

# Gateshead SCITT

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) inspection report

Inspection Dates 25–28 November 2013

This inspection was carried out by 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
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	<b>1</b>
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**

- Gateshead School Centred Initial Teacher Training is now in its tenth year. It is based at Lobley Hill Primary School which is the lead school in a consortium of 11 primary schools and a partnership of 80 nursery, infant, primary and special schools in eight local authorities. Currently, 47 trainees are following a programme to gain a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education: Early Years (3–7) with Qualified Teacher Status validated by Northumbria University.

### **Information about the primary ITE inspection**

- Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited five primary schools to observe five former trainees and six current trainees teaching either English or mathematics. All observations were carried out jointly with school-based professional tutors and mentors. Her Majesty's Inspectors observed the giving of feedback and met with tutors and trainees to discuss the training. They also observed two training sessions at the centre and visited two schools to see a training session led by professional tutors based on a lesson streamed live from a classroom in the lead school. Her Majesty's Inspectors also met with groups of current and former trainees, employing headteachers, centre-based trainers, the acting manager of the centre, the headteacher of the lead school and members of the management committee. They also looked at a wide range of documentation, including trainees' files and records of progress and minutes of management and moderation meetings.
- At the time of the inspection, trainees were in the final week of a non-assessed placement.

### **Inspection team**

Sonja Øyen, Her Majesty's Inspector – lead inspector  
Joy Frost, Her Majesty's Inspector – team inspector

## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 1**

### **The key strengths of the primary partnership are:**

- The very strong learning community – leaders, trainees and trainers share a high level of commitment, diligence, enthusiasm and passion. Trainees experience best practice in centre- and school-based sessions.
- High-quality training which ensures that trainees put theory into practice in working with children in the lead school. As a result trainees make rapid progress in reflecting on their practice. The lead school also benefits significantly in developing staff's skills in mentoring and in providing many pupils with individual support.
- The robust selection of trainees who fully appreciate the rigours of day-to-day teaching, show outstanding professional attributes, stay the course and most often go on to teach in local schools.
- Trainees with a good understanding of how young children learn and who confidently lead a team of early years professionals.
- Forward-thinking leaders and skilful practitioners who keep the training at the forefront of national and local initiatives.
- The enhanced placements, especially those centred on outdoor learning, special educational needs and early years provision, which enable trainees to lead an aspect of school improvement.

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

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

- Make further use of data and trainees' existing knowledge and experience to identify precisely each trainee's learning needs and ensure that trainees know exactly what will raise their performance.
- Ensure that all written records reflect fully the high quality of oral feedback and professional debate and give a clear justification for any later changes in judgements concerning how well trainees have met the Teachers' Standards.
- Fine tune improvement planning and subsequent evaluation by specifying and quantifying wherever possible the intended improvements in outcomes for trainees.

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are outstanding.**

1. Trainees have made very good progress in the first three months of their training. They are brimming with confidence, enthusiastic about what they are doing in school and showing insight on the effectiveness of their teaching, particularly in which strategies work for them in managing pupils' behaviour. This is because the training is finely structured to enable trainees to put immediately into practice what they learn in centre-based training. The first placement, not formally assessed, allows trainees to observe practitioners and to gradually take on a teaching commitment, including sessions with Key Stage 2 pupils.
2. Trainees have applied the content of their centre-based training in teaching mathematics and phonics very effectively to individual Year 2 pupils in the lead school. They have evaluated their own teaching and also pupils' progress in relation to the expected outcomes for reading and mathematics in the revised curriculum for September 2014. This has given them a secure, impressive understanding of key factors in progression in number knowledge and phonics.
3. In 2013, just over a quarter of trainees were judged to be outstanding overall and substantially more had aspects of outstanding, especially in relation to managing behaviour effectively and planning and teaching well-structured lessons. Male trainees performed particularly well.
4. Nearly all trainees complete the course and gain Qualified Teacher Status. In 2013, well-founded reasons lay behind the withdrawal or deferment of training for a very few trainees. Employment rates are consistently higher than the sector average. A key success is the continuing employment of trainees in schools within Gateshead local authority, particularly within the 11 consortium schools. Five years after training, just over 90% of trainees appointed to local schools remain in post, often holding management responsibilities and involved in training current trainees. Headteachers referred to 'snapping up' Gateshead SCITT trainees who perform particularly well at interview and who went out of their way to be prepared for their first class and who thrived on the support and guidance from mentors.
5. The teaching of former trainees is at least good and often outstanding. Common strengths are high self-confidence, productive team work, interesting ideas to gain and keep pupils' interest and effective management of pupils' behaviour. Three former trainees working with children in nursery and reception classes had a strong understanding of how young children learn, and held high expectations of what the

children could achieve. Outdoor experiences were very well planned to encourage children to use all their senses.

