

# Cornwall SCITT

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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David Edwards HMI

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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. Cornwall School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) is a provider of secondary postgraduate teacher training leading to the award of qualified teacher status for the 11 to 16 age range with enhancement to post-16 in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, modern foreign languages, music and information and communication technology; and for the 14 to 19 age range in media studies. The SCITT also offers Postgraduate Certificates in Education at higher and masters levels. Cornwall SCITT serves a largely rural area and the partnership comprises 16 secondary schools, a special school and a tertiary college. At the time of the inspection there were 52 trainees on their final school placement.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
- the collaborative nature of the partnership which is a highly cohesive community of schools locally, strongly focused on learning and producing teachers of the highest quality
  - the responsiveness of the programme manager and her deputy to the needs of all stakeholders
  - the professionalism of the trainees, who are well prepared to meet the diverse needs of learners
  - succinct documentation that provides clear communication across the partnership and helps sustain high-quality training and support
  - highly committed mentors, subject leaders and professional tutors who ensure high-quality training
  - the high quality of the pastoral care and the personalised help and support trainees receive
  - honest and aspirational action planning that responds fully to local needs and national initiatives.

### Recommendations

5. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
- establish clear and time-related expectations for improvement for the very small number of trainees who require additional support
  - ensure consistency in the use of grade criteria by mentors to inform trainees about the quality of their teaching.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

6. Trainees' attainment is outstanding. This is a direct result of the high-quality training that balances equality of opportunity with the selection of trainees who have the potential to be good or better teachers by the end of the course. The commitment of trainers across the partnership to securing high-quality outcomes for trainees, and their impact on improvement, is clearly reflected in an improving trend in the proportion of trainees graded good or better over the last three years.
7. A notable strength of trainees is their excellent subject knowledge. This, together with a commitment to learning, motivates them to keep up to date with current educational thinking and practice. Trainees are quick to establish

productive relationships with staff and students in order to create a professional climate for learning within their classrooms. They develop the ability to reflect critically on their own practice and then use this information to inform their professional development. They are highly effective in their use of information and communication technology to support their teaching and engage learners. In addition, trainees settle quickly in their placement schools and are very willing to be involved in all aspects of school life. This further allows them to make a strong contribution to the all-round development of learners.

8. Trainees benefit from opportunities to work collaboratively with one another in planning their lessons and developing their subject knowledge. Their lesson planning is detailed and appropriately focused on students' learning. They are able to use a wide variety of strategies to maintain good pace and the engagement of learners in lessons. Trainees are well informed and suitably prepared to teach students with a wide range of learning needs and those who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
9. Despite the relatively high number of trainees who had either withdrawn early from training or had been counselled off the course in 2010/11, inspectors found no evidence to suggest the very strong recruitment procedures were lacking in any way. The SCITT is willing to take calculated risks in its identification of trainees' capabilities and areas for development when determining their potential to be good or outstanding teachers. In fact, the care and diligence of the partnership to ensure all successful applicants are provided with appropriate schools experience prior to starting their training are excellent. This focus on personalised learning is a strength of the provision and a commitment that is exhibited at all levels of the partnership. As a consequence, the SCITT meets local and regional employment needs very effectively and is increasingly successful in achieving targets related to gender and diversity that are above the regional and national averages.
10. The SCITT's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity is a distinctive feature of the provision. This is demonstrated through the partnership's commitment to inclusion which ensures the promotion of trainees' understanding of cultural diversity when planning lessons. In doing this it ensures trainees are provided with personalised targets as early as possible which are clearly identified and shared with their mentors. Although this strategy is highly effective for the vast majority of trainees, because mentors do not use grade criteria consistently to inform trainees about the quality of their teaching, some remain vague regarding their potential to become outstanding teachers.
11. The quality of support for the well-being of trainees is excellent and trainees hold strongly positive views about their pastoral care. They are unanimous in their belief that any issues or concerns will be dealt with appropriately and quickly. Trainees' completion rates in 2009/10 were notably better than national benchmarks. The feedback trainees receive from their mentors or visiting subject tutors is appropriately focused on teaching and learning and helps to ensure that the overwhelming majority of trainees make the good

progress expected of them. Without exception, trainees are extremely positive about the quality of training they receive across the partnership. In particular they appreciate the coherence between central and school-based training and the way provision is tailored to meet their individual learning needs. School placements are chosen as carefully as possible to provide trainees with contrasting experiences, and assignments are carefully focused to address individual development needs. The programme manager or her deputy steps in rapidly to sort out problems when they occur.

