

# The Learning Institute South West

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates 10–13 March 2014

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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 each separate 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*

	Secondary QTS
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	<b>2</b>
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 partnership currently involves 11 secondary schools in the Cornwall, Devon and Plymouth local authority areas, covering a wide geographical footprint over 30 miles in radius. The training is centred at Callington Community College, which is a Teaching School in the heart of rural Cornwall. Training is offered in initial teacher education in either 11–16 or 14–19 age ranges, leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Trainees may also gain the additional Masters-level qualification of Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The awarding body and Higher Education partner is the University of Exeter.
- In the academic year 2013/14, 15 trainees started the 'core' school-centred initial teacher training route (SCITT), and seven were recruited to Schools Direct non-salaried programmes. The specialist subjects being studied this year are mathematics, media studies, physical education, applied business studies, psychology, religious education, art and design, art and textiles, health and social care, modern foreign languages, computer science and chemistry.

### **Information about the secondary ITE inspection**

- Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by trainees, in five schools. These observations were undertaken jointly with mentors, subject lead practitioners or partnership senior tutors. Four schools where newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are employed submitted evaluations of the NQTs' preparedness to teach.
- Inspectors held discussions with individual trainees, mentors, subject lead practitioners, generic tutors, partnership senior tutors and managers, representatives of the strategic partnership board, and partnership headteachers.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence. This included information about recruitment, selection, the qualifications and experience of trainees, trainee files, records of trainees' monitoring and assessment by the partnership, analysis of trainee outcomes and employment success, external examiners' reports, provider improvement plans, surveys of trainees and examples of training materials.

### **Inspection Team**

Brian Cartwright, Her Majesty's Inspector: Lead inspector

Ian Hodgkinson, Her Majesty's Inspector: Assistant lead inspector

## Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

### The key strengths of the secondary partnership

- The improving rate of employment over time. In 2013, all trainees who completed the course gained teaching jobs. Their employers report that the teaching of newly qualified teachers is good.
- The effectiveness of trainees at enhancing the literacy skills of the students that they teach.
- The quality of trainees' lesson planning that uses their good subject knowledge consistently well, and effectively takes account of the different learning needs of their students.
- The extensive involvement of trainees in the wider professional life of their placement schools.
- The accuracy of assessment and feedback by trainers across the partnership that leads to clear developmental targets which promote rapid improvements in the trainees' teaching.
- The flexibility of the partnership in meeting individual trainees' needs, especially very good second placements designed to address each trainee's personal development plan.
- The continuing good quality of training in vocational subjects, maintaining the high reputation the institute enjoys.
- The clarity and foresight of leaders in anticipating local and regional needs, coupled with their leadership of complex partnerships.

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

#### The partnership should:

- reduce the number of trainees who leave the programme prior to completion by
  - analysing the reasons for withdrawals to improve recruitment and selection criteria
  - ensuring the selection process gives applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to manage the demands of a teaching career

- ensure the assessment of teaching quality, by both trainers and trainees themselves, consistently links the impact of teaching activities to the learning and progress of school students
- simplify the course documentation associated with target setting and progress against the teaching standards to minimise bureaucracy
- ensure improvement plans
  - contain performance benchmarks to guide the evaluation of the impact of development plans
  - respond formally to concerns raised by trainees through the regular staff/trainee liaison meetings.

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are good**

1. The large majority of trainees successfully complete their training, with almost all of them exceeding the minimum teaching standards required to obtain QTS. For all trainees, this success represents good progress from their starting points. Employers affirm the high quality of training, given the predominantly good or better quality of teaching from newly qualified teachers from this provider. In 2013, all trainees who completed the course gained QTS, and all obtained teaching posts.
2. Small numbers of trainees mean that the proportion from minority groups varies substantially over time. The provider has a small number of trainees from minority heritage backgrounds year by year, but the profile over time reflects the White British background of most of the local population. Last year, the partnership exceeded the national benchmark for recruiting male trainees. There are no differences in outcomes between different groups over time.
3. The small number of trainees exaggerates the proportionate impact of the one or two who withdraw before the end of the course each year, but over time this has never been higher than average for the sector as a whole. For the majority of examples, unforeseen personal circumstances are the main factor. However, the complex paper-based trainee file system adds considerably to the administrative demands on trainees, and some are still finding this burdensome despite being half way through their training.
4. Trainees are consistently looking for strategies to enhance the literacy skills of their students across all subjects. Good centre-based training sessions, coupled with expert support from partnership mentors, drives

this approach well and includes opportunities to teach students who speak English as an additional language, and students with weak literacy skills.

