

Chiltern Training Group

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

03–06 February 2014

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector 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?	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 secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The Chiltern Training Group is a well-established provider of school-centred initial teacher training, based in Luton. Training consists of a full-time, one-year post-graduate certificate of education (PGCE), leading to the award of qualified teacher status (QTS). The PGCE award is validated by the University of Bedfordshire.
- Current trainees are training in: art and design, design and technology, English, geography, mathematics, modern languages, music, physical education (PE), religious education and science. Training for all these subjects focuses on the 11–16 age range. At the time of the inspection, there were 36 trainees on the core programme, four on the School Direct (funded) programme and four on the School Direct (salaried) programme.
- Central training takes place mainly at Challney High School for Boys, which holds Teaching School status. The partnership comprises 17 secondary schools and one sixth-form college, and works across three local authorities.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed the teaching of three newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and five trainees. They held individual discussions in schools with two NQTs and five trainees, and two group interviews, involving a further six trainees.
- Inspectors held meetings with the partnership's managers, subject coordinators, school-based ITE coordinators and subject mentors.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with senior staff in three schools to discuss their schools' experience with former trainees currently in their NQT year. Inspectors also discussed with senior leaders the progress of former trainees in the schools visited.
- Inspectors scrutinised evidence relating to trainees' progress and how it is monitored, together with a wide range of documentation supplied by the partnership's managers.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to recent NQT surveys and looked at the responses of current trainees to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection Team

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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- managers' clear guidance for mentors and the strong commitment of partner schools that lead to highly coherent training programmes
- rigorous selection procedures that contribute to the partnership's consistently high completion rates
- the regular meetings between partnership managers and school-based trainers that are well attended and help:
 - school-based trainers to understand their role more effectively
 - subject mentors to share good practice with others
 - managers to maintain an excellent overview of trainees' progress
- the high attainment of recent trainees that has helped them to make a strong start to their first year of teaching
- trainees' excellent skills in planning and delivering well-structured lessons
- training in behaviour management that ensures trainees quickly gain a range of strategies and employ them with increasing effect as they complete the training year
- training that enables trainees to feel confident in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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

The partnership should:

- strengthen the quality of written feedback and/or targets by providing a greater focus on subject-specific pedagogy
- sharpen improvement planning to focus more clearly on outcomes for trainees.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are outstanding

1. Trainees' attainment has been rising steadily for the last three years and, in the most recent cohort, all trainees exceeded the minimum standards for QTS. Half of all trainees completing the course were graded outstanding. Those with better prior qualifications tend to do slightly better than other trainees but, otherwise, different groups such as males and females, and different ethnic groups attain equally well. There are no discernible differences between the achievement of those on the core programme and those on either of the School Direct programmes.
2. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate very clearly the strong personal qualities that are needed to be successful in teaching. They set high expectations and demonstrate consistently the positive values that are expected of pupils. They also exhibit outstanding practice in some aspects of teaching: for example, they demonstrate excellent skills in planning and teaching well-structured lessons and prepare resources that often make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
3. NQTs demonstrate professional skills that are ahead of expectations for the early stage of a teaching career. Senior leaders in employing schools gave very positive accounts of NQTs' teaching skills and expressed confidence in their potential as excellent teachers and/or school leaders.
4. Trainees establish good working relationships with pupils and develop their behaviour management strategies very effectively during the training year. They build on their subject knowledge well: they identify areas of relative weakness early in the course and demonstrate improvement through preparing and teaching lessons, attending additional training or, in the case of PE trainees, gaining additional coaching qualifications. While most are aware of the support offered by their subject associations, trainees are not always familiar with recent subject-specific publications.
5. Completion rates are consistently high with no pattern of differences between different groups.
6. Overall employment rates are above average. While numbers in individual subjects are small in any one year, employment rates over time in mathematics and geography compare very well with national data.

The quality of training across the partnership is outstanding

7. The training programme is highly coherent. School-based trainers follow closely the guidelines offered by the partnership's managers by providing a school perspective on the topic covered in the central training. As a result, the school-based training is consistently strong across the partnership and the different elements of the training support each other extremely well. The complementary experience of the second placement helps trainees to broaden their skills by applying them in different contexts.
8. Trainees gain valuable experience in Key Stage 2 that enhances the central training very well, including the understanding of how pupils learn to read. As a result, trainees learn quickly how to support secondary school pupils with reading difficulties. For example, one trainee explained how an understanding of phonics had helped him to provide more effectively for a pupil at the early stages of learning English. Trainees promote pupils' communication skills in their teaching through emphasising key words and in their marking. They understand their responsibility to promote pupils' mathematical skills where possible. For example, a PE trainee included mathematical tasks in a fitness lesson where the focus was on the relationship between energy expenditure and burning off fat.
9. Trainees follow up the excellent central training on behaviour management very effectively, including by researching for an assignment. As a result, they know about and use a developing range of techniques, such as using praise to encourage learners, to maintain a good climate for learning. They know how to ensure that incidents of challenging behaviour do not escalate and how learning and using students' names can reinforce high expectations of work and behaviour. Further training on combating bullying is planned for later in the training year and, at the time of the inspection trainees were still developing their understanding of different types of bullying and how to deal with it. However, NQTs generally have a good understanding of how to prevent and tackle the use of derogatory or prejudiced-based language.
10. Central training, supported by school experience, provides outstanding training in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a result, current and former trainees feel particularly confident in this aspect of their work, and this is confirmed by responses to the NQT survey. Trainees benefit from good training in teaching disabled pupils and those with special educational needs through central training, school-based tasks and completing a written assignment. They are beginning to broaden their experience of adapting their teaching to cater for individual needs. There were too few responses to the trainee online survey to draw any firm conclusions.

