

West Berkshire Training Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates: 10–13 February 2014

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 the primary and secondary programme 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 and secondary routes 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 primary and secondary phase

Information about the primary and secondary partnership

- West Berkshire Training Partnership, previously an employment-based initial teacher training provider, became a school-based initial teacher training (SCITT) provider in September 2013. The partnership offers primary and secondary routes to qualified teacher status (QTS). Each phase offers core and School Direct places with both categories of trainee following the same programme. All trainees, regardless of the type of place they have been offered, are supernumerary in their host schools.
- Partnership schools are located mainly in West Berkshire, with a small number in Oxfordshire, Reading and Bournemouth. At the time of the inspection, placements were offered in 14 primary schools and seven secondary schools.
- Most primary trainees are trained to teach the 5–11 age range, but a small number focus on Early Years and Key Stage 1. There are currently 14 trainees on the primary programme, one on a core place, nine on School Direct places and four on School Direct (salaried) places.
- All secondary trainees are trained to teach the 11–16 age range. There are currently seven trainees on the secondary programme, four on core places and three on School Direct places. The subjects covered by current trainees are history, chemistry, English, geography, mathematics and modern foreign languages.
- Centre-based training sessions for all trainees mainly take place at The Willows Primary School. Trainees gain most of their school-based experience in their host school where they train during the whole of the autumn and summer terms, and part of the spring term. They gain experience in a second placement for part of the spring term.

Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited five schools and observed three trainees and four newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teaching. The observations of trainees were conducted jointly with their mentors. Inspectors then observed mentors giving feedback to their trainees. Meetings were held with 10 other trainees, three other NQTs, seven other mentors, three professional tutors, four assessors and four centre-based trainers. Part of a centre-based training session was observed. Discussions took place with three headteachers involved in the selection process. Meetings took place with the programme leader and with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Strategic Partnership Board.

- Inspectors analysed historic and current data on trainees' outcomes, reviewed a range of documentation, including the partnership's self-evaluation, assessment records and external moderators' reports. Trainees' files were scrutinised and trainees' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire were considered.

Inspection team

Gwen Coates HMI	Lead Inspector
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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the primary and secondary partnership are:

- the way primary trainees quickly become skilled at planning lessons that address the learning needs of pupils of different abilities, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language
- the high regard schools have for both primary and secondary trainees' strong teaching skills, which is reflected in high employment rates
- the school-based training and, in particular, the quality of mentors' support in developing both primary and secondary trainees' teaching skills
- the quality of training in behaviour management that is reflected in both primary and secondary trainees' very good management of behaviour in lessons from an early stage of their training
- the strong partnership of very committed schools
- the rigorous recruitment and selection process that ensures both primary and secondary trainees who join the course are highly reflective professionals who are self-motivating and very committed to becoming good teachers
- the accuracy of assessment and the effectiveness of the systems which assure its quality.

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

The partnership should:

- support both primary and secondary trainees in the completion of their needs analyses and knowledge and skills audits in order to ensure all training plans are as effective a means of developing skills and widening knowledge and understanding as the best examples
- develop the understanding that both primary and secondary trainees have of national priorities and wider developments in education in order to ensure that their teaching is informed by the very best practice
- develop secondary trainees' subject knowledge beyond that which meets the requirements of the current specifications they are teaching
- ensure all aspects of the central professional issues training are relevant to the needs of secondary trainees
- monitor the selection of the second placement to ensure it provides all primary and secondary trainees with a sufficiently contrasting experience to that gained in their host school
- ensure that all secondary trainees gain some experience of sixth-form work and are aware of developments in the 16-19 curriculum
- increase the regularity with which stakeholders' views about the quality of the provision are sought in order to enable prompt, in-year improvements to take place.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

