

Southfields Academy Teacher Training

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates: 11–14 November 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

- Southfields Academy Teacher Training provides employment-based ITE for graduates through the School Direct salaried route.
- The lead school is Southfields Academy, where the majority of trainees are employed. It is a National Teaching School.
- Currently, there are five other schools in the partnership; four are mainstream secondary schools and one is a residential special school for students aged 10 to 19.
- At the time of the inspection, 17 trainees were following a full-time programme. Training covers the 11–16 age range and is offered in a range of subjects. Subjects currently offered include mathematics, physical education, biology, English, history, modern foreign languages, geography and computer science.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by trainees and four by newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The majority of the observations were in the lead school. One NQT was observed in a local school outside the partnership and five trainees were observed in two partnership schools. Six of the observations were undertaken jointly with mentors.
- Inspectors reviewed training by watching recordings of recent sessions held in the lead school and led by a range of specialists.
- Inspectors also held discussions with: individuals and groups of trainees; former trainees and NQTs working in partnership schools; leaders and managers; professional tutors and mentors; and members of the partnership steering committee.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation including: information related to recruitment and selection, statutory safeguarding and compliance with the initial teacher training criteria; tracking and assessment data; trainees' teaching evidence and assignments; the analysis of outcomes for trainees; evaluations and improvement plans; external moderators' reports; and the partnership website. They also read a large amount of correspondence from headteachers who have employed Southfields' trainees in the past.
- Inspectors also took account of the responses to the trainee online questionnaire, which just over half of the trainees had recently completed.

Inspection Team

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The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- the highly motivated trainees who manage behaviour well and are competent practitioners from the start of their teaching; many former trainees move to posts of responsibility
- the ability of trainees to use assessment well in their teaching and support the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs
- the good opportunities to develop an understanding of and skills in teaching in the sixth form
- the rigorous recruitment and selection procedures that ensure the best possible candidates with appropriate prior experiences are chosen for the course
- the supportive documentation that provides guidance for mentors and trainees, and contributes to the good consistency and coherence of the training
- the strong personal support the course provides through excellent communication and the active promotion of 'buddying' and peer support
- the strong contribution the partnership makes to recruitment in local schools and the development of a community of professionals in the lead school who are dedicated to improving their practice and the outcomes for their students.

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

The partnership should:

- ensure a greater proportion of trainees develop a clear understanding of what good or better teaching looks like in their subject by:
 - sharpening the focus on the subject-specific aspects of teaching in the targets that mentors set for trainees
 - extending the opportunities for trainees from the same or similar subject areas to share ideas for the best practice.
- improve the precision of self-evaluation and improvement planning by:

- ensuring that the system for tracking trainees' progress provides a clear overview of where trainees are in their progress towards their predicted final grades
- increasing the use that leaders make of data on the outcomes for trainees.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. Trainees have a good understanding of the Teachers' Standards and continue to develop and improve in their NQT year. The proportion of trainees demonstrating good or outstanding attainment by the end of the course has dipped in the last three years, but in 2013 no trainees were graded less than good. All groups of trainees achieve well because the training successfully meets their individual needs. They are well supported individually because of the small numbers of trainees and because the design of the training actively promotes good communications and strong links and relationships. 'Buddying' and good peer support are notable features of the provision. Completion rates and employment rates are above average and there are no significant differences between different groups of trainees or in different subjects.
2. Even though the inspection took place at an early stage of their training programme, many trainees displayed some of the strong features of the NQTs that were observed. They understand the need for consistent routines, clear instructions and the importance of communicating high expectations to their students of behaviour and of the quality of their work.
3. Trainees develop a good awareness of how to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs as demonstrated, for example, by their lesson plans which indicate how they will support different groups of students. They make good use of the experiences they have had before starting the course to enable them to become independent and confident in the classroom from an early stage in the training.
4. Trainees are starting to use a range of assessment methods to check how well students are progressing. They are confident using information and communication technology in their lessons and produce good resources.
5. An outstanding example of a trainee pacing a lesson well was seen in mathematics, where a series of well-chosen activities gradually built the

students' understanding of a mathematical concept. However, not all trainees' lessons proceed at the right pace because the activities they have chosen do not always have a clear subject focus.

