

The Shire Foundation

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

18–21 March 2013

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in accordance with the *Handbook for inspecting initial teacher education from September 2012*.

The inspection draws upon evidence from each phase and separate programme 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

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

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Key findings

- Training in both behaviour management and mathematics is outstanding.
- Trainees on both training routes promote highly positive attitudes to learning among their pupils.
- Training managers and tutors on both training routes have high expectations, which are securing important improvements in training quality and trainees' outcomes. The effectiveness of the training managers is excellent.
- Employment rates on both routes into teaching are high. Local recruitment needs are met very well. The reasons why trainees are so employable include their strong professional attitudes and the way in which they engage pupils in their learning by making it enjoyable and meaningful.
- Partnership schools, visiting tutors, and the Shire tutor team support very well those trainees who may experience difficulties. As a result, the great majority of trainees successfully complete their training.

To improve further the ITE partnership should

- Ensure that more trainees attain qualified teacher status (QTS) at an outstanding level by:
 - enabling trainees in their teaching to consistently challenge the more able pupils
 - encouraging trainees to focus more sharply on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning
 - ensuring the intended outcomes of improvement plans are clear and that all schools in the partnership are fully conversant with how they will contribute to the success of these plans.
- Continue the improving trend of course completion on both routes by ensuring that, at selection, only those trainees who possess the potential to be good or better teachers are offered a place.

Information about this ITE partnership

1. The Shire Foundation SCITT and EBITT Partnership (formerly the Luton Teacher Training Partnership) was set up in 1994 by a group of Luton headteachers in response to a shortage of teachers within the local authority. Both the school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) and the employment-based initial teacher training (EBITT) routes work together as a unified body through the foundation's infrastructure of boards and committees.

2. On the SCITT route, trainees, on successful completion of the full-time one-year programme, are awarded the professional graduate certificate of education (PGCE) validated by the University of Bedfordshire.
3. The Shire Foundation is housed at Hillborough Junior School in Luton, a school judged by Ofsted as outstanding in January 2010. The Foundation enjoys use of a dedicated learning space, offices and facilities at this school. Some members of the school's governing body are also members of The Shire Foundation's executive board.

The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

4. The Shire Foundation SCITT, based at Hillborough Junior School, Luton, is a partnership between Luton local authority and 29 schools. At the time of this inspection, there were 20 trainees on the one-year PGCE course leading to QTS training to teach children and pupils in the 3-11 age range.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

5. This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
6. At the time of this inspection, the PGCE trainees had just completed a block of school-based training and experience and therefore none were observed teaching. Inspectors met eight trainees and observed training in English and mathematics at the lead school.
7. Inspectors took account of 24 responses received from trainees via Ofsted's online questionnaire on both the SCITT and the EBITT routes.
8. Inspectors observed five newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teaching and held discussions with these teachers.
9. Meetings covering aspects of training, leadership and outcomes for trainees on both routes were held with members of the executive board, partnership headteachers, school-based mentors and course tutors.
10. Inspectors were unable to take into account the national NQT survey for this route because the small numbers annually make comparisons with national averages difficult.

Inspection team

Mark Williams HMI
Christopher Nye HMI
Ken Buxton HMI

Lead inspector
Assistant lead inspector
Team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- The outstanding training in behaviour management and mathematics which:
 - contributes to trainees' high rates of employment
 - enables trainees to promote in their pupils highly positive attitudes to learning
 - in the case of mathematics, enables trainees to promote a strong sense of enjoyment and achievement in the subject.
- Trainees' strong professional attitudes and their willingness not to 'play safe' in their teaching but, instead, to engage pupils in activities which make learning enjoyable and meaningful.
- The very strong determination shown by the training managers, which has secured improvements in training quality and outcomes for trainees across the partnership.
- The highly sensitive support and challenge given by the Shire tutor team and school-based colleagues to trainees experiencing difficult circumstances, with the result that the great majority of trainees complete their training successfully.
- The way the Shire tutor team supports and challenges school-based colleagues to ensure that training in schools is of at least good quality, and the commitment of partnership schools to ensure that this quality is achieved.