1. Developing and matching learning activities to the needs of individual pupils and promoting their good progress are emerging strengths in primary trainees' teaching and are firmly embedded in the practice of the partnership's primary NQTs. Primary trainees' lesson plans accommodate very well the learning needs of pupils of different abilities, disabled students and those with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. Secondary trainees and NQTs have high expectations of their pupils and plan lessons that motivate and challenge them to make at least good progress.
2. NQTs are able to adapt their lesson plans to respond to the strengths and needs of students during lessons, including disabled students and

those with special educational needs. However, sometimes trainees are too concerned with sticking to their plans rather than using them as a provisional structure that may need to change, for example, to enable all pupils to complete tasks fully, or to respond to what trainees are finding out about pupils' learning as a lesson develops. All trainees learn how to deploy teaching assistants effectively and this is assisting them in meeting the needs of all pupils.

3. While planning for activities that match the individual needs of pupils is good, the effective use of differentiated activities by secondary trainees to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged is still developing. Secondary trainees are developing their use of questioning to probe and challenge students to think hard and provide extended responses.
4. Primary and secondary NQTs make accurate and productive use of assessment, and trainees' skills in this area are developing well. Pupils are encouraged to use self- and peer-assessment regularly in lessons. However, sometimes in the secondary phase, pupils' self-assessment is not moderated sufficiently. For example, when pupils say they understand or show they can perform a particular procedure, their actual understanding of the core concept is not always tested.
5. Primary trainees use their subject expertise to good effect to engage the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. For example, in a literacy lesson, a trainee showed how punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence, often to humorous effect; pupils enjoyed this and experienced the thrill of good literacy teaching. Secondary trainees and NQTs have appropriate levels of subject knowledge, and are well prepared and confident about teaching the specifications and courses in their placement schools. However, their subject knowledge is not being extended beyond these requirements. Both primary and secondary trainees are less aware of national priorities and developments in subject and curriculum areas beyond those directly relevant to their day-to-day teaching.
6. Primary trainees and NQTs are confident in their teaching of reading to early readers and of teaching mathematics to primary pupils of different ages and abilities. Secondary trainees and NQTs have a good understanding of how to develop pupils' literacy skills in the teaching of their subjects. For secondary trainees, their skill in promoting literacy within their subject teaching is stronger than their skill in promoting mathematics.
7. Trainees and NQTs manage behaviour effectively because they have quickly learned the connection between engaging pupils' interest and reducing the causes of disruption. As a result, they use minimal interventions to prevent potential misbehaviour and do this unobtrusively.

8. Trainees are consummate professionals who demonstrate high standards of professional and personal conduct. They contribute very well, academically and pastorally, to the work of their schools, working with parents and carers, running clubs and joining in with the professional development and training opportunities available. Most are mature individuals and many are embarking on a career change. They are highly reflective individuals who are self-motivated to develop and improve their teaching skills.
9. All trainees exceed the minimum levels of skill set by the Teachers' Standards by the end of their training. In recent years, all primary and most secondary trainees have been judged to be teaching consistently well by the end of their training. Completion rates are broadly in line with national averages. Most trainees who withdraw before the end of the course do so because of personal circumstances that were unforeseeable at the time of their selection. However, occasionally, a trainee is not suitable for the teaching profession and, with the mutual agreement of the trainee and partnership leaders, withdraws from the course. Employment rates are high. Many trainees are offered employment in their placement schools because of their strong performance and the important contribution they make during their placements.
10. The relatively small number of trainees enrolled means that statistically-based judgements about outcomes for different groups of trainees cannot be made, but evidence indicates few differences in outcomes for individual trainees.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

11. Trainees, whether on core or School Direct places, experience consistently good training. This is because a key strength of training, for all trainees, is the major contribution made by mentors who spend a lot of time coaching, training, advising, observing and providing formative feedback to trainees. Mentors model good practice in their teaching and in their conduct within and outside the classroom.
12. The training offered by the partnership provides a cohesive programme to ensure trainees develop into good or better teachers. Trainees have many opportunities to practise their skills. The nature of the provision is such as to involve as much 'learning on the job' as possible and much time is spent in planning, teaching and evaluating lessons.
13. Primary NQTs unanimously praised the quality of their school-based training. They also rated highly some of the centre-based training, especially those elements that connected with their own classroom experience. The attention paid to training primary and secondary

trainees about national priorities and developments is limited unless they are part of a partnership school's own priorities. As a result, trainees and NQTs have a relatively limited understanding of coming changes to the National Curriculum and other developments.