5. In the lessons taught by trainees, inspectors noted thorough planning that built upon the learning needs of their students. Trainees' good subject knowledge comes to the fore, allowing them to illustrate and explain ideas clearly. In almost every example, trainees engage the attention and respect of students very well. This leads to positive trainee-student relationships that prompt lively dialogue and a brisk pace to lessons.
6. For example, a Year 7 physical education lesson on balance and movement included a clear review of the technical terms involved, such as 'counterbalance'. These keywords were on display in the gym, together with achievement targets that students were expected to refer to when self-assessing their performance. As the lesson unfolded, students took turns to use a delayed video recording system to review their work. The trainee spotted that students were making good progress on their gymnastic routines, from a range of relatively low starting points. Rather than stop the lesson to receive feedback group-by-group, he allowed learning to develop further, so that each student was able to practise and eventually master their routine. This 'live' assessment for learning is a feature that is developed well by mentors.
7. The large majority of trainees are confident in their ability to manage the behaviour of students in their lessons. Most at this stage are already effective at this, with just the odd instance where trainees need to wait long enough for students to respond to their instructions before moving the lesson on. In some lessons, trainees attempted too many different activities, which led to some students not completing and understanding a task before having to move on to the next one.
8. One trainee, early in her second placement, deployed a range of techniques with outstanding effect to keep a class of Year 11 students on task at every moment and to secure their full engagement in learning. She gave awards for homework, and asked award-winners to share their good work as examples to others who needed to catch up. She systematically checked that everyone had successfully completed each activity and insisted that all stages were fully complete. She skilfully distributed and differentiated questions that matched the pupils' abilities to ensure that all students contributed positively to class discussions, and thereby boosted the esteem and motivation of every student.
9. Trainees across the partnership are fully committed to the professional life of a teacher. They are all involved in extra-curricular activities, and join in with trips, visits and after-school clubs. These activities provide

valuable training in risk assessment, and in helping trainees understand the wide range of work done by schools in developing the personal and social skills of their students.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is good**

10. Trainees receive very thorough training in both centre- and school-based professional studies programmes in aspects of behaviour management and in procedures to keep pupils safe. The training programmes give detailed attention to the recognition of different forms of bullying and the countering of discrimination. Trainees are well equipped with strategies to manage students' behaviour, and have a good understanding of their schools' systems of rewards and sanctions.
11. General and professional studies sessions have raised trainees' awareness of the importance of promoting students' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Trainees systematically plan to develop students' literacy skills, for example, through specific use of technical vocabulary, and through good questioning techniques which encourage students to speak confidently and accurately. There is, however, less evidence of explicit planning to promote students' numeracy skills.
12. Training is well structured to develop trainees' subject knowledge and subject pedagogy. Subject specialists, called lead practitioners, play a key role in monitoring trainees' subject knowledge development; they design central subject training sessions which in most cases are well tailored to close gaps in knowledge or understanding of individual trainees, and are well received. Lead practitioners also work with school subject tutors to ensure that placements give trainees opportunities to teach aspects of subjects, courses or phases in which they may be less experienced or confident.
13. Assignments and essays, including masters-level assignments for the PGCE, helpfully enable trainees to apply education research and theory to develop their own practice. However, although trainees have access to the latest research papers including Ofsted reports via Exeter University's e-Library, they are not always directed to them, or to the subject associations where they exist. The partnership's virtual learning environment is poorly developed at present to provide a bespoke source of up-to-date copyright-free materials.
14. Trainees receive thorough training early in the programme in the evolution and structure of the National Curriculum. Individual subjects vary in the extent of work done on the new National Curriculum for

2014; this is well advanced in ICT/computer science and modern foreign languages but less so in science.

15. Most trainees have direct experience of teaching students in post-16 settings. For those that do not, there is an expectation that they will spend at least two days in a post-16 setting, observing (similar to that arranged for primary experience). However, the arrangements for setting up these visits are in the hands of trainees themselves working with lead practitioners, and there is no explicit requirement for them to explore what is new about post-16 education, especially the new arrangements for post-16 study programmes and the implications of the raising of the participation age.
16. Trainees have a strong understanding of the national priority of closing gaps in achievement for poor and disadvantaged children. This has a prominent position in centre-based training and in trainees' work in schools. As a result, trainees are sharply aware of students eligible for pupil premium support and what schools are doing to support them. Placements are used well to offer most trainees well-balanced experiences of working in a range of socio-economic contexts, including inner-city, rural and coastal settings.
17. Through central training, assignment work, and work with specialist staff in schools, trainees develop a good understanding of ways to adapt teaching to meet the disabilities and/or special educational needs of students in their classes. As a result, lesson plans often identify explicitly how materials and approaches are adapted for individuals and groups.
18. Trainees receive good central training on aspects of teaching in culturally diverse settings, including students who speak English as an additional language. While many schools in the partnership are not very ethnically or culturally diverse, trainees are often able to talk in detail about how they have adapted their teaching for individuals. For example, one trainee had noticed that a student who speaks English as an additional language had lower mathematics test scores in solving word problems, and had designed additional support and materials as a consequence.
19. The partnership works hard to design second placements that match the development needs of trainees. These give trainees a balance of experience across socio-economic contexts, phases and subject courses. Placements are generally in settings rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted, and even where not the quality of training is high. School Direct second placements are shorter than those following the core PGCE route; some School Direct trainees wanted longer than the four weeks available.



