

The Grand Union Training Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

2–5 December 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

	Secondary QTS
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 secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The Grand Union Training Partnership provides secondary school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) for graduates. Trainees who successfully complete the programme are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS) and gain either a professional or post-graduate certificate of education from the University of Leicester.
- The partnership consists of six partnership schools and four associate schools in the Northampton and Milton Keynes area. The lead school is Sponne School, Towcester. The headteachers of each partnership school are members of the SCITT's governing body.
- Training in history, science, mathematics, English, modern languages and physical education covers the 11–18 age range; it covers business studies in the 14–19 age range. At the time of the inspection there were 14 trainees on the core training route and 15 trainees on the School Direct training route.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by trainees and four by newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The observations of trainees were undertaken jointly with mentors. Inspectors also observed coaching and mentoring training for school-based trainers and a quality assurance visit by the mathematics subject leader to a partnership school.
- Inspectors held discussions with individual trainees and NQTs, leaders and managers, professional tutors, mentors, subject leaders, headteachers, a representative from the University of Leicester, and members of the SCITT governing body. Inspectors also took into account responses to the trainee online questionnaire, which all trainees had recently completed.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence including information on recruitment and selection, statutory safeguarding and compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, tracking and assessment, trainees' teaching evidence, analysis of outcomes for trainees, evaluations and improvement plans, external examiner reports and the partnership's website.

Inspection Team

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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- the high regard in which the trainees and training are held by local schools, which helps to ensure trainees' subsequent high levels of employment
- the well-established partnership of good and outstanding schools that are committed to ensuring trainees enter the profession as good or better teachers
- the collaborative team of expert school-based trainers and managers that supports the development of trainees' subject knowledge and practical teaching skills well
- reflective trainees, who listen to advice and use detailed feedback to improve their teaching
- the regular and frequent monitoring of trainees' progress that helps leaders and managers to identify where trainees are in need of extra support
- the effective use of rigorous quality assurance procedures, including detailed attention to the views of trainees, to ensure consistently good quality training and assessment across the partnership
- high-quality support, effective communications and the clarity of documentation which supports trainees' professional development and provides clear guidance for school-based trainers.

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

The partnership should:

- increase the proportion of trainees whose teaching is outstanding by the end of their training
- raise completion rates further
- ensure improvement plans more effectively measure the success and impact of the actions taken to improve trainees' outcomes.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. Trainees have a good understanding of the Teachers' Standards and aspire to become good or outstanding teachers by the end of their training. They are reflective, willing to listen to advice and use detailed

feedback from mentors, subject leaders and managers to improve their teaching and students' learning.

2. All trainees who completed their training in 2012/13 exceeded the minimum level of practice for their teaching and demonstrated consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. Although good or better attainment rates have improved since the last inspection, the proportion of trainees reaching outstanding levels of attainment remains static. Much of trainees' and NQTs' teaching observed during the inspection was good.
3. Although the inspection took place in the first term of their training, trainees were already demonstrating strengths in their teaching and their standards for professional and personal conduct. Sixth-form teaching, observed by inspectors, was particularly good and encouraged and supported independence and the development of skills essential for future study. Trainees have high expectations and foster good relationships with their students and the adults supporting learning in their classrooms. Trainees with prior experience of the classroom quickly establish an authoritative and professional presence in their lessons. All trainees are starting to use a range of techniques to manage behaviour well.
4. Trainees quickly adopt the high expectations of the partnership's schools and departments. They draw on their good subject knowledge and their understanding of teaching and learning to plan lessons which engage students and thus enable them to make progress in their learning. This includes those with disabilities or who have special educational needs and those who are able, gifted and talented. They use a range of imaginative resources, including information and communication technology (ICT) well and plan effectively for the development of students' literacy skills, regardless of the subject they teach.
5. At this early stage of their training, some trainees' practical teaching skills are less-well developed. Although trainees understand their role in addressing students' learning needs, their actions do not always fully meet them. For example, they do not always make effective use of assessment information and questioning skills to refocus learning or to explain difficult concepts to their students during lessons.
6. The proportion of trainees who complete their training and gain qualified teacher status (QTS) is improving and is now in line with national norms. Inspection evidence confirms that there are no significant differences between the outcomes of different groups of trainees over time.
7. The exceptional employment rates reflect the high regard in which the trainees and training are held by local schools and the partnership's

commitment to ensuring all trainees enter the profession as good or outstanding teachers. Four-fifths of trainees gain first posts in local schools. Many go on to gain roles of responsibility within the SCITT partnership as mentors, subject leaders or managers.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

8. Training is of consistently good quality. Trainees are known as 'associate teachers' and are involved in schools and classrooms from the start of the programme. This approach quickly ensures that trainees play a role in school life and take on increasing responsibility for planning and delivering lessons throughout their placements. Recognition of trainees' prior experience, through the careful use of recruitment information, individual training plans and subject audits, enables mentors to vary the pace of the training for individual trainees.
9. Training is very carefully planned and structured around general professional studies sessions, subject training, the development of ICT skills and carefully phased school placements to develop trainees' subject knowledge as well as their understanding of teaching and learning. The quality of the training reflects the strengths of the partnership and how well expertise is deployed. For example, very useful guidance ensures that departmental colleagues, whose classes trainees teach, understand their role in the training process.
10. The NQT survey results show high levels of satisfaction with the training overall and indicate how well they were prepared with the skills to teach effectively. Current trainees, who responded to Ofsted's trainee online questionnaire, agreed unanimously that they are being trained effectively by mentors and trainers and that their training promotes equality of opportunity very well.
11. Partnership schools and subject departments provide good venues for training. The two complementary placements give trainees a good breadth of experience of different types of student and areas of the curriculum. Placements in schools for students aged 11–18 years ensure that all trainees have substantial experience of teaching sixth-form classes and that they are well trained in examination specifications and future developments. Trainees have a good understanding of changes to National Curriculum requirements from September 2014. Primary school experience is extensive and used to inform trainees' first diagnostic assignment, but lacks sufficient emphasis on subject specific issues and expected levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.
12. Mentors typically provide trainees with good-quality support and guidance. They regularly observe the teaching of trainees and give specific feedback on strengths and areas to improve. Gaps identified in trainees' subject knowledge at interview and in subject audits are

