

Surrey South Farnham SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates 10–13 March 2014

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

Information about the primary ITE partnership

- The Surrey South Farnham school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnership has developed from Surrey local authority's employment-based route for teacher training which ended in 2012/13. It is based on the South Farnham Teaching School Alliance and an expanding group of primary schools across Surrey and its borders.
- There are currently 28 host partnership schools and seven partner schools offering shorter school placements. South Farnham Primary School is the lead school and Surrey local authority continues to be a key partner in the SCITT. English, mathematics and science training are provided by Roehampton University. On successful completion of the training, trainees gain qualified teacher status (QTS).
- There are currently 60 trainees on School Direct salaried and tuition fee routes.

Information about the ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 10 trainees and five newly qualified teachers (NQT) in a total of seven schools. Inspectors also met with groups of trainees, NQTs and a small number of teachers in their second year of teaching who had been trained by Surrey South Farnham.
- Meetings were held with the senior leaders of the SCITT, support tutors, class mentors, assessors, external trainers, members of the recruitment team, headteachers from partnership schools and the external quality assurance consultant.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents which included:
 - the provider's evaluations of how well it is performing
 - course handbooks
 - achievement, completion and employment data
 - minutes of the strategic board meetings
 - external examiners' reports
 - documents relating to school experience placements.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, Her Majesty's Inspector
Dr John Menendez, Additional inspector
Helen Wiseman, Additional inspector

Lead inspector
Assistant lead inspector
Team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- trainees' outcomes which are consistently good or better with an increasing proportion of trainees attaining the Teachers' Standards at the highest level
- high completion rates with trainees securing teaching posts in local schools and making a positive contribution to employment in the region
- training of the highest quality which enables trainees to put the theory they learn into practice in the classroom
- trainees' immersion in an exceptionally strong learning community where leaders, trainers and trainees share a high level of commitment, enthusiasm and engagement in the partnership
- forward-thinking leaders and skilful practitioners who keep the training at the forefront of national and local initiatives and have a very strong capacity to improve.

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

The partnership should:

- use its highly successful support tutors and trainers to train new partnership members and model best practice as the SCITT continues to expand
- ensure that all trainees gain additional experience in the increasing number of rural and coastal areas involved in the partnership.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are outstanding

1. Over the past three years, the attainment of almost all trainees in relation to the Teachers' Standards has been good or better by the end of their training. In 2012/13, well over half of the trainees were graded outstanding. Detailed assessments of the trainees demonstrate that they are currently teaching in the classroom at a good or better level. There is no significant difference in the outcomes achieved by different groups of trainees.

2. Trainees know how pupils learn and ensure that their classrooms are safe and stimulating. They use a good range of strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and their clear expectations help pupils to develop a positive attitude to their learning. Trainees speak clearly and demonstrate a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They have high expectations of their pupils and ask searching questions to challenge their thinking. By encouraging them to talk to their class partners about the knowledge they have been introduced to in lessons, trainees help the pupils to 'roll ideas around in their head' and work out how learning can be linked to everyday life.
3. Trainees apply their centre-based training very well in the classroom. Many of the trainees were classroom assistants and have already gained confidence in teaching phonics; they have now successfully merged this experience with their centre-based training. Trainees help pupils to develop their writing by modelling best practice and reinforcing key skills. Trainees talk knowledgably about the changes to the curriculum for September 2014 and feel well prepared for them because they are already engaged in discussions about the new arrangements in school.
4. Former trainees' teaching is at least good and is often outstanding. Classrooms are stimulating, with a sensible balance of displays which support learning and celebrate pupils' work. Former trainees are confident presenting their lessons and are skilled at working with teaching assistants. The purpose of each session is clearly explained and interesting ideas are used to keep the pupils actively engaged in their learning. Former trainees are particularly adept at using history topics to interest and stimulate pupils. For example, learning about Victorian diseases in one class promoted pupils' note-taking techniques while in another their diary-writing skills were being developed as they studied the eruption of Vesuvius. Trainees, former trainees and trainers are respectful of professional dress codes.
5. Completion and employment rates over the past three years have been high. Over the past three years, 95 % of trainees have secured teaching posts, and this increased to 100% for the 2012/13 cohort. A small number of unusual and unforeseen circumstances have resulted in an increase in the proportion of trainees withdrawing in 2013/14. However, at just over halfway through the course, nearly all the current trainees have secured a teaching post for September 2014.

The quality of training across the partnership is outstanding

6. When they join, trainees find themselves immersed in an exceptionally strong learning community. School- and centre-based training are closely meshed together, thus ensuring that trainees have a very secure understanding of the link between theory and practice. Trainees and

NQTs reported that the way in which they were able to get straight back into school after a day's training and implement what they had just learnt was a significant strength of the programme. These positive views are reflected in the NQT survey from 2013, the SCITT's own internal exit survey and the trainees' online questionnaires that confirm that the trainees feel well prepared to teach. All the trainees and NQTs spoken to said that they would recommend the course without hesitation.