14. Centre-based, subject training for secondary trainees takes full account of the needs of trainees and builds on the training provided by subject mentors. Centre- and school-based professional issues training ensures trainees gain a solid foundation in other aspects of secondary education. Most, but not all, centre-based, professional issues training is attended by primary and secondary trainees together. There are many positive aspects to this approach, but there is not always sufficient focus in sessions on the implications for secondary subject teaching. For example, while phonics training is a valuable addition to the secondary central professional issues programme, not all secondary trainees understand its value because trainers fail to relate it sufficiently to the secondary context.
15. A number of assignments are set during the year, but these are not used to develop trainees' awareness of, for example, national priority areas or national developments in education, or as a way of encouraging wider reading on current educational issues, such as those included in Ofsted survey reports.
16. Trainees commented positively on how well their training shows them how to promote good behaviour through their teaching and implement a range of behaviour management strategies in their lessons. Very early in the training, the link is made between engaging pupils with motivating activities and their subsequent behaviour. Trainees talked of the match between tasks, ability and needs as their major tool in managing class behaviour and do not see behaviour management as an isolated set of 'tricks'.
17. Training ensures that primary trainees know about systematic synthetic phonics, communication and language development so that they are able to teach reading in the early years well. Training also ensures that trainees know what teaching strategies they can use to teach mathematics effectively. Primary trainees can teach physical education well, including to pupils with special educational needs. There is a good focus on developing secondary trainees' ability to teach reading, writing, communication and mathematics, regardless of their own specialist subject area.
18. Trainees and mentors plan the second placement in a school with as different a context as is feasible within the locality. However, trainees are not exposed to a particularly wide range of school contexts and the selection of second placements is not rigorously monitored because the criteria for selecting these schools are not sufficiently clear.

19. The two special schools in the partnership enable those trainees interested in gaining a deeper experience of teaching disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to have extended placements in these schools. A positive feature of the course is the expectation that trainees will experience an additional, shorter placement of up to a week, in a primary school for secondary trainees or in a secondary school for primary trainees, to enhance their awareness of progression and transition issues.
20. Some secondary trainees gain valuable experience observing or teaching post-16 groups of students but this is not the case for all secondary trainees. Although there is some focus on 16–19 provision in the centre-based training for secondary trainees, this is not extensive and, as a result, trainees are not aware of the new 16–19 study programme or other changes that are taking place in this phase of education.
21. Personalised training plans are devised by trainees and mentors as a framework for meeting trainees' development needs during the year. Trainees are expected to audit their subject knowledge and their skills in information and communication technology themselves. These audits, together with initial needs analyses, form the basis of the training plan they develop. For some, these plans are working documents that are regularly revised. However, their quality is variable and the monitoring of actions set out to resolve shortfalls in knowledge and skills identified in the plans is inconsistent.
22. In the case of secondary trainees, because the audits on which their training plans are based are produced by the trainees themselves, they are not informed by broad, subject specialist issues and thus are not always sufficiently challenging. In general, secondary trainees' subject knowledge is not developed much beyond that required to teach their current courses. Subject-specific training days are rated highly by NQTs and trainees. However, the focus of these days is principally determined by trainees' self-diagnosed needs rather than a broader approach from a subject leader with a view about the necessary requirements of the secondary subject specialist in any school context.
23. The assessment of trainees is accurate. The current performance of the partnership's NQTs confirms the judgements made of their performance as trainees. Mentor training and quality assurance by assessors and external moderators ensure that the consistency and accuracy of assessment are maintained. Mentors set appropriate targets, linked closely to the Teachers' Standards, and monitor trainees' achievement of these targets. End-of-placement reviews provide a clear narrative for trainees about their strengths and weaknesses – again linked closely to the Teachers' Standards. The fact that from the start there are common criteria for judging the quality of a trainees' teaching, which are the

same as those used to judge a qualified teacher, contributes to the consistency of judgements and provides a clear indication to trainees of the progress they are making.

24. Trainees are prepared well for their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good

25. The provider and the schools involved in the partnership have a clear vision for the SCITT – to provide 'high calibre teachers for West Berkshire schools' – which they pursue determinedly.
26. Monitoring and evaluation overall are good, and this is reflected in the quality of training and school placements, and the accuracy of assessment. Quality assurance in relation to assessment is strong and involves regular, joint lesson observations by mentors, professional tutors and assessors. External moderators provide high-quality reports that are perceptive and suitably critical. However, because their recommendations focus closely on the performance of particular trainees, rather than the quality of provision overall, they are not as strategically useful as they could be in prompting improvement.
27. The evaluation of placements and mentor support is not yet sufficiently regular to ensure that prompt, in-year improvements can routinely take place. There is no evidence of placement schools evaluating their own contributions to the training, the quality of communications with the centre, or the support provided centrally.
28. Although training is effective and is informed by good practice, it does not make sufficient reference to up-to-date research, including Ofsted survey reports, in order to promote high levels of subject and curriculum knowledge and excellence in teaching. As a result, trainees, although developing strong classroom skills and a solid base of subject and curriculum knowledge, are not aware of the latest developments in education, for example, in relation to the new National Curriculum, or of current research in their subject or curriculum areas.
29. Training ensures that mentors are well prepared for their generic roles and responsibilities, and this is reflected in their very good-quality support and the accuracy of their judgements. Assessors receive good training that ensures they are able to assure the quality of placement provision and the accuracy of assessment. Centre-based trainers all have relevant current or recent experience and are up-to-date with curriculum developments nationally.

30. This is a small partnership in which the schools play a very active role in decision making, selection, training and assessment. The strategic partnership board includes headteachers of partnership schools and local authority representatives. It has a clear strategic role to review and develop the partnership, and does this well. The current programme leader of the partnership has fostered very positive relationships with the schools involved.
31. A rigorous recruitment and selection process ensures high-quality trainees are recruited who are self-motivating and well prepared for their training. The selection process is good at evaluating potential trainees' commitment, resilience and emotional intelligence. The involvement of partner school headteachers, senior leaders and heads of subject departments, ensures that the best trainees are recruited to the course and eventually to schools as qualified teachers. All those involved in the selection process see themselves as 'gatekeepers' for the profession, assuring the quality of eventual entrants to the teaching profession by ensuring the quality of trainees.
32. The provider has good capacity to improve further. It has successfully transformed into a SCITT and introduced School Direct as well as core training places. It is confident of its financial stability, is about to expand the senior team with a new appointment and is beginning to increase the number of schools in the partnership. The provider is realistic about its strengths and weaknesses, evaluates its own performance accurately and is clear about its future strategic direction. Although it is a small provider, it is responsive, particularly to local schools and to the local teacher employment situation. Overall, the provider is making good progress in building capacity, improving provision and tightening quality assurance procedures, while at the same time maintaining at least good outcomes for trainees and therefore a strong reputation locally. The partnership complies with all statutory safeguarding and ITE requirements.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Hampstead Norreys CE Primary School, Thatcham
Theale CE Primary School, Reading
The Willows Primary School, Newbury
St Bartholomew's School, Newbury
Prospect School, Reading

ITE partnership details

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Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70183
Provider address	The Willows Primary School Pyle Hill Greenham Newbury RG14 7SJ