continually addressed and monitored at regular intervals. The best mentoring sessions support reflection and ensure that trainees are able to evaluate students' learning as well as their teaching. Prompts on evaluation and review documentation are well designed to promote trainees' reflective skills. Assignments are marked very well and usefully focus on observation and reflection, published data and classroom research, and teaching styles and methodologies.

13. Through effective training, trainees gain a good understanding of how to recognise different forms of bullying and actions which should be taken to address this. They feel confident in applying their schools' behaviour management strategies and understand that the best form of behaviour management is engaging all pupils in purposeful learning. Training in teaching disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and ensures that all trainees understand the importance of adapting their teaching to meet the needs of students. Training gives a good priority to the development of literacy skills across the curriculum. There was less evidence of the development of numeracy across the curriculum. There are limited practical opportunities for trainees to work with students who speak English as an additional language, so professional studies training has been enhanced in this area for 2013/14.
14. Comprehensive systems are in place to assess and track trainees' progress and to ensure that assessments in relation to the Teachers' Standards are accurate. Trainees' progress is recorded in an assessment portfolio and an easy-to-monitor electronic Teachers' Standards log. Lesson observation proformas include a recently introduced assessment grid which is carefully matched to the Teachers' Standards. This grid provides a good mechanism for standardising assessments, monitoring progress and setting targets. Regular use of joint observations with subject leaders and managers also supports standardisation and the consistency of judgements.
15. Inspectors judged the assessment of trainees by the partnership to be accurate. Effective systems, including the use of internal moderation procedures and an external examiner, appointed by the validating university, are in place to ensure the final assessment against the Teachers' Standards for the award of QTS is accurate.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

16. This well-established partnership, based in good and outstanding schools, is committed to ensuring trainees enter the profession as good or better teachers and to meeting the demand for teachers in local schools. The partnership aims to produce future teachers with the skills and understanding necessary to enable all students to succeed. Schools

and school-based trainers share this vision, are clear about their roles and responsibilities, consistently apply policies and procedures and are effectively held to account through a detailed consortium agreement.

17. Engagement in teacher training is seen as an integral part of the partnership's shared approach to school improvement. The involvement of headteachers and lay governors on the governing body, and headteachers and managers on the steering committee ensure high-quality placements take place in effective subject departments. Trainees are well supported by experienced and well-qualified mentors and subject leaders. These groups also play a key role in managing and monitoring the quality of provision and in shaping the continuing development of the partnership. School-based trainers contribute actively to the recruitment and selection process and to the design and delivery of the training.
18. Positive relationships among the collaborative team of school-based trainers and managers ensure that comprehensive, generic and subject-specific training supports the development of trainees' subject knowledge and practical teaching skills well. The partnership is particularly responsive to the needs of trainees, whose views are sought after each training session and at regular consultative meetings. The in-depth end-of-year review of training also makes effective use of trainees' views from additional focus group meetings, the partnership's evaluative data and information on changing educational policy in order to produce detailed training briefs. These are used effectively to structure and enhance the quality of training for the following year.
19. High-quality support, effective communications and the clarity of documentation supports trainees' professional development and provides clear guidance for school-based trainers. This, together with the effective use of rigorous quality assurance procedures, ensures consistently good-quality training and assessment across the partnership. The regular and frequent monitoring of trainees' progress at four key review points and the use of web-based documentation helps leaders and managers identify where trainees are in need of extra support.
20. Mentors and trainers value the opportunity to take on roles in initial teacher training and are appreciative of the training they receive and the approachability of managers. During the inspection, inspectors observed an excellent training session in which new and experienced mentors enthusiastically engaged in activities to develop their coaching and mentoring skills further. Mentor's subject expertise is continually enhanced through opportunities to engage in award-bearing qualifications and research, membership of subject associations and attendance at a range of conferences and events. Regular visits from

subject leaders provide mentors with appropriate support and challenge. They also ensure trainees are accurately assessed and receive the feedback they need to develop their subject knowledge and improve their teaching.

21. The thorough, school-based, recruitment and selection process involves a probing discussion about the suitability of applicants' subject knowledge for teaching and a practical presentation to assess their potential to become good or better teachers by the end of their training. This means that the partnership has a good understanding of trainees' starting points and can identify areas for trainees to start to work on before their training commences. The proportion of trainees with either an upper-second or first-class honours degree is increasing.
22. There is clear evidence that the SCITT has a proven track record and good capacity to continue to improve. Strengths that were identified in the last inspection have been sustained. Areas recommended for improvement have been tackled, including improvements to the consistency of mentoring and greater use of data. However, improvement plans lack detail and do not sharply measure the success and impact of the actions taken to improve trainees' outcomes.
23. The initial teacher training criteria are fully met. The partnership meets all relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Guilsborough School
Magdalen College School
Moulton School and Science College
Shenley Brook End School
Spodne School.

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70028
Inspection number	421252
Inspection dates	2–5 December 2013
Lead inspector	Angela Milner
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Secondary QTS
Date of previous inspection	June 2012
Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/xxxxx
Provider address	Sponne School Brackley Road Towcester Northampton NN12 6DJ