What does the primary partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

- Improve trainee outcomes further so that more trainees attain QTS at an outstanding level by:
 - enabling trainees in their teaching to provide consistently more challenge to more able pupils
 - encouraging trainees, in the evaluations of the work they have undertaken, to focus more sharply on the impact their teaching has on the learning of their pupils

- ensuring the intended outcomes of improvement plans are clear and that all schools in the partnership are fully conversant with how they will contribute to the success of these plans.

- To increase further the number of trainees completing the course, selection procedures should recommend for training only those candidates with the potential to be at least good teachers.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

11. Trainees on the SCITT route are highly regarded by employers, and particularly those in the immediate locality. Because trainees display strong professional attitudes, and are always seeking ways to engage their pupils in activities which make learning both enjoyable and meaningful, employment rates are consistently high. Previous strengths, such as the ability to promote equality of opportunity have been maintained, partly because placements have allowed trainees to gain experience of teaching pupils from different backgrounds. Completion rates however, while improving, have been more variable. Where trainees have withdrawn, reasons have always been legitimate.
12. All groups of trainees attain well by the end of their training with nearly all attaining QTS at a good or better level. Trainees display features that demonstrate well how they exceed some if not all of the Teachers' Standards. Even the decreasing number of trainees who have been judged by the partnership as satisfactory teachers by the end of their training, and those who currently are requiring improvement, display good features. Such features include skills in not only managing pupils' behaviour so that it is at least good, but the ability to instil in their pupils highly positive attitudes so that they want to learn. All trainees are clear in their understanding that good and better behaviour stems from good and better teaching.
13. Former trainees are assets to their employing schools. Examples of at least good teaching were observed in lessons taught by NQTs during the inspection. In one lesson, the NQT ensured her class of Year 1 pupils made at least good progress in recognising that 'se' in print makes a 'z' or a 's' sound. Using technology well, the teacher challenged her pupils, including those who are more able, to recognise these sounds in words such as 'loose', 'mouse' and 'choose' and then to use these words in sentences of their own.
14. Trainees are increasing reflective of their learning. They are developing their subject knowledge well, particularly in mathematics, and constantly seek to make good use of this knowledge in their teaching. Sometimes,

however, their evaluations focus too much on what they themselves know rather than looking at how they can ensure better outcomes for the pupils they teach, especially for the more able in their classes. Occasionally, there is an over-reliance on accepting visual responses from pupils, for example, 'thumbs up, thumbs down,' rather than checking with individual pupils whether such a response to their learning is accurate.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

15. Responses to the online questionnaire are very positive. All who responded agreed that their training would make them a good teacher. In addition, all were confident they would be able to meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of their training. Very good opportunities exist throughout the training to put theory into practice. Training is not outstanding, though, because outcomes for trainees, while improving, are not yet outstanding. Nevertheless, there are significant strengths in training quality at The Shire Foundation.
16. The Shire tutor team and school-based mentors offer highly sensitive support and challenge to trainees who, for whatever reason, are experiencing difficulties. More often than not, this support, which takes a range of forms, such as extended placements, enables trainees to complete the course successfully. The quality of mentoring continues to improve and is now good. Whereas a few trainees and NQTs reported slight differences in quality between one school and another, if a school or mentor is new to the partnership for example, inspectors found quality never less than good. This is because training for school-based mentors is thorough.
17. The quality of training in mathematics is outstanding. As a result, nearly all trainees express confidence in teaching this subject. Their subject knowledge is developing well. This is because initial weaknesses and misconceptions are picked up early in the course. Discussions with trainees and scrutiny of their files indicates that they model mathematical vocabulary well and plan sequences of lessons, which refer to prior learning and ensure learning objectives and success criteria are clear. These plans show trainees use a wide range of resources, including information and communications technology (ICT), increasingly well to support both teaching and learning. Trainees' confidence and competence in teaching mathematics is enhanced further by the clear feedback they receive from the Shire tutor team and school-based mentors. This results in equally clear targets to improve trainees' and pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
18. Trainees are rightly enthusiastic about the outstanding training they receive in behaviour management. It challenges trainees not just to

manage incidents should they occur but to seek ways of fully engaging pupils in their learning. This prepares trainees well. In lessons taught by NQTs, for example, the interest of pupils was secured by well-thought out activities, which were clearly linked to what the teachers were demanding pupils should learn. Even in lessons in which teaching and learning required improvement, pupils' attitudes and behaviour remained positive throughout because activities were interesting.

