

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Graduate Teacher Training Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates: 13–16 May 2013

This inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors in accordance with the *Handbook for inspecting initial teacher education*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from January 2013.

The inspection draws upon evidence from 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	2

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The employment-based routes

Information about the employment-based partnership

- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Graduate Teacher Training Partnership offers primary and secondary routes to qualified teacher status (QTS) through employment-based teacher training (EBITT). The majority of training is provided in schools, including phase and subject-specific training. This is supplemented by a programme of generic professional training and guidance provided by local authority advisers and tutors.
- Trainees in the primary phase train to teach pupils in the 3 to 7 or 5 to 11 age range. Those in the secondary phase train to teach pupils in the 11 to 16 age range. At the time of the inspection, there were 11 primary and 10 secondary trainees, including three secondary trainees who were self-funded. Current secondary trainees train to teach the following subjects: English, food technology, mathematics, physical education, psychology and science.
- The provider is a partnership between the local authority and schools in the borough. Local schools encounter difficulties in recruiting newly qualified teachers (NQTs) from outside the local area because of the high cost of housing. The partnership was established to meet the recruitment needs of the authority's schools by offering a route to QTS for those already living in the area. There are 37 schools in the partnership, 15 of which are used regularly for training and placements. The other schools are used occasionally.
- The partnership employs an independent, external assessor to assure the quality of assessment leading to QTS. From September 2012, it began working with Buckinghamshire New University to provide additional academic assessment leading to the Post Graduate Certificate in Education Practice.

Information about the employment-based ITE inspection

- Nine schools were visited, including three secondary schools, one middle school, four primary schools and one nursery school. In these schools, inspectors observed teaching by eight current trainees and eight former trainees, seven of whom are now NQTs and one of whom is a recently qualified teacher. In the case of current trainees, their teaching was observed jointly with their mentors. Inspectors then observed the feedback given by mentors to trainees.

- In addition to lesson observations, during visits to the schools, inspectors held discussions with another five trainees, six NQTs and 15 recently qualified teachers. They also met with six mentors, three teacher training coordinators, three heads of departments and four headteachers in the schools visited.
- Inspectors held meetings with the partnership coordinator; members of the partnership's Strategy Group, including four headteachers and three local authority members; and nine former trainees who are now NQTs in local schools that were not visited during the inspection.
- 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 data, trainees' teaching files and evidence about how well they are meeting the Teachers' Standards. Inspectors also scrutinised the partnership's analysis of data about trainees' attainment, completion and employment outcomes over time and the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement plan.

Inspection Team

Gwen Coates HMI: lead inspector

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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the employment-based partnership are:

- Highly motivated trainees with valuable prior experience and strong personal attributes who have a real commitment to become at least good teachers, and who are proactive and self-reliant in developing the skills that will allow them to succeed.
- High-quality mentoring that ensures trainees are fully supported to develop the skills necessary to become at least good teachers.
- The 'seamless' progression from trainee to successful NQT in partnership schools, which results from the continuity of support provided by local authority tutors and schools.

- The high performing schools that are totally committed to the partnership and to developing trainees to become good and outstanding teachers.
- The well-planned integration of school-based and central training that provides excellent opportunities for trainees to develop their teaching skills.
- The excellent knowledge local authority tutors have about local schools, and the very close relationship between the local authority and schools in the partnership, which provide a very strong context for training teachers.
- The high quality recruitment and selection process that has led quickly to improved attainment and completion rates.

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

The partnership should:

Sustain recent improvements made in trainees' outcomes and improve them further by:

- reviewing provision for, and leadership of, subject knowledge and subject pedagogy training for secondary trainees to ensure that excellence is promoted in a wider context than that of the placement school
- developing more diagnostic needs analyses for all trainees, including detailed subject knowledge audits for secondary trainees, to inform the personalised training plans that support trainees' development to become good or outstanding teachers
- ensuring that the most able trainees are set sufficiently challenging targets that really stretch them and promote outstanding teaching and ensuring that lesson feedback for all trainees consistently focuses more on how well pupils are learning rather than on how well trainees are teaching
- sharpening the process of tracking trainees' progress so that it is more transparent about how well targets set are being achieved and indicates more explicitly the strengths and weaknesses of trainees' development at each stage of their training.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. Almost all trainees who completed the course in recent years were judged as good or outstanding and all current trainees are on track to be judged as good or outstanding in their final assessments. All trainees now complete the course and all gain employment as teachers, with a large majority gaining employment in partnership schools. Trainees are well prepared to teach. All trainees and NQTs observed and met during the inspection exceed the minimum level of practice expected of teachers as defined in the Teachers' Standards.
2. A notable strength of trainees is that they bring with them considerable relevant life experiences; many having worked as teaching assistants in their placement schools. They are developing into highly reflective practitioners who are self-reliant and in charge of their own development. Their extensive prior experiences, both in the classroom and in other contexts, mean they have a range of transferable skills that gives them the confidence to contribute widely to the life of the schools they are working in. As a result, they fulfil their wider professional responsibilities very well and make significant contributions to their schools.
3. Trainees set high personal standards for their planning, teaching and conduct and remain professional at all times. They have high expectations of their own performance and of their pupils' achievement. Trainees and NQTs plan and teach well-structured lessons and sequences of lessons. They set clear learning objectives and, in most cases, use effective differentiation to enable all pupils to make expected levels of progress. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson about the use of emotive language, the trainee ensured that pupils of different abilities focused on language of varying degrees of difficulty and provided less able pupils with a structured writing frame. Trainees and NQTs adapt teaching well to respond to the strengths and needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. While good attention is paid to the differing needs and abilities of pupils, this was not as effective in meeting the needs of the most able pupils as it was for the less able.
4. Trainees and NQTs make accurate use of assessment. Their use of assessment for learning techniques is usually well developed and, in some cases, trainees demonstrate real expertise. However, success criteria are not always emphasised sufficiently, and pupils do not always fully understand the progress they have made.
5. Trainees and NQTs have very positive relationships with pupils and manage behaviour very well. They understand about different types of

bullying and how to deal with them. Many trainees and ex-trainees have been teaching assistants and thus all understood the contribution they can make in the classroom. In most cases, trainees were observed to use teaching assistants effectively. For example, in an early years session, the trainee made good use of the teaching assistant by planning for her to work closely with a child whose behaviour was off task and potentially distracting, while the teacher continued to work with the rest of the class so that their learning was not disrupted.

6. Trainees understand the importance of promoting and developing spiritual, social, moral and cultural aspects of learning through their teaching. For example, in a science lesson, pupils experienced awe and wonder when considering the particles that make up matter. However, this aspect of learning is rarely planned for explicitly and it is not considered in grading trainees' teaching or in setting challenging targets particularly for trainees who are already exceeding the minimum requirements of the Teachers' Standards.
7. Primary and secondary trainees' subject and curriculum knowledge is good. Primary trainees, in particular, are well trained to take into account and develop cross-curricular working when this is relevant. For example, a trainee developed a programme of work for Year 5 pupils that made very good cross-curricular links with literacy and history. This had been used throughout the school as an example of best practice. Secondary trainees' subject and curriculum knowledge is good because their subject mentors ensure that the trainees are well prepared and confident to teach the programmes of study they have been allocated. However, their subject knowledge and understanding of subject pedagogy could be improved further by more diagnostic auditing of subject knowledge at the start of the course and by a greater focus on broader subject knowledge and pedagogical developments that are beyond those provided in placement schools.
8. Primary and secondary trainees feel confident about their ability to ensure pupils develop and consolidate their literacy and mathematical skills. Primary trainees' understanding of phonics is well developed and their teaching of it is good. In one example, a primary trainee demonstrated an excellent knowledge of phonics teaching and, as a result, pupils had reached a high level of understanding of a range of complex sounds and their written forms. Primary trainees have a good understanding of primary mathematics and are able to teach it well. One former trainee, who is a recently qualified teacher, spoke confidently of her focus on misconceptions and how she ensures that pupils understood processes in mathematics, rather than simply being able to 'do' exercises correctly.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

