

e-Qualitas

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates: 3–6 December 2012

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one seconded inspector in accordance with the *Handbook for inspecting initial teacher education from September 2012*.

The inspection draws upon evidence from both the primary and secondary phases within the ITE partnership to make judgements against all parts of the evaluation schedule. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is requires improvement; grade 4 is inadequate

	Employment-based routes
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	2
The outcomes for trainees	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

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The employment-based routes

Information about the employment-based partnership

- e-Qualitas is a private limited company offering primary and secondary routes to qualified teacher status (QTS) through employment-based initial teacher training (EBITT). Training is based on a blended-learning model, with the overwhelming majority provided in school. e-Qualitas provides guidance and support through tutor visits, a virtual learning website and a range of discrete training days based in partnership schools or at a central location. Schools working with e-Qualitas are predominately in London and the South-East but also include schools across a wide geographical spread from Essex to Cornwall. Six local authorities are formal partners and recommend e-Qualitas to schools; these are Croydon, Kingston, Medway, Merton, Sutton and Westminster. e-Qualitas commissions Roehampton University to provide external quality assurance of its provision and its assessment of trainees.
- The partnership attracts a very large number of applicants for both primary and secondary programmes. The number of trainees on the course at any one time is variable since trainees may enter training at any point in the academic year. In addition, a number of trainees with prior teaching experience are able to complete an accelerated programme. During the academic year 2012/13, a total of 147 trainees (57 primary and 90 secondary) are due to complete the course, with a further 38 joining in January 2013. Of those due to complete in 2012/13, 62 are self-funded, of whom 41 are working in independent schools. A very small number of trainees are employed in special schools.
- There is no fixed number of schools in the partnership. There are a number of core schools that have trainees every year and then there are schools that are either new or only have trainees intermittently. In 2012/13, the partnership comprises 53 primary schools and 77 secondary schools.

Information about the employment-based ITE inspection

- Thirteen schools were visited. In some of these schools, inspectors did not observe teaching but met with trainees, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and school staff. Inspectors observed, jointly with school-based trainers, ten trainees teaching. The teaching of one NQT was observed by an inspector independently.
- Inspectors observed two central training sessions. One, focused on meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language,

involved primary trainees and was delivered by an experienced teacher and an NQT who had trained with the partnership. Another session, this time about special educational needs, involved primary and secondary trainees and was delivered by one of the partnership's most experienced tutors.

- Inspectors also held discussions, face to face and on the telephone, with individual trainees, NQTs, school-based trainers and partnership tutors and senior leaders. Inspectors considered a wide range of documentary evidence, including that related to statutory safeguarding and compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, tracking and assessment, trainees' teaching evidence, analysis of outcomes for trainees and groups of trainees, training modules, self-evaluation and improvement plans. In addition, inspectors reviewed the partnership's virtual learning website.

Inspection Team

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Peter Gale HMI: Team inspector

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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the employment-based partnership are:

- Highly personalised training that is very well structured to enable almost all trainees, with support, to take control of their own development, and become good or better teachers.
- Expert visiting tutors who provide excellent individualised training for trainees and school trainers, and who themselves benefit from exceptionally high quality, challenging and well-focused professional development.
- Accurate and consistent assessment supported by robust and extensive moderation processes.
- Rigorous selection procedures that fully involve schools and result in the recruitment of well-motivated trainees who make valuable contributions to their schools.
- Rigorous and well-embedded quality assurance systems that lead to continually improving provision and to the promotion of high quality outcomes for trainees.
- The responsiveness of the provider to the views of trainees and schools and the promptness with which it deals with every concern raised.

- The high aspirations and expectations that result in a partnership that has an outstanding reputation with its trainees, former trainees and schools.