19. Training in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is of at least good quality and improving. It rightly sets phonics in the context of early reading development. Tasks and assignments are relevant and appreciated by trainees for the way they put theory into practice. However, some NQTs reported limited opportunities to apply, in Key Stage 2 classes, the knowledge and skills that they have gained. Nevertheless, following the example of their course tutor, NQTs and trainees are passionate about pupils' reading. As a result of this and of their wider training in reading, nearly all who responded to the online questionnaire reported confidence in developing pupils' literacy skills.
20. The trainees' preparation to teach different groups of pupils is enhanced by the range of professional studies sessions, which focus on important aspects such as the early years, assessment, working with parents and carers, and teaching pupils with English as an additional language. Subject training benefits from being led by current practitioners who bring a wealth of practical experience and ideas. These sessions, along with the way in which ICT is thread throughout all training, are appreciated greatly by trainees. Sometimes, though, the training is not challenging trainees enough to ensure the impact of this work is measured in improved outcomes for the pupils they teach.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

21. The training managers (who are also the Shire tutors) have shown very strong levels of determination and excellent drive since the previous inspection. This has secured important improvements across the partnership in training quality and outcomes for trainees. They enjoy rightly the confidence of partnership schools. Key strengths identified at the previous inspection have been maintained and enhanced, including trainees' promotion of diversity and equality across the partnership and the NQTs' very good use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
22. In response to the findings of the previous inspection, the amount and use of key documentation has been refined so that trainers and trainees are clear about how to use it to accelerate trainees' progress. Consequently, there are good levels of consistency from one school experience to the next. Progress against recommendations is developing

well. For example, information on trainees' prior learning and expertise is used well to inform the start of the taught course. In addition, as past arrangements for recruitment and selection have not always recommended only those candidates with the potential to be good or better teachers, the procedures for 2013/14 have been refined to make even clearer to potential trainees the demands of the course and teaching as a career.

23. Bringing together the leadership of this route and that of the EBITT has been successful. The partnership's plans for improvement deal with exactly the right priorities. Very good use has been made of a range of evaluations, which include those from schools and trainees, and from external examiners. The outcomes of some planned actions are clear, but the outcomes for others are less distinct, making it hard for leaders to evaluate success in these measures. Furthermore, not all schools in the partnership are fully conversant with how they will contribute to the success of these plans.
24. The partnership knows its schools very well. The Shire tutor team supports and challenges school-based colleagues to ensure training in schools is of at least good quality. Consequently, all schools are at least good training centres. Leaders have instilled in schools a strong sense of shared training and all members of the partnership are committed to ensuring at least good quality is maintained. Leaders and schools are very well placed to secure further improvements.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Bramingham Primary School, Luton
Icknield Primary School, Luton
St Margaret of Scotland Primary School, Luton

The employment-based routes

Information about the employment-based partnership

25. The Shire Foundation EBITT, based at Hillborough Junior School, Luton, is a partnership between 40 schools. At the time of this inspection, there were 48 trainees on this route of which three were self-funded. Trainees train to teach in the 3-11 age range.

Information about the employment-based ITE inspection

26. This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

27. Inspectors observed the teaching and held discussions with ten trainees and two NQTs who had trained on this route. An inspector also observed a training session in science at the lead school.
28. Inspectors took into account the 24 responses received from trainees via Ofsted's online questionnaire on both this and the SCITT route.
29. Further meetings covering aspects of training, leadership and outcomes for trainees on both routes were held with members of the executive board, partnership headteachers, visiting tutors, school-based mentors and course tutors.
30. Inspectors took into account the national NQT survey data for this route.

Inspection Team

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Lead inspector
Assistant lead inspector
Team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the employment-based ITE partnership are:

- The outstanding training in behaviour management and mathematics, which contributes to trainees' high rates of employment, enables trainees to promote in their pupils highly positive attitudes to learning, and, in the case of mathematics, enables trainees to promote a strong sense of enjoyment and achievement in the subject.
- Trainees' strong professional attitudes and willingness not to 'play safe' in their teaching but, instead, engage their pupils in activities which make learning both enjoyable and meaningful.
- The very strong determination of the training managers which has brought about improvements in training quality and outcomes for trainees across the partnership.
- The highly sensitive support and challenge given to trainees by the visiting tutor team and school-based colleagues to trainees experiencing difficult circumstances that enables the great majority of trainees to complete their training successfully.
- The way the visiting tutor team supports and challenges school-based colleagues to ensure training in schools is of at least good quality, and

the commitment of partnership schools to ensure this quality is achieved.