20. Subject mentoring is of a good quality. Subject mentors are highly supportive and encouraging, and very accurate in their assessments of trainees' progress. Oral feedback following lesson observations is precise, and offers helpful tips and strategies for improving performance and outcomes based on solid experience. Targets for improvement, however, are not always precisely linked to ensuring that students make the best progress. The focus of mentors' observations of the trainee is often on specific aspects of their performance; insufficient emphasis is given by all mentors to the impact that trainees' teaching has on learning for all groups of students.
21. While trainees often praise the work of subject mentors and lead practitioners, professional tutors in schools are not always up-to-date on the processes and procedures of the partnership. Trainees sometimes have to explain these to tutors. In some instances, tutors signed off trainees against the standards, but quality assurance by partnership leaders of the evidence is later deemed not strong enough. Mentors and tutors are briefed about partnership procedures in visits at the start of the academic year, but many do not attend meetings during the course of the year, and rely on electronic communications or visits from course managers. Written communications are helpful – especially the calendar of events. The paperwork demands of the course are very substantial, and involve too many overlapping requirements for recording progress and reflections.

### **The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good**

22. The key characteristic of leadership is the flexibility and vision for the future development of training and school improvement work. This is shared by the Principal of Callington, the leaders of partnership schools, the teaching school director and the ITE programme manager. Initial teacher training is part of the bigger vision to provide high-quality professional teacher training for local people to meet local teaching needs. In doing so, the partnership is seeking to raise the overall academic and professional profile of the local area by recruiting local people. To deepen this impact, the partnership is planning to offer primary teacher training from 2014, building upon the success of its foundation degree programme in education.
23. The 'core' SCITT programme continues to recruit well-qualified graduates to predominantly 14–19 vocationally based courses, retaining this specialism and also retaining a regional reputation for producing good teachers of these subjects. The steadily improving employment success of trainees in recent years, now at 100%, is a key indicator of the capacity of the provider to improve continuously.

24. The Schools Direct programme is intended to offer places that meet predicted teaching needs within the partnership schools. However, not every Schools Direct trainee is expecting to get employment at their main placement school. Encouraging schools to make clear their future recruitment needs is proving to be difficult; nevertheless, some partnership schools are now recruiting to their own Schools Direct places for 2014. The host training school is developing a data profile tool that it plans to share with local authorities, local primary and secondary schools, which is designed to identify teaching strengths and areas for improvement, and contribute to the local intelligence of future demand for new teachers.
25. The recruitment and selection process is rigorous, and involves partnership school tutors should they be available. Applicants are evaluated against a clear set of criteria, with a consistent 'scoring' system used to select, and then make an early prediction of the potential success of each applicant. The partnership recruits in shortage subjects, or uncommon subjects, and experiences some late applications, which is not unusual for these subjects nationally. A majority of applicants have substantial previous work experience. The provider allows some applicants onto the course in the full understanding that the course might prove to be very challenging. Generally this proves a successful strategy due to the very good support for trainees at risk of failure. Nevertheless, some trainees withdraw before completion. Over time, this has led to completion rates on the low side of average. This concern is recognised by the strategic partnership board, and it is reviewing the selection process to minimise future withdrawals.
26. The institute is fully compliant with the requirements for teacher training, including the duties it has to ensure trainees are suitably vetted and cleared before starting the courses. Trainees receive centre-based and school-based safeguarding instruction throughout their training.
27. Trainees complete an exit survey run by the provider. Too few NQTs completed the national NQT survey for results to be fed back to the provider. During this inspection, 17 trainees completed Ofsted's online survey. For the most part, almost all trainees are satisfied with the training they are receiving, unanimously so in regard to developing subject knowledge, managing behaviour, and incorporating literacy and numeracy into their subject teaching. However, a small majority of trainees consider that their views are not being taken into account, despite the excellent informal communications between trainees, mentors and course providers and the formal trainee/staff liaison meetings. The provider's own exit survey records a small minority of former trainees expressing concern at the complexity of the files and

recording system. That view is repeated at the liaison committee and by trainees interviewed by inspectors.

28. The programme manager and her subject lead practitioners monitor, evaluate and, as required, train and support course mentors and generic tutors. Much of this is done on a bespoke basis, in order to accommodate the availability of mentors across the wide geographical area of the partnership. The strategic partnership board receives a self-evaluation report and a partnership development plan. The latter correctly identifies strengths and areas for improvement in general terms but lacks trainees' outcome data. As a result, the strategic board cannot review how well trainees are performing in relation to national and regional benchmarks.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Torpoint Community College  
Callington Community College  
All Saints C of E Academy  
Devonport High School for Boys  
Lipson Community College

## ITE partnership details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	70164
<b>Inspection number</b>	428996
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–13 March 2014
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Brian Cartwright HMI
<b>Type of ITE partnership</b>	SCITT and Schools Direct
<b>Phases provided</b>	Secondary
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 March–3 April 2009
<b>Previous inspection report</b>	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70164">http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70164</a>
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