9. Trainees benefit from the support of good or outstanding teachers in strong schools that are excellent training bases. The nature of the schools in the partnership provides a good mix of contexts that ensure trainees gain experience of teaching pupils with differing needs and different socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Good practice in linking the main and second placement schools involves mentors from both schools observing trainees together and discussing progress and future targets for development. As a result, trainees are able to make continuing good progress during both placements.
10. Good use is made of the strengths and specialisms of schools in the partnership. In addition to the two standard placements, trainees visit other schools to experience excellent practice and to see different educational contexts. For example, both primary and secondary trainees visit a special school to gain a greater understanding of the learning needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. All secondary trainees visit a primary school to develop their understanding of Year 6 to Year 7 transition issues.
11. Good quality training in behaviour management is provided by the local authority's behaviour management support team in the form of formal sessions and one-to-one tutorials to address individual issues. The impact of this training is demonstrated in the confident behaviour management skills trainees exhibit in the classroom.
12. Local authority tutors, who deliver much of the central training and quality assure schools' monitoring of trainees' progress, are highly experienced professionals, well respected by mentors in partnership schools and have exceptional levels of local knowledge about schools in the partnership. School mentors play a key role in the training process. They demonstrate highly skilled approaches to mentoring and a clear commitment to encouraging the development of the trainees for whom they are responsible. Trainees and NQTs spoke highly of the support provided by the course leader and by their mentors.
13. Central training is comprehensive and well structured and links well with school-based training. Primary training is very well coordinated and coherent across all schools. There is no similar centralised focus for secondary subject training, which is left to individual schools. This is not a concern in the sense that all schools and their departments are at least good and mentors provide these highly motivated and able trainees with very good support to ensure they develop appropriate levels of subject knowledge. However, it does mean that trainees gain a view of subject teaching that is limited to that of their placement schools, rather than being exposed to a broader view of subject

pedagogy, of the role of the subject in the curriculum and of national developments in relation to the subject.

14. Trainers build well on trainees' prior experience and ensure that trainees have good opportunities to develop their expertise and overcome any areas requiring development. Effective monitoring procedures are in place and targets are linked well to performance and the Teachers' Standards. The initial needs analysis and the secondary subject knowledge audit identify general aspects to develop further, but neither documents are sufficiently diagnostic. As a result, these formal documents do not provide sufficient detail to inform personalised training plans. Actual training and development are good and tailored well to individual trainees' needs, but this is done informally as a result of the close and on-going relationship between trainees and mentors.
15. All trainers and mentors in schools are Advanced Skills Teachers or outstanding teachers. They, and the highly skilled local authority tutors, consistently model best practice in the classroom, in assessment and in target setting for further improvement. The fact that the partnership manager is the GTP coordinator for the partnership and the NQT coordinator for the local authority means that trainees are provided with continuity of support as they move from trainee status to NQT status in local schools. One former trainee and current NQT in a partnership school said the support had been 'seamless'.
16. Trainees' teaching is regularly observed and the trainees receive good feedback on their teaching that is well focused on targets related to those Teachers' Standards that need further improvement. However, in some cases feedback concentrates too much on what trainees are doing rather than what pupils are learning. For those trainees who were able to demonstrate skills well above the minimum level of the Teachers' Standards from early in their course, targets are not always challenging enough to encourage them to develop their excellence further. Ongoing monitoring of progress in relation to targets takes place and this is summarised in the regular half termly reports. However, there is insufficient detail in these reports to indicate the actual strengths and key areas still to be developed, and as a result the process does not allow for easy analysis of how well trainees are progressing over time.
17. Both central training and school-based training encourage secondary trainees to incorporate the development of pupils' abilities in reading, writing, communication and mathematics in their teaching, regardless of their own specialist subject areas. All trainees are aware of the importance of doing this because it is a priority in their placement schools.

18. There is a good focus on developing primary trainees' ability to teach early reading, synthetic phonics, communication and language development. Two of the partnership's consultants are also the local authority's literacy tutors and so they provide expertise and continuity for trainees as they become NQTs. The structure of this training is good because it is practical and involves the building of knowledge, followed by practice and on-going support. As well as developing skills in their two placement schools, primary trainees participate in visits to two additional schools to observe and practise good phonics teaching using different schemes.
19. Training in primary mathematics is a strength. The training provided is very interactive. Planning examples are provided and tutors model good practice by focusing on stages of progression rather than the age of pupils. This central provision is followed up by additional support sessions and further developed in schools. NQTs confirmed the quality of the training and commented on the enthusiastic and skilled teaching by the local authority's mathematics specialist.
20. The quality of secondary science training is good. Trainees' own subject knowledge is good and subject mentors provide day-to-day support to ensure any gaps in knowledge or weaknesses in planning are rectified. However, trainees lack subject-specific developmental targets. Science subject development within placement schools is highly effective but trainees are not exposed sufficiently to the broader aspects of science pedagogy outside their placement schools. Exceptionally, one trainee attended a residential course for non-specialists run by the Royal Society of Chemists, which widened her skills and experience considerably. Scientific enquiry is regularly used as the basis for teaching pupils about how science works and practical work is used well to demonstrate scientific concepts. However, the effectiveness of investigations is sometimes limited by a lack of suitable equipment.
21. Assessment is accurate in terms of grading teaching against the Teachers' Standards and against the provider's scale for assessing progress towards and beyond them. There was full agreement between mentor assessment and inspectors' grading in relation to the lessons observed.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