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

The partnership should:

- Improve trainee outcomes further so that more attain QTS at an outstanding level by:
 - enabling trainees in their teaching to provide consistently more challenge to more able pupils
 - encouraging trainees, in the evaluations of the work they have undertaken, to focus more sharply on the impact their teaching has on the learning of their pupils
 - ensuring the intended outcomes of improvement plans are clear and that all schools in the partnership are fully conversant with how they will contribute to the success of these plans.
- To increase further the number of trainees completing the course, selection procedures undertaken jointly with employing schools should recommend for training only those candidates with the potential to be at least good teachers once training is completed.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

31. Trainees employed by schools on the EBITT route attain well by the end of their training. Nearly all are on course to complete their training as good or better teachers. The few accurately assessed by the partnership as requiring improvement already exceed some of the Teachers' Standards and display some skills and abilities found in much more experienced teachers. Of particular note are the excellent skills trainees demonstrate in managing the behaviour of their pupils so that it is at least good.
32. Trainees teach predominantly good lessons, which engage pupils well and make learning enjoyable. In turn, pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning. One trainee, for example, ensured all her Year 6 pupils made at least good progress in identifying and using synonyms to make their writing more interesting. Her excellent use of resources, including ICT, her insistence on the correct vocabulary, and the way in which she used pupils' responses in their partner work ensured learning

progressed at a brisk pace and all pupils gave their best efforts to succeed.

33. The willingness of trainees not to 'play safe' in their teaching is a strength and a contributory factor in their high rates of employment. Schools place high value on the strong professional attitudes displayed by trainees and NQTs. One lesson illustrates well trainees' willingness to take a risk in order to get the best from their pupils. A trainee, when encouraging her pupils to explore different versions of the story 'Billy Goat Gruff,' employed a number of pupils as 'talk leaders' and a number as scribes. Dividing her class into small groups, each moved around a set of interesting activities such as listening to the story being read by different actors or watching an animated version. Even though the initial setting up of these activities did not ensure a smooth start to this key part of the lesson, the trainee did not give up. Sensibly, she brought the class together to re-explain and ensure their understanding. The result was that nearly all pupils made good progress. These features were also evident in other lessons taught by NQTs who had trained on this route.
34. A characteristic of the strong professional attitudes displayed by trainees is the way in which they reflect on their learning. In common with trainees on the SCITT route, their subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics, is developing well. While trainees are increasingly focusing on how to use subject knowledge in their teaching, not all their evaluations focus sufficiently sharply on how the pupils' outcomes may be improved. Occasionally lessons incorporated insufficient challenge for more able pupils.
35. Trainees' use of assessment to check what pupils know is developing well. Trainees check how well pupils are learning in lessons, through asking them to respond with signals to indicate understanding for example. However, only in the very best lessons do trainees ask deeper questions to check that these responses are secure and to re-shape learning according to pupils' need.
36. Completion rates are improving although they are variable. When trainees have withdrawn, reasons have always been legitimate.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

37. Trainees and employing schools are rightly positive about the training provided by the partnership. For example, all trainees who responded to the online questionnaire were confident their training would make them a good teacher and enable them to meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of their training. As with trainees on the SCITT route, those on the EBITT route are right to express this confidence.

