

Wandsworth Primary Schools' Consortium

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address

Swaffield Primary School
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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, based in the London Borough of Wandsworth, has been operating for 15 years. There are currently 16 schools in the partnership but numbers have ranged from 8 to 19. The consortium was inspected in the final week of the course and no trainees were in schools. The consortium offers a one-year, postgraduate certificate in education route to qualified teacher status (QTS) for teaching the age ranges 3 to 7 and 5 to 11. At the time of the inspection there were 35 trainees. The consortium is currently based in a partner school and is moving to accommodation in another host school in September 2012.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
 - the excellent use of physical and human resources to meet the needs of trainees and the effective targeting of these to have most impact
 - the active promotion of equality of opportunity which contributes to rising levels of attainment and high-quality, reflective trainees
 - engagement with the wider world of teacher education which enables the consortium to anticipate and pre-empt future developments
 - a strong sense of collegiality and shared identity across the consortium which leads to a strong commitment to active participation and highly-flexible, responsive leadership
 - high-quality teaching in core subjects and in phonics
 - excellent pastoral care and attention to the well-being and progress of each trainee
 - rigorous, and much improved, quality assurance procedures and strategic planning.

Recommendations

5. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
 - ensure that the targets for improvement arising from lesson observations are routinely followed up in later observations
 - further individualise training in order to reflect more fully trainees' existing strengths.
6. In order to improve recruitment and selection arrangements, the provider should:
 - ensure that there is greater transparency in, and better consistency between, grade and text when recording applicants' answers at interview.

Overall effectiveness

Grade 2

7. Trainees attain well because the provision is of increasingly high quality. In 2011 almost half the trainees were judged outstanding and, for almost all trainees, their attainment was good or better. There is little difference in attainment between groups of trainees or between courses. Scrutiny of trainees' files and discussions with tutors, mentors and trainees confirm the accuracy of the consortium's assessments. Those trainees completing the course in 2012 are set to exceed the recent pattern of good and outstanding attainment.

8. By the time they complete the course, trainees have a good understanding of how pupils learn. The practical nature of the training prepares trainees very well for the rigours of life in the classroom. Trainees say they are confident and feel well able to manage the challenges of their first year's teaching. This view is enthusiastically endorsed by headteachers who say that the consortium's trainees are well prepared to make a full contribution to the life of the school. Trainees are steeped in school practice and many go on to secure teaching posts in their placement schools.
9. The partnership was established in order to meet the recruitment needs of local schools. It has been highly successful in meeting this aim. Completion rates are high, as is the proportion of trainees entering employment. In 2011, almost half of the graduating trainees obtained posts in Wandsworth schools and most end up teaching in London. Longer-term rates of retention in teaching are also high. Many local schools, particularly those within the partnership, have significant proportions of former consortium trainees in post, many as mentors and senior staff. All current trainees have succeeded in gaining teaching posts for September.
10. Selection procedures are rigorous and are well designed to meet emerging national priorities. Applicants' basic skills in literacy and numeracy are tested, as are their understanding of key educational themes and their teaching ability. This has improved the judgement on trainees' starting points in relation to the QTS Standards. All trainees are expected to have gained some pre-course experience in schools. The proportion with more than one year of school experience has risen steadily over three years and currently stands at nearly half. The outcomes of interviews and the selection process are carefully analysed and effectively incorporated into trainees' individual training plans from the outset. Some trainees are required to undertake pre-course tasks to improve their basic skills or enhance their understanding of school practice. This information is shared with the placement schools and early support is provided when required. Trainees spoke highly of the impact of this focused support on their ability and confidence.
11. The administration of the selection process is rigorous and previous weaknesses have been eradicated. However, while trainees are asked an appropriate range of standardised questions, responses to these questions sometimes consist of a simple record of the answer rather than a clear evaluation of the quality of response.
12. The proportion of men recruited into teaching is well above both the overall national figure and that of similar providers. The proportion of minority ethnic trainees recruited is generally close to average. Safeguarding checks for trainees are fully in place.
13. Trainees make good progress towards achieving the Standards. There has been a steady rise in the proportion of trainees judged to be outstanding, with a corresponding decline in the proportion judged only satisfactory. There has been a particularly sharp increase in the proportion of trainees judged to be

good or better over the last two years. Of the current cohort 66% are outstanding, which is an increase of 10% over each of the past three years and 20% on last year. One of the most significant strengths of the programme is the exceptionally detailed analysis of trends in attainment. This enables very effective action to be taken to raise attainment further. Trainees value the help they have received in preparing their professional portfolios and completing applications for teaching posts.

14. Trainees are reflective practitioners; while they recognise their strengths, they also know how to improve. In the 2011 newly qualified teacher survey, all trainees considered the quality of their training to be at least good and most considered it very good. The most recent end-of-course evaluations by trainees are equally positive. Trainees say that they are now more confident in their ability to teach early reading and phonics. Responses from trainees following the Early Years Foundation Stage course are particularly enthusiastic about the training they have received.
15. The training meets the needs of trainees very well and is closely matched to their individual training plans, although their existing strengths are not always fully enough recognised. Their progress is rigorously tracked in the Standards profile. The handover of trainees from one school experience placement to the next is particularly effective. Lead mentors from current and next-school placements meet and discuss the progress of trainees and their on-going targets. On trainees' placements, small-step targets agreed with mentors after lesson observations reflect the outcomes of the lesson well, but these targets are not always followed up to see whether or not they have been met. Tracking data are regularly and thoroughly analysed and additional support, if required, is rapid and effective. A useful summative report records trainees' overall progress, beginning with a predictive grade at interview and culminating in a final, moderated grade. Assignments are very clearly linked to the need to understand and gather evidence related to the Standards and to promote a deep understanding of educational issues and academic rigour. All partners remark on the consistency between school-based and central training. The clear and explicit course handbook sets out precise expectations for each week of a trainee's school placement and ensures trainees have enjoyed a broad range of experiences. Mentors particularly value this explicit and consistent set of expectations.
16. Centre-based staff are an excellent resource because of the depth and range of their experience and the exceptional quality of the help and guidance they give to partnership schools and trainees. Subject tutors are highly effective in the development of trainees' skills, particularly in the teaching of phonics and early reading, English, science, mathematics and behaviour management. Resources are exceptionally well deployed to enable trainees to become skilled in working with disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs, to develop positive attitudes to learning and to promote an awareness of cultural diversity. Leading Literacy and partnership schools provide exceptional resources, particularly in the development of trainees' key competencies. School-based mentors are very well trained. Trainees have access to a wide range of resources, including the Kingston University virtual learning environment and