6. Headteachers who have employed trainees from the partnership are very pleased with the positive impact that former trainees are having on the achievement of students in their schools. Many former trainees move quickly into posts of responsibility.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

7. Trainees and NQTs are very satisfied with their training. The consistency, coherence and quality of all aspects of the training are good. The lead school plays a key role in ensuring all trainees receive good quality training on a wide range of topics in a timely fashion. The training sessions that take place for a whole day every Thursday ensure that strong links between trainees are established and all have equal access to support and guidance from skilled teachers and trainers.
8. Trainers model good teaching and trainees use ideas from the sessions in their own classrooms to good effect. The sessions are recorded and available for trainees to revise or catch up on any they may have missed. A large number of different trainers lead sessions and external providers add variety to the course. Some of the memorable experiences described by NQTs included a literacy session on 'talk for writing' and the sessions on behaviour management. The sessions on bullying include much information and practical advice, but homophobic bullying is less well covered than other forms.
9. The quality of mentoring varies between good and outstanding. Occasionally, the targets mentors set for trainees are repeated several times and some make too little reference to subject-specific aspects of students' learning. The strongest mentors encourage trainees to reflect on their teaching in their weekly mentor meetings and when they are receiving feedback following lesson observations. Trainees have both formal and informal observations and feedback, giving them a useful range of ideas from different teachers. The well-designed records of these help them to track their own progress. Good documentation provides suitable guidance for mentors and contributes to the consistency and coherence of the training.
10. Trainees have a second placement in a school that complements their first placement well. The schools in the partnership are all good or outstanding and offer contrasting experiences. There are good opportunities to work with minority ethnic students and those who speak English as an additional language. Trainees develop a good

understanding of sixth-form provision because there are many opportunities to observe post-16 teaching and to teach sixth-form lessons. Insufficient time is given in a primary school setting for trainees to gain a clear understanding of progression in their subject. However, trainees said that they appreciate the experience and that it raises their expectations of what students in Year 7 can achieve. Where they have no opportunity to observe the teaching of phonics, they have the chance to observe the teaching of reading for slow readers in Key Stage 3.

11. Assignments are well chosen and linked to action research in the classroom. The mentors and then course leaders mark assignments and they provide helpful, detailed and developmental feedback. The quality of reading resources in the handbook varies across subjects, but the pre-course tasks are demanding, setting the tone well for the high expectations of the course.
12. Subject knowledge auditing and the monitoring of trainees' subject knowledge development are good and continue throughout the course, although there are few opportunities for trainees to share ideas with each other about the best practice in subjects.
13. End-of-course assessments are accurate. External assessors carry out the final assessment of a proportion of trainees and the awards panel validates all final grades. The system for tracking trainees' progress has some weaknesses; it does not easily provide a clear overview of where trainees are in their progress towards their predicted final grades.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

14. The leaders of the partnership have the highest expectations and share them effectively with trainers, schools and trainees. The well-established links with schools in the region and with higher education institutions have created a strong and mutually beneficial partnership. High employment rates have been maintained. These strong relationships and the determination of course leaders give the partnership good capacity to improve.
15. The provider's self-evaluation identifies accurately the areas for improvement and plans are drawn up to meet priorities. The strengths of the partnership are used well to determine development opportunities. For example, strengths in the teaching of mathematics have led to a plan to develop training for secondary mathematics specialists. This has had some impact recently, but the partnership does not use data on the outcomes for trainees in sufficient detail to ensure continued improvement. As a consequence, the number of trainees that

gain the highest levels of attainment has not risen. The course leaders and the steering committee of the partnership understand the priorities well, but improvement plans do not have success criteria that can be measured at regular intervals.

16. Very good use is made of trainees' evaluations to develop and improve the quality of training. For example, trainees reported that the opportunities to develop and enhance their subject knowledge were not as good as they could be and so additional support has been provided.
17. Recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous and used to recruit trainees with the right qualifications and suitable prior experience for this employment-based course. Non-negotiable requirements such as relevant teaching or similar experience are applied consistently. Trainees' written skills are tested as well as their ability to plan and teach lessons. The partnership recruits an above-average number of minority ethnic trainees and about the same number of mature trainees and men as the sector average.
18. Mentors are selected very carefully and have to show they have the necessary up-to-date subject knowledge to fulfil the role. The partnership has identified some weaknesses in mentoring and has established new systems this year to improve the monitoring and development of mentors' skills. Visiting professional tutors from the lead school are working with small groups of trainees and they give detailed and helpful feedback to mentors on the quality of their work. However, course leaders do not yet use the information from these visits to strengthen self-evaluation. Subject specialists have insufficient opportunities to meet and develop their subjects, especially where there is only one trainee in a subject.
19. The work of the partnership is making a very positive impact on the professional development of teachers in local schools. The partnership successfully meets local and regional needs and has responded well to recent national initiatives, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of work to prepare for changes to the National Curriculum.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Southfields Academy, Wandsworth
St Cecilia's, Wandsworth Church of England School, Wandsworth
The Charter School, Southwark
Ashcroft Technology Academy, Wandsworth

ITE partnership details

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