38. Throughout the training, the great majority of which is in school, trainees have very good opportunities to put into practice what they have learned at the centre. Training on this route is not outstanding, however, because outcomes for trainees, while improving, are not yet outstanding. Nevertheless, and again in common with the SCITT route, there are significant strengths in training quality.
39. Training in mathematics is outstanding. Because any weaknesses in subject knowledge are picked up by course leaders and mentors early on and during the course, trainees are increasingly confident in teaching this subject, as confirmed by nearly all those who responded to the online questionnaire. This confidence is illustrated well by one trainee who, despite making an error in her questioning when modelling a difficult problem with pupils, used the mistake as an opportunity to check pupils' understanding and to extend their learning. As a result, nearly all pupils made good progress in their learning. Two further features stand out. First, the trainees' strong modelling of mathematical vocabulary; second, is their ability to plan sequences of lessons, which make use of a wide range of resources, refer to prior learning, and ensure that learning objectives and success criteria are clear to pupils.
40. Training in behaviour management is outstanding. It instils in trainees the need to engage pupils in their learning rather than just respond to any incidents which may arise. This means that pupils not only respect the trainee during the lesson, they respect each other too. In nearly all lessons observed, the pupils made at least expected and, more often than not, good progress in their learning.
41. Trainees are prepared well to teach different groups of pupils. The programme of subjects and professional studies is enhanced by being led by current practitioners, who bring a wealth of practical experience and ideas. In science, for example, trainees benefited from high quality ideas for making best use of the outdoor learning environment in all weather conditions. Trainees value greatly these sessions, along with the way ICT underpins all training. Such are the links between training opportunities on this route and that of the SCITT, trainees who for whatever reason, illness for example, miss sessions, are able to join the training on the SCITT. Their preparation for teaching is therefore not held back. Occasionally, and in line with inspectors' findings about the SCITT, the training is not challenging trainees enough to ensure that the impact of their learning is measured in improved outcomes for the pupils they teach.
42. Trainees benefit from at least good training in phonics and early reading development. Tasks and assignments are well designed to link theory with practice, although some trainees reported they had limited opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained through working with younger pupils to teaching pupils in Key Stage 2

classes. Nonetheless, nearly all trainees who responded to the online questionnaire reported confidence in developing pupils' literacy skills.

43. Visiting tutors and school-based mentors have made strong contributions to the improvements in training and trainee outcomes. Highly sensitive support and challenge is given to trainees who are experiencing difficulties. Sometimes, in order to assist trainees in such circumstances, the period of training is extended or bespoke support is provided. The quality of mentoring continues to improve and is now good. While a few trainees reported slight differences in quality between one school-based mentor and another, inspectors found quality never less than good. This is because school-based mentors are trained well for their role.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

44. The drive of the training managers to bring about improvement since the previous inspection has been excellent. They enjoy the confidence of school leaders. The partnership knows its schools very well. The role of the visiting tutor is key in supporting and challenging school-based colleagues to ensure training in schools is of at least good quality. As a result, all schools provide at least good opportunities for training. Leaders have ensured there is a strong sense of shared training and all members of the partnership are committed to this. The partnership is therefore very well placed to secure further improvements.
45. The training managers have ensured that key strengths identified at the previous inspection have been maintained and enhanced, including trainees' abilities to promote good behaviour in pupils. The one required action has also been dealt with successfully. By refining the amount and use of key documentation, both trainers and trainees are clear how to accelerate trainees' progress. A notable success has been achieved in dealing with the recommendation that encouraged trainees to take risks when planning and delivering lessons so that all pupils are motivated to achieve highly; trainees do this well.
46. Recruitment and selection procedures involve partnership schools well. In the past, however, as variable trends in trainee outcomes and completion rates have shown, the procedures have not always recommended only those candidates with the potential to be good or better teachers by the end of the training. Procedures have now been refined for 2013/14 to make even clearer to potential trainees the demands of the course and teaching as a career.
47. Bringing together the leadership of both SCITT and EBITT routes has focused leaders, the executive board and the partnership well on what

strengths need to be enhanced and what areas need to be improved. As a result, plans for improvement deal with exactly the right priorities. The plans make very good use of a range of evaluations, including those from partnership schools and trainees. Self-evaluation requires improvement. For example, as a result of feedback from trainees and schools, training managers are already considering whether it is necessary to merge the three types of very helpful reflective logs for trainees into a more manageable workload that avoids repetition. Some of the plans are very clear about what the intended outcomes should be but others are not. Furthermore, while some schools are fully conversant in the plans' expectations of them, other partnership schools have only a general understanding.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Barnfields Moorland Free School, Luton
Bushmead Primary School, Luton
Hillborough Junior School, Luton
Icknield Primary School, Luton
St Margaret of Scotland Primary School, Luton
St Matthew's Primary School, Luton

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70091
Inspection number	409461
Inspection dates	18–21 March 2013
Lead inspector	Mark Williams
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT and EBITT
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	June 2010
Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70091
Provider address	The Shire Foundation c/o Hillborough Junior School Hillborough Road Luton LU1 5EZ