22. The new leadership team has introduced a clear agenda for improvement and instigated a range of actions to tighten quality assurance systems, sharpen recruitment and selection processes and improve the quality of training in order to improve trainee outcomes. The impact of these actions can already be seen in terms of the

improved calibre of trainees recruited, the quality of their teaching, and in the improved completion and employment rates.

23. Improved selection procedures include raising the minimum class of degree acceptable to be considered for the course and ensuring that all applicants have spent time working in local schools. Selection activities in schools are challenging, involving applicants teaching part of a lesson, leading a school council meeting, writing about their teaching session and taking part in an interview. As a result, all trainees now have good academic and personal attributes and a strong motivation to complete the course successfully. The growing reputation of the course means that there are many more applicants – approximately ten to every place available. More male trainees are being recruited to primary training and more minority ethnic applications have been received.
24. Many ex-trainees gain positions in partnership schools and many of these remain in their schools and go on to gain positions of responsibility early on in their careers. One secondary school in the partnership has 19 ex-trainees on its staff and a primary school has four. In a partnership nursery school, an NQT who was a former trainee at the school, and before that a teaching assistant at the school, is about to become an assistant headteacher in the same school.
25. New leaders have introduced improved training for mentors. All mentors must now attend training and this is followed up with regular briefings and occasional drop-in sessions. Mentors comment on the quality of training and its impact in making them feel more confident about their role.
26. There are clear evaluation and review systems in place. The regular evaluation by trainees of central training sessions is almost wholly positive and all trainees and former trainees comment on how promptly the provider responds to any suggestions for improvement. Newly introduced quality assurance systems are bringing about improved consistency in the quality of course provision and in the accuracy of assessment of trainees' teaching skills across schools. However, despite good quality assurance procedures overall, the provider's ability to assure the quality of secondary subject knowledge auditing and subject pedagogy training is not yet as strong as it is in other aspects of provision.
27. Simple developments, such as a streamlined course handbook and a straightforward partnership agreement, are clarifying roles and responsibilities and helping to improve systems. Despite these improvements, the distinction between the roles of external assessor and external moderator are not yet sufficiently clear to trainees or mentors in schools.

28. The partnership has a clear vision for excellence that translates as a strong desire to develop excellent teachers and future leaders for its own schools. The Strategy Group, which oversees the strategic development of the partnership and consists of headteachers of partnership schools and members of the local authority's school improvement team, is very proactive, and very successful in its role.
29. All ITT criteria and requirements are met and the partnership has responded effectively to the recommendations identified at the last inspection, introducing improvements that are having a significant, positive impact on the quality of training and on trainees' outcomes. The new leadership team, together with the Strategy Group, has a clear view of the strengths of the partnership and the areas that still require further improvement. Their record of improvement to date demonstrates that they have very good capacity to bring about further improvement.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Charters School, Ascot
Cookham Nursery School, Maidenhead
Datchet St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Datchet
Dedworth Middle School, Windsor
Lowbrook Academy, Maidenhead
Newlands Girls' School, Maidenhead
St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School, Windsor
South Ascot Village Primary School, South Ascot
The Windsor Boys' School, Windsor

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70246
Inspection number	408577
Inspection dates	13-16 May 2013
Lead inspector	Gwen Coates HMI
Type of ITE partnership	EBITT
Phases provided	GTP
Date of previous inspection	22-26 June 2009
Previous inspection report	<u>http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70246</u>
Provider address	ECAS, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead GTTP, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF