

# The Essex Schools' Initial Teacher Training Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates 4–7 March 2013

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This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and 4 additional inspectors in accordance with the *Framework for inspecting initial teacher education from September 2012*.

The inspection draws upon evidence from 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
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	<b>2</b>
The outcomes for trainees	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	2

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## **The employment-based route**

### **Information about this ITE partnership**

1. The Essex Initial Teacher Training Partnership provides primary and secondary employment-based training in 134 schools. The very large majority of these schools are in Essex with a few in Dagenham and Redbridge, Havering, Southend, Thurrock, Hertfordshire and Suffolk. The partnership is between the schools and Essex County Council. A steering group oversees the work of the partnership. This group is chaired by the local authority and includes representatives from schools and trainees. The partnership is to become a school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider from September 2013.
2. At the time of the inspection, 143 trainees were following a full time programme, of these one was self-funded. Three additional trainees are involved in an 'assessment only' programme. The 84 secondary trainees specialise in a wide range of subjects. There is a strong focus on English and mathematics and science. In order to increase their employability, a small minority of secondary trainees specialising in non-shortage subjects also undertake a shortage subject although these are not used as part of the assessment of trainees.

### **Information about the employment-based ITE inspection**

3. Inspectors observed, jointly with school-based trainers, nine trainees teaching. They also observed independently seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs). In addition, inspectors analysed the schools' records relating to the teaching of five further NQTs.
4. An inspector observed a centre-based training session involving half the cohort of current primary trainees.
5. Inspectors held interviews with trainees and, NQTs, and had discussions with trainers, members of the steering group and senior leaders across the partnership.
6. Inspectors analysed a wide range of documentary evidence including information related to recruitment and selection, statutory safeguarding and compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, trainees' tracking and assessment, trainees' teaching evidence, analysis of outcomes for trainees and NQTs, self-evaluation and improvement plans.

### **Inspection team**

Kevin Sheldrick HMI: Lead inspector

Julie Winyard HMI: Assistant lead Inspector and thematic programme primary mathematics.

The following team inspectors were present for 3 days of the inspection:

Terry Holland

John Hibbs

Faysal Mikdadi

Jackie Pentlow

### **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

#### **The key strengths of the employment-based partnership are:**

- The good outcomes for trainees, in particular the very high employment rates.
- High quality primary mathematics training that trainees enjoy and which increases their confidence in teaching this subject.
- Excellent behaviour management training which contributes to trainees managing this aspect well in most lessons.
- The secondary subject training that effectively plugs any gaps in trainees' knowledge and enables these aspects to be effectively taught.
- The smooth well-planned transition between the host and the second placement schools which helps trainees to settle in quickly and to continue to improve.
- The high levels of commitment schools demonstrate to the partnership because they recognise its success in producing good quality trainees.
- The partnership's effective response to securing improvement through the analysis of trainees' evaluations and outcomes for trainees.

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

##### **The partnership should:**

- Improve trainees' ability to teach phonics by increasing the time spent on this element of the literacy training and scheduling this earlier in the course.

- Throughout the training identify further opportunities to promote trainees' confidence in teaching ethnic minority pupils and in promoting cultural awareness.
- Improve the quality of mentoring across the partnership, through enhancing the tutors' role in quality assuring training, and by clarifying what constitutes evidence in meeting the Teachers' Standards.
- Improve destination and progression data about former trainees and use this to evaluate the effectiveness of training and enhance improvement planning.

