

Suffolk and Norfolk Primary SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

20–23 May 2013

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors in accordance with the *ITE Inspection Handbook*. 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 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
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	1
The outcomes for trainees	1
The quality of training across the partnership	1
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

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The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- This school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnership works as part of the Suffolk and Norfolk Initial Teacher Training (SNITT) group, which comprises the primary and secondary SCITT programmes and the primary and secondary graduate teacher programme. The primary SCITT enables trainees to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) through a professional graduate certificate in education (PGCE). This qualification is validated by the University Campus Suffolk in partnership with the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex.
- The SCITT makes use of additional expertise from schools, independent consultants, local authorities and colleagues in other parts of the partnership to enhance training.
- Trainees specialise in either the 3 to 7 (Early Years) or 5 to 11 (Primary) phases. At the time of the inspection there were 59 trainees, 27 following the Early Years route and 32 following the Primary route. Centre based training takes place in Lowestoft and Ipswich. About sixty per cent of trainees receive their centre based training in Ipswich.
- Trainees were based in 80 schools spread across a large area of Suffolk and Norfolk.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons taught by seven trainees and one newly qualified teacher (NQT) in a total of four schools. Inspectors also met with groups of trainees and NQTs in schools and at the SCITT centre.
- Meetings were also held with senior leaders from the SCITT, a group of keyworkers, school based mentors and professional tutors, headteachers and chairs of the steering group and the management group.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the providers' evaluations of how well it is performing; course handbooks; achievement, completion and employment data; minutes of committee meetings; external examiner reports and documents relating to school experience placements.

Inspection team

Robert Lovett HMI	Lead inspector
Eileen Mulgrew HMI	Assistant lead inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- highly personalised training which is carefully tailored at every step to maximise trainees' progress, and enhance their confidence and well-being
- exceptionally rigorous recruitment and selection of high calibre trainees, with impressive pre-entry qualifications and very good prior experience in education settings, which helps them to achieve at a high level
- outcomes which are consistently good or better with an increasing proportion of trainees attaining at the highest level
- high levels of commitment and engagement of partnership schools in shaping the vision for excellence and robust strategic management
- high quality leadership and management at all levels so that the partnership has a very strong capacity to continue to improve
- high completion rates and high levels of progression into employment and then rapidly to posts of responsibility
- very high quality pastoral and academic support for trainees which results in outstanding outcomes.

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

The partnership should:

- In order to further increase the proportion of trainees attaining at an outstanding level;
 - sharpen subject specific feedback so that all trainees know exactly where their strengths and areas for improvement lie
 - ensure that feedback always explicitly comments on the stated focus of the observation.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are outstanding

1. Trainees are overwhelmingly positive about every aspect of the course. All of those spoken to by inspectors had chosen the SCITT as a result of careful research or recommendation. All said without hesitation that they would strongly recommend the SCITT as a good place to train and many have already recommended it to family and friends.
2. In each of the last three years almost all trainees have attained a good or better standard by the end of their training. This proportion is rising. The proportion of trainees judged to be outstanding has also increased in each of the last three years. The partnership's accurate assessments of how well trainees are currently doing indicates that attainment is set to rise again in 2013, with no trainees judged as less than good and an increase of over ten per cent in the proportion judged outstanding. There is no significant difference in the outcomes achieved by different groups of trainees.
3. Trainees have also made very good progress against the Teachers' Standards in each of the last three years. Progress has been rapid and has been consistently and overwhelmingly good or better across the board. The strongest achievement has been in those Standards linked to strategies to develop positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. Feedback from mentors, professional tutors, keyworkers and headteachers, in addition to inspectors' observations in schools and discussions with trainees corroborate high standards in respect of trainees' professional conduct.
4. The partnership is particularly effective in providing bespoke pastoral and academic support to ensure that all trainees are good or better teachers by the time they finish the course. Completion and employment rates are consistently high. Over ninety per cent of NQTs have secured teaching posts in each of the last three years. Over ninety-five per cent obtained teaching posts in September 2012 and over eighty-five per cent of the current cohort have already secured teaching posts for September 2013, many in the schools in which they have trained. Retention in teaching is also high.
5. As a result of the high quality of training and excellent preparation to teach, career progression is often rapid with a high proportion of recently and even newly qualified teachers assuming additional responsibility as leaders of literacy or numeracy or phase leaders.

The quality of training across the partnership is outstanding

6. In each of the last three years all of the NQTs completing the NQT survey judged the quality of training to be good or better, with a high proportion judging it as very good. In the most recent NQT survey almost all areas of training have been rated well above the sector average. Two previously and comparatively weaker areas have been addressed by the partnership and are now significant strengths. The on-line inspection survey of current trainees confirms this very positive picture, with every trainee who responded saying that the quality of training would make them a good or better teacher and about ninety per cent strongly agreeing that this is the case. The high quality of training ensures that the course enjoys the overwhelming confidence of schools. The most recent survey of headteachers employing partnership NQTs corroborates this picture by indicating high rates of satisfaction, with all agreeing that NQTs teach challenging, well organised lessons.
7. The partnership analyses trainees' evaluations of training in great detail, reports to the partnership and strategic boards and rapidly adapts training in response. There is excellent cohesion across the course, with school based tasks well matched to trainees' emerging experience and skills and very well designed to deepen trainees' practical knowledge. While trainees, quite naturally, point to different 'favourites' in respect of subject training no aspects of the course are considered weak. All have their supporters whether they are subject based or aspects of professional studies. This is true across both core and foundation subjects.
8. All mentors observed gave accurate oral feedback, both in respect of the overall judgement and their analysis of strengths and areas for improvement. However, not all the written feedback comments explicitly on the agreed focus for the observation and in consequence does not provide as useful a record of trainees' teaching as it might otherwise do. Mentors speak highly of the training they receive and particularly value opportunities to work with mentors in other schools.
9. Trainees are able to enjoy school placements in a range of contexts, to observe expert practice and visit different settings such as a pupil referral unit and a special school. Where trainees feel they would benefit from additional experience in a different school, or wish to observe expert practice, keyworkers are proactive in making sure this happens. Keyworkers, (the SCITT staff who work most closely with schools and trainees), and senior leaders and tutors at the SCITT know their trainees exceptionally well. In consequence training is highly personalised and designed to meet the specific individual needs of trainees. Trainees are very carefully paired with schools and mentors in order to maximise the impact on the quality of their teaching. Because of the strong

partnership and high reputation of the SCITT, school placements are almost always of at least good quality.

10. High quality training ensures that trainees are very confident in their ability to ensure that pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Trainees form positive relationships, have high and consistent expectations of how pupils should behave, and are familiar with a range of strategies to ensure that pupils listen well and work hard. Crucially, trainees are very aware of the strong link between high quality teaching, clear expectations and positive attitudes to learning. As a result trainees' classrooms are well-ordered and industrious places for pupils to learn.
11. Trainees are very well prepared to teach pupils of all abilities, including those with disabilities and special educational needs. At the time of the last inspection trainees' planning to meet the needs of more able pupils was a weakness. As a result of improvements trainees now plan very effectively to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including the more able.
12. Training in early reading, comprehension and systematic synthetic phonics, (letters and the sounds they make), is highly effective and results in very confident and competent teachers of literacy. Formerly a less strong area of training, this is now a strength. Both trainees and schools say that training to teach phonics is of high quality and results in NQTs who are able to make an immediate and very positive contribution to pupils' learning. The quality of teaching is carefully tracked and analysed. All lesson observations relating to the teaching of phonics are reviewed and about ten per cent of trainees are observed teaching phonics by the subject leader for English. All trainees are expected to teach phonics at least twice a week irrespective of the phase for which they are being trained.
13. Training in mathematics is very impressive. Trainees and NQTs spoke extremely positively about the excellent central training which has improved their own skills and their confidence and competence in teaching mathematics. Training sessions start with the 'daily 8', timed mental mathematics problems, which trainees say they love and have been instrumental in turning anxiety about teaching mathematics into real enthusiasm. This approach helps them to see problems from the viewpoint of their pupils. Those trainees observed taught well planned lessons with a focus on ensuring work was well matched to pupils abilities and the use of key vocabulary. This reflects the partnership's emphasis on the importance of using the correct subject specific vocabulary and on ensuring higher ability pupils are challenged. As a result of excellent subject knowledge and training in addressing common misconceptions, trainees use questions well to probe pupils' learning so that good progress is made in lessons. Trainees focus on practical activities based on real-life contexts and use effective strategies to

engage and capture pupils' curiosity right from the start. They also make excellent use of mathematical equipment to enable pupils to understand concepts and solve problems. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class found the number of floats that would fit into a given distance during carnival week. Pupils were engaged and interested as they thought hard from the start of the lesson about presenting problems and solutions in an organised and clear way. They enthusiastically used a variety of practical resources to support their learning. Tutors are current practitioners who are highly valued by trainees and are very effective in linking theory to practice. Well-focused assignments and tasks completed in schools further support this very practical approach to teaching. Together with audits and self-assessment tasks tutors identify which aspects of subject knowledge individual trainees need to improve and provide subject enhancement classes throughout the year. These extra sessions have proved so popular that they are now open to all trainees so that their skills in teaching mathematics are very high.

14. Observations of trainees and a newly qualified teacher, discussions and analysis of trainees' files and other records indicate that the partnership's assessments of how well trainees are performing are accurate. The Teachers' Standards Assessment Tool is one of a range of indicators of how well trainees' progress along with additional resources such as phonic teaching record sheets and guidance on assessing the quality of teaching in mathematics. Final end of course assessments are accurately judged against the Teachers' Standards.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding

15. The SCITT team has a clear focus on providing high quality teachers to meet a pressing local recruitment need. It is exceptionally successful in this respect. SCITT trained NQTs are highly valued by headteachers who say that the high quality training NQTs have received prepares them exceptionally well for a career in teaching. SCITT trained teachers are very well prepared to assume positions of responsibility at an early stage of their career.
16. The SCITT has a very clear management structure. Members of the primary steering groups and management group are highly committed, very well informed and have a sharp focus on improving outcomes. The detailed improvement plan is an agenda item at every steering group meeting and both the steering groups and management group are very clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. Schools are very committed to the SCITT and to securing the maximum progress for trainees.
17. All relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements and criteria are fully met.

18. Mentors say they particularly value the recent training in making judgements on the quality of teaching linked to specific national curriculum subjects. They say that this enables them to make sharper judgements and provide more focused feedback on how trainees can improve. While all feedback observed was at least good, sometimes written and oral feedback could have been even sharper in respect of subject specific aspects of teaching. There is additional support for new mentors. The SCITT ensures that any mentors who miss important training catch-up at a later date.
19. Keyworkers provide an essential link between the SCITT, schools and trainees and are greatly valued by all partners. They carefully monitor the progress of trainees through a weekly analysis of lesson observations feedback and summary sheets known as de-briefs. These are e-mailed each week to the partnership from where they are forwarded to keyworkers. There are formal lesson observations and de-briefs of all trainees at least twice a week. Trainees say that keyworkers know them exceptionally well, carefully monitor their progress and are readily available to help. They say that keyworkers act quickly to resolve any problems and ensure that all trainees make good or better progress. Keyworkers are central to the quality assurance of the partnership. Subject leadership and training are strong, resulting in a significant increase in trainees' confidence and competence to teach across the curriculum. Not only do the programme leader and assistant programme leaders provide very effective strategic management and oversight but they also know each trainee very well. As one said 'expectations at the SCITT are high and there's no hiding place'.
20. Recruitment and selection procedures are very rigorous. Because of the high reputation of the SCITT the number of applicants significantly exceeds the number of places available. In 2012 the target for recruitment of trainees with an honours degree at upper second level or above was exceeded. Interviews are school based, with careful quality assurance to ensure consistency. In addition to an interview and written tests, candidates are expected to tell a story to pupils (without a book to read from) and assess pupils' learning. Tasks are intended to probe not only candidates' subject knowledge and communication skills but also their resilience, presence and ability to reflect on their practice. Schools are active contributors to the process of selection and recruitment and as a result are confident in its rigour. They say that only potentially excellent and very good trainees are recruited. Many successful candidates have significant prior experience of working in schools. Those new to the recruitment process are carefully prepared and partnered with more experienced colleagues. If the recruitment process and audits identify any weaknesses additional support is rapidly provided. The partnership has recently begun to identify those trainees with the capacity to be outstanding teachers and who have potential to assume

leadership responsibilities early in their teaching career and is providing enhanced support and challenge for this group.

21. The provider's self-evaluation is accurate and robust. Because of the exceptionally detailed analysis of outcomes and trainees' evaluations, very well focused leadership and management at all levels, and the rapid and flexible response to emerging areas for improvement, the partnership is very well placed to continue to improve.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Cliff Lane Primary School, Ipswich
Harleston Primary School, Harleston
Northfield St Nicholas Primary School, Lowestoft
Poplars Primary School, Lowestoft

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70069
Inspection number	423235
Inspection dates	20–23 May 2013
Lead inspector	Robert Lovett HMI
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	10-14 May 2010
Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70069
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