

# High Force Education SCITT ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 8 June 2015

Stage 2: 30 November 2015

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This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors in accordance with the 'Initial teacher education inspection handbook'. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2015.

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

	<b>Primary QTS</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	1
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	1
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	1
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	1

## The primary phase

### Information about the primary partnership

- The High Force Education ITE partnership provides a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programme for individuals wishing to teach in the primary (5–11) age range. Trainees who successfully complete their training are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS) and gain a postgraduate certificate in primary education (PGCE) from the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.
- The partnership consists of 23 schools located in four local authority areas across the North East, Yorkshire and Humberside region. It has close links with the Durham Teaching Schools Alliance and the Swaledale Alliance, which provide training places across a further 17 schools. Four lead schools within the partnership offer a School Direct (salaried and non-salaried) route into teaching. All trainees receive the same core training and experiences, as one cohort, regardless of their chosen route to gain QTS.
- During Stage 1 of the inspection, there were 19 trainees on the core training route, 18 on the School Direct (non-salaried) training route and three on the School Direct (salaried) training route.
- A new training manager, employed from one of the lead partnership schools, took up post between Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the inspection.

### Information about the primary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited seven schools during Stage 1 of the inspection, observing 13 trainees teach. All observations were conducted jointly with school-based mentors and included an analysis of trainees' evidence towards meeting the Teachers' Standards.
- At Stage 2, inspectors visited seven schools, including three from outside the partnership, to observe nine newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach. They reviewed the quality of work in pupils' books to determine the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress over time.
- Meetings were held with individual trainees and NQTs, the programme director, training managers, members of the executive board, lead mentors, school-based mentors, course tutors and headteachers. Inspectors also took into account responses to Ofsted's online trainee questionnaire completed in June 2015, the partnership's exit survey, the NQT survey and the actions taken by leaders to improve training and outcomes between the two stages of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of evidence, such as course handbooks, development plans and the partnership's self-evaluation. They also reviewed documents to check that the partnership was compliant with statutory requirements relating to primary ITT (QTS) and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Lee Owston HMI                      Lead Inspector  
Jonathan Brown HMI                Assistant Lead Inspector

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

### The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- Leaders' relentless pursuit for excellence continually secures the highest quality of training, enabling them to realise the potential of every trainee. As such, the partnership develops the very best teachers to meet the needs of the immediate locality and beyond.
- Trainees' confidence, resilience and utmost professionalism, together with a tenacious work ethic, gives them the drive and determination to reflect on their own practice and pursue their own ambitions within education. Virtually all NQTs progress into leadership roles quickly, including reinvestment into the partnership as mentors, tutors and managers.
- The strong reputation of the partnership within the region ensures trainees are seen as highly desirable teachers and recruited quickly, typically before the training year has ended; employment rates are consistently high.
- Trainees' well-tuned assessment skills, which take account of the different needs and abilities within the class, allow them to adapt their teaching to offer the right levels of support and challenge to pupils. Trainees are resolutely focused on the progress their pupils make over time and the crucial role teachers play in ensuring every child reaches their full potential.
- High levels of academic, personal and professional guidance ensure trainees feel well-supported. Use of a mental health and wellbeing counsellor is very effective in supporting those with competing personal and family demands to stay on course and complete their training successfully.
- The expertise of course tutors, professional tutors and school-based mentors ensures insightful and developmental feedback to trainees that enables any weaknesses in practice to be addressed rapidly.
- The stringent systems in place for monitoring the partnership's work allow leaders to respond at pace, and with precision, to the emerging areas for improvement identified through their own quality assurance and feedback mechanisms.
- Leaders' rapid and concerted response to the areas for improvement identified at the end of Stage 1 of the inspection, so that changes to established practices are already making a positive difference to the quality of training for the current cohort of trainees.

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

### The partnership should:

- Further refine the mechanisms for liaising with schools outside of the partnership to better capture external views on the quality of training and to support more focused target setting for the NQTs that they employ.

