together with the ways their individual needs, both professional and personal, are addressed. Throughout the year, trainees make informed and critical evaluations of their teaching. Each lesson observed by the school mentor or a link tutor is evaluated against previously set targets, with the next steps in professional development being clearly identified during feedback. High quality evaluations are recorded by the mentor and link tutor.
11. The lecturers leading the centre-based sessions are chosen carefully for their experience, knowledge and ability to communicate what it means to be a high quality teacher working in local schools. Many are practicing teachers working in partnership schools and have the credibility and respect needed to communicate very successful teaching strategies. They deliver the majority of the theoretical input in the early stage of the course before trainees move into their full-time placements in school. Trainees highly value this preparation and consider that they are extremely well prepared for their placements. For example, trainees feel confident to teach phonics. This is because they have an excellent series of lectures on teaching reading through letters and sounds. This is swiftly followed by sessions at the PCP's leading literacy school where they work together in groups supporting pupils in their phonic work. School-based tasks and assignments are superbly designed to help them with their teaching in the future. There is a very strong focus on teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, English as an additional language and promoting the strands of Every Child Matters. Visits to inner city schools along the south coast and a clear focus on the local Diocesan's programme for religious education

enable trainees to be exceptionally well prepared for teaching in a diverse range of schools.

12. The extensive range of resources available has considerable beneficial impact on the progress that the trainees make. Every trainee is allocated a laptop with a wide range of software. Trainees demonstrate very good skills and understanding in the use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. School-based mentors and link tutors are exceptionally well trained for their role and they carry out their responsibilities with great care and attention. The managers of the partnership continually assess the allocation of resources against impact and adapt the programme to improve trainees' outcomes. For instance, schools are allocated resources which allow mentors to have release time from class to enable high quality feedback time with their trainees.
13. All those involved in the partnership consider it to be a 'family who communicate with professionalism'. Members of the partnership are highly committed, extremely well trained and passionate about teacher training.
14. The promotion of equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity is an exceptional feature of the partnership. All trainees receive their entitlement to very high quality training. Inner city school visits raise the trainees' awareness of working with pupils who speak English as an additional language. By using the local Diocesan programme of work for religious education, an understanding of different faiths and beliefs is promoted extremely well. Former trainees report that their in-depth knowledge of different religions developed during their time at the partnership has enabled them to be considered by their teaching colleagues as experts in comparative religions. There are no instances of harassment, bullying or intimidation.

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

15. All those involved in leading the partnership share a well-thought-out, clear vision to maintain the highest quality training and be respected as a provider of highly sought-after teachers. The provider has outstanding capacity to improve further because there is a very strong track record of improvement over the past few years which has resulted in a rapidly improving trend of the proportion of good and outstanding trainees. This is because the information from evaluations across the partnership is used extremely effectively to inform development planning and the management board is very quick to take action to ensure trainees' needs are met.
16. As a result of excellent leadership and management at all levels, self-evaluation is outstanding. The management board takes very seriously its role to challenge and to make informed decisions. Four sub-committees drive the programme of improvement extremely well, drawing on the expertise from the partnership schools. However, trainees and trainers know their voice counts because

important changes are made in response to their views. The programme leader works extremely closely with all the partnership schools and knows who to call on when a particular need arises, such as a trainee with a specific issue who needs specialist support. The programme leader also responds rapidly to engage specialist expertise to ensure trainees are aware of local and national initiatives, such as those who publish specific programmes to promote writing in schools.

17. One of the main reasons for the continuous improvement in trainees' outcomes is the exceptional quality assurance system and the strategic use of data. The outcomes of all observations of trainees by school mentors and link tutors are rapidly reported back to the programme leader and senior link tutor. Where a trainee is not progressing at a sufficient rate in their teaching or is performing less well than expected, additional support visits are quickly put into place to tackle specific areas of concern. As a result, the overwhelming majority of trainees make excellent progress. The programme leader, in conjunction with link tutors, closely evaluates the quality of mentoring and provides precise feedback to each mentor and extra training to mentors immediately if an issue arises. The senior leaders use the partnership's own interactive information technology programme extremely well to track which QTS Standards are being met by the trainees. As a result, the tutors are able to clearly focus on clusters of Standards or individual Standards for different groups of trainees, enabling the overwhelming majority to make outstanding progress.
18. There is a comprehensive system of evaluating the course using a range of evidence from the detailed tracking and assessment of trainees and evaluations completed by tutors, mentors, former trainees, employing headteachers, and the Diocese of Portsmouth. Responses to issues raised in the external examiner's report are very swiftly addressed. For example, the partnership has responded to the grading issues highlighted in the external examiner's report where it was considered unnecessarily challenging to gain the highest level at the end of the course. This has involved refining the grade criteria and ensuring consistency across all the partnership schools.
19. The PCP has an excellent track record of anticipating and responding to change. It is very responsive to day-to-day issues that arise and quickly takes action to address individual or wider concerns. For example, when trainee evaluations showed that they considered that input on the Early Years Foundation Stage had been over-emphasised, senior staff reacted quickly to make changes that improved the situation. The willingness to deal with matters promptly is greatly appreciated by staff and trainees across the partnership. The manner in which the PCP also responds to local and national initiatives is impressive. There is very clear evidence of how the partnership has responded to the local need to train teachers for Catholic primary schools and with religious education as a core subject; trainees are extremely well prepared for this specialism. Given that a significant proportion of former trainees rise rapidly into middle leadership positions, the PCP is also a driving force in helping to address the national shortage of Catholic headteachers. Former and current trainees interviewed confirmed that the partnership is highly proactive in providing training and practical experiences for teaching letters and sounds. They also emphasised the importance their trainers placed on developing techniques to manage behaviour

and all trainees spoken to, both past and present, felt that training to provide the additional support required for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enabled them to feel confident in the classroom.

20. Strategic planning is clear, of high quality and focuses on priorities that have been identified as the result of rigorous evaluation and monitoring. The action plans are extremely well considered. For each priority there is a clear rationale as to why it is a priority and this links to monitoring and evaluation outcomes. Actions are very well planned with personnel, timescales and resources clearly indicated. Success criteria which relate directly to trainees' teaching and assessment are exceptionally clear and measurable against outcomes for 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?	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

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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