7. Trainees and NQTs said that they had been well briefed about teaching pupils who have special educational needs. They consider the opportunities that they had to visit specialist schools another asset of the course. The wide range of providers who work within the partnership enables trainees to gain experience in contrasting schools. Experience at a school where over 90% of the pupils speak English as an additional language provides the trainees with a good understanding of how to modify and adapt their teaching to provide the necessary support in class. Other trainees appreciate the opportunity to experience teaching in small village schools. As the partnership expands, it should ensure that all trainees gain additional experience in the increasing proportion of schools in rural and coastal areas. Trainees and NQTs fully understand the importance of 'closing the gap' between those pupils who are most likely to fall behind and those who are not. They know that this is not limited to pupils eligible for free school meals, but also includes those who were born in the summer and those who may be experiencing personal difficulties. Trainees believe that they have a very firm grounding in the management of class behaviour. The central training is considered informative and helpful in this respect and is strengthened by the school-based activities they are required to complete. Nevertheless, trainees feel that it is the regular observation of experienced teachers that teaches them most about behaviour management.
8. High-quality training in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics helps trainees to teach these key skills well. The trainers for English, mathematics and science, and the other National Curriculum subjects, share their extensive experience with the trainees by successfully balancing educational theory with practical teaching advice for the classroom. Well-designed, directed tasks are used most effectively to assess and deepen trainees' subject knowledge. This subject knowledge is then built on in school where trainees benefit from opportunities to observe the best practice in the teaching of phonics and mathematics. Recent educational research and findings from Ofsted reports are given a high priority and this enables the trainees to keep up-to-date with initiatives and key findings. The NQTs and trainees interviewed were confident about teaching phonics and mathematics, and were keen to praise the training they had received from their subject-specialist tutors. In one lesson, a trainee confidently taught the pupils the differences

between perpendicular and parallel lines. By encouraging them to use key mathematical vocabulary and spelling the words correctly, their learning was also linked to other subjects such as the work of the painter Matisse which they were studying in art sessions.

9. Trainees are based at one host school and have a six-week training period in a contrasting school. They also have several short experiences in other primary schools. The quality of training provided by these partnership schools is extremely high. Mentors keep a close check on their trainees by carrying out weekly observations while, in addition, a support mentor provides further training and the opportunity for discussion. Working and learning in schools, trainees also benefit from the extensive range of professional development which is made available to them. The fortnightly, school-based tasks keep the trainees on their toes and ensure that their professional development is continuous and embedded in educational practice. Handbooks outline clearly what is expected on each placement from trainees and mentors. The partnership's intranet is informative and is well used by all those involved in the SCITT.
10. Trainees are very well prepared for the new National Curriculum because they are not only given central training of high quality, but are also involved in planning sessions in their school placements. The lead school is involved at a strategic planning level on the assessment structure for the new curriculum and this enables trainees to have a privileged knowledge of the changes as they unfold. The extensive involvement by the lead school in the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics provides additional challenge both for those trainees who excel in mathematics and for those who need extra support.
11. Observations of trainees and NQTs, discussions and analysis of trainees' files and other records indicate that the partnership's assessments of how well trainees are performing are accurate. The Teachers' Standards are used effectively to indicate how well the trainees are progressing. Very detailed written feedback, following the completion of the well-focused assignments, school-based tasks and observations, is used well to provide the trainees with helpful improvement points to consider. The oral feedback given to trainees following lesson observations is of high quality and there are opportunities for trainees to review their targets and reflect on the progress that they are making.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding

12. The leaders and managers of Surrey South Farnham are in the forefront of initiatives to develop and expand school-based initial teacher training

and are highly effective in adapting to new challenges. All members of the partnership share a vision and commitment. Despite tripling in size over the past three years, leaders and managers remain focused on providing high-quality teachers to meet the recruitment needs of the local area. The SCITT is meeting the national challenge of involving small rural schools in initial teacher training by extending its partnership across Surrey and beyond. It also understands the challenges faced by coastal areas in the South East and, by gaining a foothold in this area, is poised to expand its provision to meet them.

13. Leaders and managers are clear that only good or better trainees should succeed, and this is reflected in the rigorous academic and practical activities they set. They are aware that as the provision expands they will need to use and share the expertise of their existing support tutors and trainers to model best practice and maintain their present high standards.
14. The way in which the partnership checks its effectiveness at all levels is impressive. The strategic board, which consists of representatives from the lead school, the local authority and partnership schools, provides clear direction for the SCITT. Its members consider central government directives, trainees' outcomes and future recruitment plans. Support tutors with extensive experience as class mentors provide a strong level of support and challenge at school level. There are robust systems in place to assess the consistency and success of school placements. A non-negotiable expectation that they should attend four training sessions each year ensures that class mentors are well briefed and kept updated. Rigorous internal quality assurance and external moderation confirm that mentors and trainers are of the highest quality. All relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements and criteria are fully met.
15. Recruitment and selection procedures are very rigorous with careful consideration taken of each candidate's full range of qualifications. Of paramount importance during the selection process is the experience prospective trainees have of working with children, their ability to model accurate speaking and write with coherence and accuracy. Headteachers, support tutors and mentors are actively involved in the recruitment process. The partnership identifies those trainees who have the potential to assume leadership responsibilities early in their teaching career and, as an accredited centre for developing middle and senior leaders, monitors them carefully. The partnership has a recruitment target of 90 trainees for the next academic year. With its planned expansion into rural and coastal fringe areas, leaders are fully aware that they are being faced with a greater challenge to recruit and select effectively, and they are responding to this well. For example, the minimum requirement of school experience on application for September 2014 has been increased from two weeks to one term to

ensure that potential trainees are fully committed and understand the workload in schools.

16. The partnership's plans for improvement are clear and informed by thorough and accurate self-evaluation, constant reviews of NQT surveys, and evaluations from trainees and partnership schools. Close involvement with government initiatives enables leaders to keep abreast of changes and provide training that uses the most up-to-date research. The partnership's strong track record and the clarity of its plans for maintaining and building upon its high-quality leadership team is testimony to its capacity to bring about further improvements. As the lead school in the partnership, South Farnham Primary School has carefully ensured a continuing succession of strong, effective leaders who have sustained capacity to work hard and share their experience within this rapidly growing SCITT and beyond.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Earlwood Infant and Junior School
New Haw Community Junior School
Sandcross Primary School
South Farnham Academy
Sythwood Primary School
West Byfleet Infants School
Wray Common Primary School

ITE partnership details

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