11. The quality of mentoring across the partnership is consistently good and often outstanding. Inspectors saw examples of excellent mentoring, such as when giving very skilled feedback on an observed lesson. Trainees benefit from regular meetings with school-based trainers and frequent lesson observations that contribute strongly to trainees' rapid progress. Lesson feedback is appropriate to helping the trainees develop skills and collect evidence of meeting the standards, but some feedback forms do not give sufficient focus to comments or targets that are subject-specific. Targets are reviewed on a weekly basis and provide a useful thread through the school-based training. In one example of excellent practice, the mentor provides not only challenging targets but also details about what the trainee needs to do to achieve the targets.
12. The assessment of trainees is accurate, including at the pass/fail boundary. Trainees collect evidence towards each of the Teachers' Standards and benefit from the fact that mentors monitor the evidence regularly and assess it formally at five different points in the year.
13. Trainees' preparation for the National Curriculum changes due in September 2014 is generally good. All trainees follow up the general professional studies training through discussions in their subject groups. At the time of the inspection, some had enhanced their knowledge further in schools through preparing teaching materials to cover new curriculum areas. Trainees are developing their understanding of how to prepare a scheme of work and a curriculum development project is planned for later in the training year. An NQT who had trained in information and communication technology explained that his training included an extensive focus on the computer science curriculum for 2014 and, as a result, he felt fully prepared for the changes.
14. All trainees have the opportunity to observe, team teach and/or teach their subject at post-16 either at one of their main placement schools, on visits to a school with a sixth form, or on visits to a sixth form college. The subject training includes appropriate discussion of post-16 subject curricula, including vocational options where relevant. The majority of NQTs spoken to felt well prepared to teach at post-16 in their induction year.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding

15. Leaders and managers are very clear about the partnership's role in teacher training and have a track record of pursuing excellence. Long-term strategic planning incorporates a clear vision for the future and articulates the beliefs and values that underpin the partnership.

16. School-based trainers' regular attendance at mentor meetings demonstrates the outstanding engagement of partner schools. School-based mentors say that course documentation, including that presented electronically, is helpful and clear. They report that partnership managers are highly responsive to their comments and requests. Schools across the partnership have significant representation on the management group.
17. The selection process contributes strongly to the positive outcomes for trainees. An initial interview that includes a presentation and an observed discussion on aspects of good teaching is followed up by a second interview that assesses candidates' subject knowledge and teaching skills. While recruitment data over three years show a broadly average proportion of males, trainees from minority ethnic groups, mature trainees and disabled trainees, the proportion of males has dropped considerably in the current year.
18. The quality of monitoring and evaluation is outstanding. Managers respond quickly to trainees' evaluations of their training by making appropriate changes and explaining their actions to the trainees. The regular meetings between mentors and partnership managers are an outstanding feature of the course. They have a positive impact on the quality of training by helping school-based trainers to understand their role more effectively and helping subject mentors to share good practice. They also help managers to maintain an overview of trainees' progress and to respond quickly should any problems arise.
19. Training Support Tutors, who visit each school three times a year, also contribute to the partnership's excellent monitoring and evaluation. They provide school-based trainers with oral feedback on the quality of the training and their subsequent written report is shared with professional tutors. As a result, schools know quickly whether they are providing the high quality of training demanded. ITE coordinators provide strong quality assurance within schools, including through observing jointly with each subject mentor, observing mentor feedback and seeking trainees' views on the quality of the training.
20. External examiners provide useful feedback on the organisation and structure of the programme, documentation, monitoring processes and trainees' views. Improvement planning focuses on appropriate areas and responds to the views of trainees and external examiners. However, written plans do not always focus sharply on outcomes for trainees.
21. The partnership undertakes all necessary checks on potential trainees at the recruitment stage. The content and organisation of the programme comply with all requirements.

22. The partnership demonstrates excellent capacity to improve. Leaders and managers have successfully maintained the outstanding outcomes reported at the time of the last inspection. Course developments, including stronger behaviour training and better cross-phase links, have had a positive impact on trainees' outcomes. More trainees are gaining good or better assessments at the end of their training and this has fed through into strong performance in their NQT year.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Ashcroft High School, Luton
Barnfield West Academy, Luton
Challney High School for Boys, Luton
Denbigh High School, Luton
The Hazeley Academy, Milton Keynes
Icknield High School, Luton
Manshead CofE VA Upper School, Caddington
Putteridge High School, Luton.

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70014
Inspection number	428988
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Lead inspector	Paul Chambers
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Secondary
Date of previous inspection	April 2009
Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70014
Provider address	Challney High School for Boys Stoneygate Road Luton LU4 9TJ