12. The system to audit trainees' knowledge, skills and understanding is effectively embedded in the training and is a strength of the provision. Audits graphically demonstrate trainees' progress and prompt swift and effective intervention and support when causes for concern are raised. They allow trainers to monitor trainees' development and progress closely and information from them is used very well by trainers to ensure trainees benefit from carefully personalised training opportunities. However, in the very small number of cases where trainees require additional support, deadlines for the completion of actions to ensure a return to trainees' expected rates of improvement are not always made explicit.
13. Centre-based training is regularly enriched by external trainers with specific expertise, for example by providing training to teach students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This approach ensures that training is not only up to date but incorporates the best practice from across the partnership and beyond. The process of target setting and review in supporting trainees' progress is particularly effective; trainees are kept fully involved in the regular review of their progress and development. Mentors accurately identify the main strengths and weaknesses in the trainees' teaching and frequently refer to previous learning and past targets in order to encourage trainees to reflect and identify areas for improvement. As a result, the quality of professional dialogue between trainees, mentors and visiting tutors is of high quality. Despite some inconsistencies in the application of grade criteria, assessment is generally accurate across the partnership and kept under continuous review. The programme manager and her deputy keep a very close eye on moderation processes through regular joint observations and the scrutiny of trainees' logs and files at key points during the course.
14. Across the partnership there is a high level of commitment to, and involvement in, the strategic direction of the SCITT. The programme manager and her deputy know each school's strengths well and this information is used carefully in placing trainees in the best schools to meet their training needs. Mentor training across the partnership is well organised and responsive to need. Opportunities for mentors to share good practice, for example during moderation meetings and in joint lesson observations, contribute effectively to their professional development. Mentors and other school-based staff are confident in their roles because the programme documentation is carefully written.
15. The excellent use of resources underpins trainees' good development and progress. The programme manager and her deputy are judicious in the

deployment of resources in order to maintain high-quality training and development across the partnership. For example, mentor meetings are planned at a time appropriate for all and ensure high attendance and continuity; the responsiveness of mentors is a particular strength of the provision. Visits from seconded professional tutor and centre-based staff are also regular and highly effective, allowing trainees to benefit from very good subject support.

## **The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality**

### **Grade: 1**

16. Strong leadership at all levels and accurate self-evaluation have led to improvement planning which results in continually improving outcomes for trainees. External examiners' reports, action plans and professional studies groups all contribute to self-evaluation and the quality of the provision is constantly under close scrutiny. The executive board offers a highly effective forum for the development and implementation of the SCITT's strategic plan. The high quality of training in the SCITT has contributed significantly to perceived improvements in the quality of education locally with the majority of trainees securing teaching posts in the locality.
17. The course programmes are regularly reviewed and the programme manager and her deputy are visionary in pursuing improvement, analysing data and using the outcomes of their analysis creatively to find solutions to problems. They use trainees' outcomes, benchmarking data, such as those provided in the newly qualified teacher survey, and feedback from trainees, trainers and external examiners, to identify strengths and areas for development. As a result, self-evaluation is effectively embedded across the partnership and recognised as an essential vehicle for accelerating trainees' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, following transition meetings, trainees' strengths and weaknesses are summarised and shared. Employment rates, not surprisingly, are high and continue to improve.
18. Crucial to the success of the partnership is the excellent relationship between the SCITT and its partner schools. The tight-knit SCITT community is highly responsive to need and the excellent communications between the SCITT and placement schools ensure a high level of coherence and commitment to the evaluation of training. The programme manager and her deputy are always seeking ways to improve training and development opportunities for all stakeholders, not just trainees. For example, the partnership has responded to the request to hold mentor training after school hours that is open to all teachers and not just to those new to mentoring. Similarly, documentation has recently been reviewed to make the work of assessing trainees' progress as simple and effective as possible.
19. Senior leaders and the executive board embrace change and are highly effective in anticipating and responding to external initiatives at national and

local levels. As a result, all trainees are well prepared to manage and promote good behaviour in their lessons and develop key skills through their careful attention to planning lessons to meet the full range of students' abilities. In response to a growing need recognised by partnership schools to train more teachers who are confident in teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, plans have been drawn up to enable trainees to specialise jointly in special educational needs and some of the core subjects currently on offer.



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

## Overall effectiveness

		Secondary
<b>How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?</b>		<b>1</b>
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

		Secondary
<b>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?</b>		<b>1</b>
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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