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

7. Over the past three years completion rates have been high and trainees rarely withdrew from the course. The proportion of trainees progressing into employment is consistently high and last year all trainees obtained teaching posts. Secondary trainees find employment in part because they are all trained to teach a shortage subject. The large majority of teachers who completed their training in 2010 remain in teaching. The partnership meets local and regional need well because most trainees are appointed to teaching posts in the partnership schools. Many of the others go on to teach in local schools.
8. The partnership is held in high regard by headteachers because it has a well-deserved reputation for producing mainly good, and some outstanding teachers. Many former trainees are making a positive contribution to their schools. For example, former trainees have played a key role in transforming the achievement in English in a large secondary school that serves a community with high levels of disadvantage. In a primary school, an NQT was observed skilfully ensuring all the areas of learning in the Reception class reinforced children's understanding of shape. Here, the rich learning environment extended to the outdoors and enabled children to make rapid progress in their mathematical understanding.
9. Most trainees can identify for themselves the improvements they need to make in their teaching. At the end of training the majority of trainees are teaching good lessons and a few lessons that are outstanding. There are no discernible differences in the attainment of different groups of trainees. Trainees use a wide range of interesting teaching strategies to ensure pupils enjoy their lessons. Most focus well on pupils' learning, including for those that are gifted and talented and for those who are disabled or have special educational needs. However, too many trainees are uncertain about how to meet the needs of pupils from minority ethnic groups or how to promote cultural awareness. Trainees ensure pupils of different ability undertake work at an appropriate level; for instance through tasks related to different National Curriculum levels. An NQT was observed successfully involving primary age pupils in creating mathematical investigations related to accurate measurement using a range of units. In most cases, pupils are suitably challenged by the work they undertake. For example, during a design and technology lesson taught by an NQT, the level of challenge was skilfully increased by encouraging pupils to adapt their designs for people with a range of disabilities. Pupils also developed a strong awareness of the relevant GCSE examination criteria so they could work at the highest possible

level. However, in a minority of cases, pupils are not challenged sufficiently.

10. Trainees teach lessons that are well structured and they often use their subject knowledge to inspire pupils. In a science lesson, pupils enjoyed exercising 'gangnam style' as part of their pulse rate investigation. Opportunities for reviews of pupils' learning are identified in lessons, although there is some variability in how well these are undertaken. Although trainees often ask pupils appropriate questions, they do not always adjust their teaching sufficiently to reflect the responses.
11. Trainees' understanding of how to promote pupils literacy and numeracy is generally strong. For instance, a secondary science trainee ensured each group planning a science investigation into fitness contained a pupil who had specific responsibility for checking on spelling, punctuation and grammar. In a mathematics lesson, an NQT increased pupils' ability to analyse data critically by asking them to predict the relationship between CD sales and music downloads and represent this graphically. Primary schools ensure that most trainees can teach phonics adequately. However, phonics training is insufficient to ensure all trainees have a good understanding, and the training is given too late in the course.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

12. Relevant and interesting central and school based training across the partnership helps to secure good outcomes for trainees. Trainees have extensive opportunities to learn from experienced teachers in good and outstanding schools. In the few cases where a trainee's host school has been judged by Ofsted to be less than good, the partnership makes sure that the trainee has a second or third placement in a good or outstanding school. Excellent arrangements exist to ensure a smooth transition between the host placement school and the second school. Mentors from the host and the second schools undertake joint observations and much discussion takes place to ensure the trainees' progress is maximised through these contrasting experiences. Secondary trainees are placed in effective subject departments. Local schools report that trainees are well prepared for their NQT year. This is also reflected in the highly positive responses in the exit survey for trainees who completed the course in June 2012. Although trainees responded largely positively in the Teaching Agency's NQT survey, the response to this survey was low. Almost all schools in the partnership retain trainees' supernumerary status so that they are not overloaded with teaching during their training year and have the time to reflect on their experiences.

13. The course structure ensures that schools and trainees know what they must deal with every week but a few trainees say that there are insufficient opportunities to adjust training plans to reflect their previous experience. The central training sessions model good teaching. They also provide useful opportunities for trainees to discuss how well pupils learn, or how to teach their specialist subjects well. Course tutors are highly committed and work well with schools to help trainees make good progress. Most trainees are active in sharing what they have learnt on centre-based courses with their school-based mentors, which helps them to put into practice what they have learnt. Trainees' second school experience is carefully selected to complement their experience in the employing school and the range of schools in the partnership ensures that all trainees have the opportunity to learn how to respond to the needs of individuals and most groups of pupils.
14. School mentors work well with external tutors in helping trainees improve their teaching. Most trainees' targets are followed up from one lesson observation to the next. Joint lesson observations between mentors and tutors ensure that evaluations of trainees' teaching are accurate. Although mentoring is effective overall, a minority of mentors are unsure how much evidence trainees should collect to show they are meeting the Teachers' Standards. At times, trainees are devoting too much time to evidencing how they have met the Standards.
15. Secondary trainees in all subjects begin the course with good subject knowledge. Trainees who enter the secondary programme from businesses or industry are helped very well to adapt their specialist subject knowledge to meet the needs of students in their classes. Any gaps in trainees' learning are usually associated with the additional subjects they want to offer in order to increase their employability. These gaps are identified early and are dealt with through central training and in schools. Mentors are carefully matched to trainees so they can offer the subject expertise that trainees may lack.
16. Primary trainees report that mathematics training is particularly effective because as well as showing them how to teach mathematics, it helps them gain confidence in their own skills and enjoy the subject.
17. Trainees gain valuable experience of working with teaching assistants. In most lessons, teaching assistants are carefully briefed so they know which pupils to help and how to help them. Training prepares trainees well to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and the higher and lower attaining pupils. The partnership's lesson planning format supports trainees well in making specific modifications to their lessons. However, there are some missed opportunities to consider the adaptations that



might be needed when trainees teach members of minority ethnic groups or in order to promote cultural awareness more generally.