What does the employment-based partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

Improve outcomes further by narrowing remaining gaps in attainment and completion rates among different groups of trainees by:

- ensuring all trainers in schools, including those new to their roles, provide trainees with sharply focused targets that identify clearly the next steps for improvement from the earliest stages of the training programme
- developing further the good practice that exists to monitor trainees' performance on an ongoing basis so that the earliest signs of underperformance are picked up at every stage of the training programme.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. The overall attainment of trainees by the end of their training programme is high and has been improving steadily over recent years. The partnership is able to account for reasons why a very small number met the QTS Standards at only the minimum level and is confident that these will progress to become good or better teachers during their NQT years. The attainment of primary trainees is less strong than that of secondary trainees.
2. Completion rates are in line with the sector norm but while withdrawal rates for secondary trainees have been declining over recent years, withdrawal rates for primary trainees increased last year. There are small gaps in the attainment and completion rates between different groups of trainees, with rates for male trainees being slightly lower than for female trainees and rates for trainees from minority ethnic groups being slightly lower than those for White British trainees. The partnership is able to offer detailed explanations of individual circumstances that go some way to explain these gaps, but managers are nevertheless aware of the need to narrow these gaps.

3. Employment rates compare favourably with sector norms. The partnership can provide many examples of trainees who have gone on to take up positions of responsibility, indicating the valuable contributions they make to their schools in terms of curriculum design, pastoral care and pupils' achievement.
4. Trainees and NQTs have high expectations both of themselves and of their pupils, and their professional commitment is impressive. They demonstrate clear strengths in their teaching even at this early stage of their training. Their ability to plan lessons is very good; they are aware of all the key elements required in a good lesson and are working to implement these as they gain more experience. In particular, they recognise the importance of focusing on approaches that enable them to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and thus to promote good learning.
5. Trainees demonstrate a highly reflective approach to their own learning and experiences, which drives their own improvement. As a result of good training, they are generally very knowledgeable about how to teach pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This was reflected in the inspection questionnaire completed by current trainees. All lesson plans identified these groups of pupils and how to support their learning needs. This was particularly evident in a history trainee's planning and teaching during a Year 9 lesson with a class that included significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs as well as a number for whom English was an additional language.
6. In lessons observed where teaching assistants were present, trainees made good use of them, planned the work they undertook and identified clear roles for them within lessons. In an outstanding primary school lesson where an NQT was using drama activities to explore adjectives in order to add to pupils' ability to describe events and express feelings, the teaching assistant was very well deployed to provide support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English was not their first language.
7. Trainees and NQTs are acutely aware of the need to plan for assessment and to check progress throughout their lessons. Accurate and productive use of assessment was noted as a strength in the most recent national NQT survey. Primary trainees and NQTs were able to speak convincingly about their confidence in using a variety of different assessment procedures. A review of pupils' books during a lesson observation of a secondary trainee indicated that the trainee was making use of a range of different assessment techniques, including peer- and self-assessment.

8. Managing behaviour effectively was a strength for most trainees observed during the inspection and reflects the highly positive response about this in the most recent national NQT survey and the inspection questionnaire completed by current trainees.
9. School trainers commented positively about the contribution trainees made to the wider life of their schools. All trainees and NQTs interviewed could demonstrate that they played a significant part in the overall life of the schools in which they were training. For example, a primary trainee and primary NQT explained how their expertise in sport was used to enhance the provision for pupils in their schools. Another primary trainee explained that his expertise in the teaching of music was used well in his school to enrich opportunities for the pupils in the school.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

10. Training is well structured to enable trainees, with support, to be in control of their own development. The training is highly personalised and ensures that the attainment of almost all trainees is at least good. Assessment is rigorous, accurate and consistent and is supported by extensive internal and external quality assurance and verification processes.
11. Centrally-provided training enriches and extends that provided in schools. For example, there is outstanding training in behaviour management, in teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language and in literacy. Trainees note that, occasionally, the central training does not always take account of their different starting points.
12. The subject knowledge of secondary trainees is good and reflects a strong selection process and appropriate pre-programme preparation activities. The relative lack of specific subject training in some of the minority secondary subjects, due to resource constraints, means that training in how to teach some of these subjects, for example business and media studies, is not as well developed. However, there is no evidence to suggest this affects trainees' outcomes and all secondary trainees receive a combination of training from subject specialist visiting tutors as well as from school-based trainers, together with wider departmental support in their schools.
13. Training provides a very good balance between theory and practice. For example, in the excellent training session for primary trainees focused on English as an additional language, theoretical underpinning knowledge was combined skilfully with practical approaches to teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language. The two trainers, an NQT and an experienced teacher, used their own expertise and action research produced by the NQT when she was a trainee, to demonstrate key principles and concepts. The training session for a mixed group of

primary and secondary trainees focused on special educational needs was of good quality and provided valuable insights into teaching disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, the generic focus of this training session precluded an exploration of issues related to special educational needs in, for example, the context of particular subject teaching in secondary schools.

14. Second placements provide a contrasting experience for trainees and, for many, this has a very positive impact on their progress. One trainee described the experience as 'transformational', while another referred to it as an opportunity that 'galvanised' their approach to the training programme. While some schools in the partnership have strong links with contrasting schools and can direct their trainees to these schools for their second placement, this is not the case of all schools. However, the intervention of the visiting tutor usually ensures that all trainees gain valuable second, and sometimes third, placement experiences.
15. The positioning of the primary school experience for secondary trainees does not always promote trainees' early understanding of pupils' knowledge on transition to Year 7. However, a science trainee who had volunteered in a primary school prior to his training demonstrated a good understanding. Central training sessions are spread over the year, allowing trainees to access them at points that are appropriate to their individual training needs.
16. As a result of high-quality training, both primary and secondary trainees give good focus to the development of pupils' literacy skills. For example, literacy was developed well in a secondary drama lesson through oracy, improvisation and exploring poetry. Primary trainees and NQTs displayed a very good understanding of, and were confident about, the teaching of phonics and its role in literacy throughout the primary school phase. Key Stage 2 trainees confirmed that observations and placements in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage settings supported their knowledge about early reading skills. The focus on the development of pupils' mathematical skills was more variable. For primary trainees, it was strong and these trainees were confident about the promotion of mathematics throughout the primary curriculum. For secondary trainees, it depended much more on the subject being taught. This reflected the fact that the provider is still working on developing training modules for mathematics of an equivalent quality to those that exist for literacy. Secondary science lessons observed included a good deal of numeracy content but also focused on the use of key words and technical language. In a secondary history lesson, the trainee planned well for literacy, and chronology was a key part of the lesson.
17. The partnership's virtual learning site is an excellent resource that is easily accessible to trainees and used regularly by both trainees and school trainers. The site includes a series of well-designed modules on a

range of topics, including national priorities areas. Links are provided to relevant and up-to-date research, including Ofsted reports and good practice visits. Use of the site is monitored by the provider to ensure trainees are accessing relevant material on a regular basis.

18. Visiting tutors are held in high regard by everyone – trainees, NQTs and school trainers. They are universally perceived to be knowledgeable, approachable and extremely rigorous – ‘exacting’ is how one school described them. They provide very valuable professional development for school trainers, for example ensuring that school trainers are up to date with current thinking on relevant educational issues. They are always accessible if there are any concerns.
19. Discrete training sessions are provided for new school-based tutors and lead tutors. These are generally well regarded, although trainers in some schools commented on the fact that these sessions lacked differentiation. These sessions are supplemented by excellent personalised ongoing support and guidance from visiting tutors for all school-based trainers. However, the feedback provided to trainees by school-based trainers, particularly those new to the role, is not always sufficiently focused on improvement, nor does it provide clearly identified targets that enable trainees to understand precisely the areas they need to develop further. In such situations, trainees’ progress does not move at as rapid a pace as is possible.
20. School-based trainers and visiting tutors ensure that the training programme builds well on trainees’ prior experience, and a well-structured individual training plan supports this. The visits made by tutors to provide training and support to trainees and schools and to assess trainees’ progress are regular, but not sufficiently frequent to ensure that any dips in trainees’ performance are picked up at the earliest possible opportunity, particularly if schools themselves have not identified this. However, elements of good practice are evident in the monitoring of trainees’ performance between tutor visits. Clear and supportive procedures are in place for trainees who may become a ‘cause for concern’ and these are well understood by schools and by trainees.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding

21. There is clear evidence of the pursuit of excellence and a drive to improve and sustain the highest levels of provision. Actions by the provider are based on a deep and accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Rigorous and well-embedded quality assurance systems ensure that all relevant criteria and requirements are met and that high quality outcomes are sustained. The partnership’s

improvement planning is based on a rigorous, accurate, systematic and far-reaching analysis of data, and a thorough and critical self-evaluation. Excellent use is made of external reviews and action research projects to promote the constant development and improvement of programme provision.

22. The exceptionally comprehensive and rigorous quality assurance systems extend to the work of visiting tutors. These individuals are highly experienced experts in initial teacher education and a key strength of the provision. They benefit from exceptionally high quality and well-focused professional development and their work, for example in relation to school visit reports and assessment, is regularly and rigorously quality assured. As a result, there is a remarkable level of consistency in the quality of their assessments.
23. Communication is strong across the partnership and this is facilitated very well by visiting tutors and by the programme director, who responds almost immediately, and in an exceptionally helpful and detailed way, to any issues or concerns raised by trainees or schools.
24. Rigorously testing selection processes are in place for trainees applying for places on the programme and for schools wishing to join the partnership. Schools wishing to join the partnership are assessed early on to establish their suitability for providing high quality support for initial teacher training. Schools use rigorous criteria to select trainees, many of whom have worked with them as teaching assistants for up to a year. e-Qualitas then completes a further selection process to decide if trainees selected by schools have the attributes to be a good or better teacher. Thus, the selection process and the training provision ensure that trainees have the resilience, knowledge, skills and personal attributes to become good or better teachers.
25. The partnership is very well regarded by schools and, for many, it is their first choice EBITT provider. The partnership comprises high performing schools that have a strong commitment to ITE and to supporting trainees, in order to provide their own high quality teacher workforce. Schools like their involvement with e-Qualitas because of its highly professional and 'hands off' approach that provides them with a good degree of independence in relation to their training provision, while at the same time providing excellent personalised support, a robust training structure and rigorous quality assurance.
26. Leaders and managers in the partnership are highly focused on offering the best provision to schools and trainees and take prompt action to bring this about in their monitoring of activities. The leadership structure of the provider is designed to ensure that national priorities are a key focus of provision, that it is able to respond promptly and effectively to new developments and that it has the capacity to improve further.

27. The partnership has worked hard to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. It was also aware of the areas for improvement identified during this inspection. It has already identified gaps in the performance of different groups of trainees in its improvement planning documents and is already exploring issues that contribute to this, including how to improve the quality of target setting and the frequency of monitoring of trainees' performance.
28. By providing well-qualified and committed trainees, almost all of whom become good or better teachers in partnership schools, e-Qualitas makes a significant contribution to helping schools improve outcomes for their pupils.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Archbishop Tenison Church of England High School, Croydon
Carshalton Boys Sports College, Carshalton
Glenthorne High School, Sutton
Parish Church CofE Junior School, Croydon
Reigate School, Reigate
Richard Challoner School, New Malden
Robin Hood Junior School, Sutton
St Augustine's Church of England High School, Westminster
St James' Roman Catholic Primary School, Orpington
St Marylebone Church of England School, Westminster
Salesian School, Chertsey
Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells
Wallington High School for Girls, Wallington

ITE partnership details

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