library. High-quality, additional resources to support placements are appreciated by trainees, for example resources to support teaching in science and art and design and those available at the Wandsworth teachers' resource centre. Resources such as laptops and digital cameras have a significant impact on sustaining high-quality outcomes for trainees.

17. Trainees are very well prepared to teach in a culturally diverse society. They gain valuable experience in schools serving pupils from a variety of social, cultural and economic backgrounds. The training sessions which focus on inclusion, backed up with academic assignments and tasks, skilled mentor support and a range of specialist resources, enable trainees to develop a nuanced appreciation of the barriers to learning pupils face and the strategies teachers use to address these. Expert leadership from the consortium's course director and good support from tutors have ensured that trainees adopt a holistic approach to this aspect of their emerging practice. They are encouraged to undertake action research on the range of social, religious, ethnic and cultural influences on pupils' learning. Schools within the partnership have provided strong support to help trainees become more skilled in assessing and tracking the progress of individuals and of potentially vulnerable groups of pupils. They are well prepared to support pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Trainees are also engaged in planning cross-curricular projects that encourage pupils to explore world faiths and to celebrate the diversity of their own backgrounds and traditions. Trainees feel very secure about the procedures for making declarations and reporting incidents, although none has had cause to do so. Equalities policies are familiar to all and their impact regularly evaluated. A key to promoting equality of opportunity is the high quality pastoral care and trainees with specific learning difficulties receive very good support. For example, those with dyslexia are offered additional resources and workshops to develop their assignment-writing skills led by former trainees who have overcome similar difficulties. Excellent tutorial support ensures that any concerns are resolved quickly.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade 2

18. The leadership and management of the consortium are securely based on robust self-evaluation, the accurate collection and analysis of data and a rigorous cycle of quality assurance. This virtuous circle has resulted in significant improvement in recruitment procedures and rising levels of trainee attainment. The allocation of resources is carefully thought out and closely matched to an analysis of trends and priorities. External and internal examiner reports, and the internal subject review led by Kingston University, have a clear focus on some of the most important aspects of the consortium's work including recruitment, teaching and learning and assessment procedures. The support provided by a well-focused consultancy has helped improve the clarity of improvement planning.

19. There is a high level of commitment to the consortium from all partners. Headteachers are expected to play a full part in its strategic management and direction. They value the programme highly because they recognise its importance in meeting their recruitment needs and in providing high-quality teachers. The course director and administrator know the strengths and characteristics of partnership schools very well. They also know each trainee's interests and areas for development exceptionally well. As a result, they ensure a very good match between need and provision. This also enables the consortium to intervene quickly if required. Trainers and trainees share high expectations which contribute to high-quality outcomes. A common sense of purpose and commitment drives the excellent support which trainees receive. Systems to ensure regular feedback by trainees to the course director ensure that resources are well matched to the requirements of the course and decisions about provision are based on the need to secure further improvement.
20. The consortium anticipates changes in local and national priorities exceptionally well and is actively engaged in the national and local debate on issues as diverse as behaviour for learning and the drive for high professional standards in respect of trainees' use of social networks. The consortium has established a link with one Wandsworth teaching school alliance and is in the process of establishing links with another. The consortium has anticipated changes to provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and is working closely with the local authority to ensure a consistent message.
21. Planning for improvement is strong. The post-Ofsted improvement plan contains a useful overview of the management structure so that roles and responsibilities are clear. All actions have clear success criteria which are linked to trainees' attainment where possible. There is a clear timeline for improvement together with arrangements for monitoring and evaluating progress with the action plan.
22. Trainees are very well prepared to teach, including across a range of national priorities such as encouraging positive attitudes to learning, phonics and numeracy. Trainees' needs are identified early and well-focused, individual training plans ensure all trainees have the support and guidance they need, although sometimes the strengths and high levels of experience that trainees bring with them to the course are not taken sufficiently into account. Trainees greatly value the high-quality, individual pastoral and academic support they receive which contributes to their good and very good progress.
23. Headteachers are well represented on the various committees responsible for monitoring and managing the consortium's work. Trainees are rightly confident that feedback and comments about the course are valued and quickly responded to. Roles and responsibilities are very clear and are made explicit in the various handbooks. Improvement planning is detailed, has a clear focus on the most important priorities and, very importantly for a relatively small team, is realistic and manageable. It is informed by rigorous and detailed quality assurance procedures and an analysis of outcomes and trends. Communication across the partnership is very good. Questions and concerns are quickly

responded to and dealt with. All partners say that the central management of the programme is flexible and highly responsive.

24. The consortium's record of improvement, commitment to high quality training, determined management and sharply-focused leadership result in a strong capacity to improve further.

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?	2
	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?	1
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?	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?	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	2
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?	2

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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