18. Trainees develop excellent skills in promoting good behaviour. This is a particular strength in most lessons and contributes to the good learning that takes place. One NQT described how the training also emphasises the importance of making learning interesting and fun for pupils. Trainees use information and communication technology well to help pupils learn well. For example, in a Reception mathematics class, one trainee had children using computer tablets effectively to capture snapshots of three-dimensional shapes around their classroom, adding their own commentary about the properties of these shapes.
19. Secondary trainees understand the importance of improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in the subjects they teach because this aspect is reinforced well in the training.
20. Trainees play an active part in the life of their host and placement schools. One trainee was so enthusiastic about the central behaviour management training that the headteacher employed the tutor to lead a staff meeting at the host school. Trainees are good role models for their pupils and embrace their wider professional duties, such as communicating with parents, effectively and with confidence. One former trainee after a relatively short time now has overall responsibility for improving teaching in a large secondary school.

### **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

21. Good leadership and management have resulted in good training and outcomes for trainees. Partnership managers are ensuring that schools take appropriate action in response to the outcomes of its monitoring of the effectiveness of training. Several schools have been removed from the partnership because they have not met the high standards that are expected. The programme manager has ensured improvement has continued despite the uncertainties associated with temporary and short-term appointment to the role.
22. The steering group oversees the work of the partnership well, holds the partnership leaders to account and ensures the views of schools and trainees are fully considered. A development group has made an appropriate response to the changes that are currently taking place in ITE. Both groups work well in ensuring provision is responsive to the needs of schools and trainees. A concise improvement plan clearly identifies the actions required to improve the outcomes for trainees.

23. Generally, recruitment procedures are effective in ensuring the large majority of trainees that join the course have the potential to be good and outstanding teachers. The partnership has also made changes to recruitment procedures to avoid selecting trainees who are likely to withdraw before the end of the course. However, the provider recognises that further improvements to recruitment are required in order to ensure more trainees are consistently good and outstanding. Although robust selection procedures have been established, these are not universally applied across the partnership. For instance, currently not all secondary trainees have much prior experience working with this age group.
24. Challenging targets are set to ensure trainees fulfil their potential from the outset. Trainees' progress is carefully monitored and action is taken at the first sign of a dip in performance. Partnership schools contribute well to the evaluation of training. Surveys and focus groups involving trainees, mentors and tutors are used well to evaluate training although the partnership is not yet analysing sufficiently the impact of training on former trainees. The partnership's self-evaluation is accurate and drives improvement. External examiners agree with the partnership's judgements about the quality of training and the standards trainees reach.
25. During the transition from employment-based training (EBITT) to a SCITT, the partnership is making effective improvements to provision, for example clarifying the amount of evidence trainees gather to show they have attained the Teachers' Standards. Although tutors are effective trainers, they currently do not have sufficient time to fully undertake their quality assurance role. In the plans for the SCITT there is recognition that more stable arrangements at a senior level are required to ensure key managers can take a longer-term view of training quality.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Baddow Hall Infants School  
Beauchamp School  
The Bromfords School  
Castle View School  
Chelmsford County High School  
Cornelius Vermuyden School  
Dunmow St Mary's CofE Primary School  
Elm Hall Primary school  
Great Totham Primary School

Sandon School  
Stanley Drapkin Primary School  
St Anne's line Catholic School  
St John's School Epping  
St Cleres School  
Stewards Academy  
Passmores Academy  
The Plume School  
Templars Primary and Nursery School  
Tudor Primary School  
Wickford Infants School  
William De Ferrers School  
Woodlands School

## **ITE partnership details**

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<b>Lead inspector</b>	Kevin Sheldrick HMI
<b>Type of ITE partnership</b>	EBITT
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary and Secondary
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	June 2010
<b>Previous inspection report</b>	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70265">http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70265</a>
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