6. The same strengths are showing in current trainees. The quality of their teaching varied but all those observed showed the potential to be at least good and some already showed outstanding elements. They worked enthusiastically and were quick to acknowledge aspects that could explain why pupils' learning stalled.
7. The responses of former trainees to the national survey for newly qualified teachers indicate high confidence in their ability to teach reading, phonics and mathematics. Even at this relatively early stage of training, current trainees similarly expressed strong agreement with the use of phonics in reading and a growing confidence in their ability to teach primary mathematics.
8. Trainees recognise that they have made very good progress in a short time. Although account is taken of trainees' existing knowledge and experience through audits, self-assessment and discussion, there is scope to pinpoint specific gaps in subject knowledge and to set even higher expectations of individual progress and outcomes.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is outstanding.**

9. High-quality training has been sustained since the last inspection in 2009. Former and current trainees were unanimous in praising the excellence of the training sessions and the consistency of quality across the programme: 'Engaging, rewarding and very worthwhile.' was a typical comment. The trainers are all expert practitioners, many former Advanced Skills Teachers and now Specialist/National Leaders of Education or advisers with the local authority. They very effectively relate theory with classroom practice and highlight links to the Teachers' Standards and the revised curriculum for September 2014.
10. The programme is highly effective in rapidly and systematically building trainees' subject knowledge alongside their teaching skills. This is clearly evident with regard to reading and mathematics, facilitated by the main training centre being within the lead school. For example, as part of a training session in reading, trainees reviewed the Simple View of Reading and ways to develop the skills of inference and deduction. In groups, they shared a story with Year 2 pupils, using strategies such as freeze-frame to evaluate their understanding. This led to productive discussion about pupils' responses, planning for listening and speaking, links with reading and writing, and the skills needed by teachers.
11. Similarly, skilful questioning by their professional tutor, following trainees' one-to-one sessions with pupils, prompted critical reflection on

the impact of their teaching. An analysis of the strategies used by pupils in counting led to discussion of the possible reasons for misunderstandings and the next steps in developing calculation skills in light of the revised curriculum in mathematics.

12. The training programme gives trainees a secure understanding of the principles underlying best practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage together with an awareness of child development and the stages of language acquisition. The first placement enables trainees to observe nursery and reception classes as well as Key Stage 2 classes, giving all trainees an early, informed overview of primary education. The directed tasks link with training, such as that in safeguarding, and lead into an assessed assignment. As a result trainees see the relevance of centre- and school-based training and come to develop their own well-founded personal philosophies of teaching: 'They sow the seeds and let us make up our own minds' commented a former trainee.
13. The use of the observatory classroom is an integral and highly effective part of the training with lessons from the lead school streamed live to consortium schools. Taking a particular aspect as a focus, trainees develop skills as critical observers as well as reflective practitioners. For instance, trainees discussed the impact of the strategies used by the classteacher to manage pupils' behaviour in a session followed by transition to group work. Lively debate included trainees linking what they had seen to relevant theory and to personal experience, including reference to specific learning needs such as autism, attention deficit disorder and selective mutism.
14. The visit early in the programme to schools in Newham, London usefully challenges trainees' perceptions and awareness of issues regarding diversity, equality of opportunity and working with pupils from a wide range of cultural heritages and who speak English as an additional language.
15. The introduction in 2012 of a short enhancement placement proved highly successful with schools and trainees alike. Trainees choose a specialist aspect, including special educational needs, outdoor learning, behaviour management and early years, and work with senior leaders in a school on an area of school improvement. In addition to deepening their knowledge, trainees gain valuable experience in compiling a plan of action, working to a budget and timescale, and evaluating and presenting their findings to headteachers and centre leaders.
16. A key strength of the school-based training is the high degree of consistency in approach. This is in large part due to: first, the careful selection of effective schools; second, the match of setting to meet the needs of trainees; and third, the judicious selection of professional tutors who, when new to the role, initially shadow and then are coached

by experienced 'buddies'. Class teachers are also well prepared for their role in hosting trainees with specific training before each placement. Recently this has centred on the use of the revised assessment grid to judge trainees' performance. Handbooks outline clearly what is expected on each placement from trainers and trainees. Trainers feel extremely well supported; they know from experience that the centre leaders will act quickly to resolve any issues.

17. Trainees are regularly self-assessing their progress in relation to the Teachers' Standards. With their professional tutors, they identify areas to develop but chances are missed to specify more exactly the aspects of subject knowledge for individual study, and also where training could be tailored even more closely to reflect experience and knowledge. Similarly, the written reports from placements give a detailed account of how well trainees perform against each Standard but are often imprecise in identifying what trainees need to do to lift their performance, particularly from good to outstanding. This is in contrast to frequently high-quality oral feedback from trainers which prompts trainees' critical reflection and balances strengths and points for improvement.

**The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding.**

18. Since the inspection in 2009, high satisfaction ratings have been maintained and recruitment has remained strong although the cohort has doubled in size with concurrent widening of the partnership. This is almost entirely due to the sustained shared vision and passion held by centre leaders and members of the management committee who want and expect the best for local schools. Headteachers on the committee refer to their vested interest in training effective teachers and consequent high level of involvement in ensuring that the provision reflects current best practice in their schools. As a consequence, trainees benefit from being part of a true learning community.
19. A great deal of care has been taken to ensure succession of strong, effective leadership building on expertise in the lead school as well as appointing experienced trainers and leaders from other providers. This has in turn sustained capacity to improve further. Amendments to the provision have often pre-empted local and national priorities and kept trainees at the cutting edge of initiatives. The close ties between the lead school and the SCITT are mutually beneficial. The school is tracking the progress of pupils in reading and mathematics to evaluate the impact of the one-to-one sessions with trainees, especially in closing the gap in attainment for identified pupils.
20. Development planning is rooted in a review of the effectiveness of the provision taking account of the views of schools, trainers and trainees.



Although intentions to strengthen outcomes for trainees are very clear, success criteria are too general to guide robust evaluation. Similarly, the minutes of the Management Committee record only in general terms any review or probing of effectiveness of action taken. Nevertheless, members of the committees are challenging centre leaders about action, its impact and value for money. They rigorously check that ITT criteria and safeguarding requirements are met and use national and regional data to benchmark effectiveness. A great deal of consideration has been given to ways to widen involvement with other providers, and how best to work with partnership schools and School Direct training from 2014.

21. The recruitment of trainees remains strong with most applicants coming from the local area and an increasing proportion from non-educational employment. A success is the high proportion of male trainees which currently stands at 25%. The male ambassador, a former trainee and now teaching in the lead school, plays an influential, effective role in supporting male applicants. As in the local area, the number of minority ethnic trainees is low. Robust procedures ensure the selection of high calibre applicants with a strong aptitude for teaching as reflected in the now significant number of former trainees in local schools. Trainees remembered the rigour of tests, work with children and an interview with a headteacher and a centre leader, but also how the warm welcome confirmed their wish to be a trainee.
22. From selection, centre leaders keep a close monitoring eye on how well trainees are fulfilling assessed potential. Any trainee giving even slight cause for concern is matched carefully to an experienced professional tutor and, when appropriate, given additional time in school with agreed targets. School-based trainers use the flexibility in placement arrangements to raise the challenge for those trainees who progress rapidly. Some trainees, for example, on first placement have been planning lessons independently and teaching classes across the curriculum while others have worked with groups as part of a team.
23. Effective procedures to quality assure the work of centre- and school-based trainers account for the high level of consistency in the way trainers work. However, there are some small gaps in the procedures to monitor the quality of the content of written records, including reports following the two assessed placements and this means that some trainees are not getting precise information on what they need to do to improve. In contrast, feedback on assignments is sharp, constructive and clear in how trainees can lift the academic quality. The acting centre manager has already identified the need to sample the content of reports, especially the specifying of areas for improvement in relation to each of the Standards for those trainees judged to be good.
24. A very good aspect of management is the meeting of centre leaders, professional tutors and classteachers to challenge and moderate draft

judgements of how well trainees meet the Teachers' Standards drawing on trainees' evidence and trainers' very good knowledge of each trainee. Although all relevant documents were completed for the cohort who left in 2013, not all record the reasons to justify a change in judgement, thus making it difficult for centre leaders to respond to any common factors.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Falla Park Primary  
Fell Dyke Primary  
Lingey House Primary  
Lobley Hill Primary  
Westgate Hill Primary

## ITE partnership details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70161
<b>Inspection number</b>	421249
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–28 November 2013
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sonja Øyen, Her Majesty's Inspector
<b>Type of ITE partnership</b>	SCITT
<b>Phases provided</b>	Primary 3–7
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	February 2009
<b>Previous inspection report</b>	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70161">http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70161</a>
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