## Inspection judgements

1. High Force Education SCITT is held in high regard. Trainees leaving the programme at the end of their training year are prized by employing headteachers because they are recognised as exceptionally strong teachers. They demonstrate the drive and determination to continually improve and, importantly, influence the wider improvement agenda in the region.
2. Leaders are resolute in their moral purpose: to enhance the educational effectiveness of each school in the area for the benefit of its pupils. For this reason, trainees experience a wide range of schools in the locality – rural and urban, faith and non-faith, mainstream and special – to ensure that they have the opportunity to develop their skills in different contexts. In this way, trainees are well-prepared to teach in any school and are best placed to make important decisions about where they would like to work once qualified.
3. Employment rates are consistently high. Over the last three years, all trainees have secured employment on leaving the course, against a backdrop of increasing trainee numbers each year. In 2014–15, all trainees had secured employment before their training year had ended.
4. Trainees are confident, hard-working individuals who show the grit and determination needed to make a significant difference to the life chances and educational achievement of the pupils in their class. They are acutely aware of the demands of the profession and show great resilience in fulfilling them. This spirited determination and a realistic outlook from the start ensures that the vast majority of NQTs stay in the profession beyond their first few years of teaching, many securing leadership positions. While many former trainees become subject or senior leaders, others feel passionately about giving back to the training programme as course tutors, mentors or training managers.
5. Trainees' resilience, strong work ethic and high levels of reflection support their continual drive to improve. They seek, accept and act upon advice readily so that any weaknesses or gaps in their knowledge are addressed quickly. This combination of attributes, together with a consistently high quality of teaching and the utmost professionalism, makes them highly desirable teachers.

6. At the end of their course, all trainees exceed the minimum expectations of their practice, as set out in the Teachers' Standards, so that they demonstrate an outstanding quality of teaching. Analysis of pupils' progress over time, together with the learning that is demonstrated day-to-day in pupils' books, show that this high quality of teaching leads to pupils making consistently good progress in their learning; many pupils make the rapid and sustained progress needed to catch up quickly with their peers. There is no discernible difference in attainment between trainees on different training routes or those of different genders, ages or ethnicities.
7. Trainees show excellent practice in the majority of the Teachers' Standards. A significant strength in trainees' practice, which serves them well as NQTs, is the range of teaching strategies that they have assimilated. Those observed by inspectors showed that they can employ the best approach to the benefit of their pupils. For example, one trainee deployed a teaching assistant to provide additional teaching input to the most-able pupils. As a result, these pupils did not have to sit through explanations of concepts they had already mastered and this maximised their learning and ensured rapid progress. Behind these teaching decisions lie a depth and strength of subject knowledge. Trainees and NQTs are acutely aware of the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils within their class, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able.
8. Course tutors are experts in their field, many having been accredited as Specialist Leaders in Education (SLE) through their work with the two affiliated Teaching School Alliances. As such, trainees are held to exacting standards of subject knowledge, including a check on how well they articulate their sounds during phonics sessions. Regular audits reveal any gaps in trainees' understanding, which are then quickly addressed through booster sessions.
9. Trainees' behaviour management, which is built upon high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour, was observed to be a real asset in their teaching repertoire. Inspectors observed trainees and NQTs reminding pupils about being polite, taking turns and respecting everyone's views, as well as instilling positive attitudes to learning, such as 'having-a-go' or enjoying a tricky challenge. Trainees' own highly tuned learning behaviours ensure that they are effective role-models for the pupils in their class. Inspectors heard constant reminders to pupils that 'if you work hard, you can achieve your dreams'. This resulted in a harmonious atmosphere where all pupils, regardless of their background or ability, could learn and achieve together.
10. Completion rates are above national benchmarks rather than consistently high. In some years, leaders have acknowledged that withdrawals from the programme have been higher than they would have liked. Forensic analysis of the data has revealed to leaders that mature, female trainees, who start the programme with a young family, are most vulnerable to the pressures and

demands of the course. As a result of this analysis, the innovative use of a mental health and well-being counsellor, alongside the friendly advice and guidance of partnership staff, is now helping to secure leaders' drive for consistently high completion rates.

11. Training provides an excellent balance between professional studies, subject knowledge and practical, school-based experiences. The use of Green Lane Primary School as the SCITT training centre ensures that theory can be applied immediately in the classroom, through team teaching and observation of best practice. This approach crystallises trainees' knowledge and understanding so they can make the swift links between what they have been taught and how this can be adapted to meet the demands of the modern classroom.
12. A broad and varied selection of school placements are used. Trainees gain a rich experience of schools and age-phases in different contexts. Through the wider work of the two Teaching School Alliances, this includes schools that require improvement and those in challenging socio-economic circumstances. Liaison with a new Teaching School Alliance in Bradford is strengthening the training programme even further. Current trainees are already benefiting from teaching higher proportions of minority ethnic pupils and discussing the similarities and differences between monocultural and multicultural communities. Trainees' understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain and, ultimately, how they can teach issues surrounding equality and diversity has been heightened.
13. Training in English, phonics, mathematics and science is meticulously planned and systematically delivered. Trainees have a robust understanding of progression in each subject from the early years through to Key Stage 3. Trainees readily grasp the links between early reading and the development of spelling, including the use of etymology to support pupils' understanding of grammar. They employ a range of strategies, including role-play and debate, to bring texts to life and aid comprehension. In mathematics, trainees frequently plan opportunities for pupils to solve problems and think for themselves. They understand that younger pupils need concrete examples, and that all pupils need constant exposure to mathematical models and images when learning new concepts so there are firm foundations on which to build future learning.
14. Training in physical education is given high priority. It is recognised as an area that has much to offer trainees, not only as a subject but also in the range of cross-cutting issues that can be addressed: undertaking risk assessments; supporting the general health and well-being of pupils; contributing to community sports projects; as well as promoting positive body image and addressing prejudice-based bullying, including homophobia. Many trainees and NQTs contribute fully to the life of their schools through after-school clubs and sports coaching as a result of their exposure to this aspect of practice during their training.

15. Assessment of trainees is rigorous and precise. Professional tutors and school-based mentors set focused targets aimed at improving the quality of trainees' teaching and the progress of their pupils. Trainees make swift progress as a result and, in the words of many employing headteachers, 'hit the ground running' when they become NQTs. While the targets set for trainees' induction year as NQTs are effective, the process is not as strong for those employed in non-partnership schools. Inspectors found that NQTs in these schools did not always have targets that were as well aligned to the needs of their first class or the context of their new school. Course leaders recognise that they do not yet have the same relationship with leaders at non-partnership schools to ensure NQT target setting is as robust as it is with partnership schools.
16. Leaders have worked quickly since the end of Stage 1 of the inspection to refine their approaches to quality assurance. While inspectors found no inconsistencies in assessment, grading or the quality of feedback given to trainees, leaders recognised that they lacked precise information about what prevented all tutors and mentors from securing the very best practice. A schedule of observations is already underway, with clear learning points feeding back into the programme of training for professional tutors and school-based mentors. New systems are ensuring that the quality of training remains high; the partnership is alert and responsive to any suggestion of inconsistency.
17. Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for sustaining the highest quality of training and outcomes. The partnership is ambitious, driven and constantly evolving in order to, as one member of the Executive Board described, 'stay on top of their game'. Areas for development identified at the end of Stage 1 of the inspection were speedily and effectively addressed. These qualities, together with the expertise of those who deliver the day-to-day programme, ensure that leaders have excellent capacity to sustain the very highest levels of provision.
18. Partnership schools are fully involved in helping to analyse available information, plan new developments and steer ambitious next steps. Leaders are highly responsive to feedback from partnership schools, the management group and the analysis of trainee performance information and satisfaction surveys. Mechanisms for non-partnership schools to liaise with leaders are not as well developed. Partnership leaders are aware that they need to refine their systems so that they can learn from the 'fresh eyes' the leaders of non-partnership schools can bring to the quality of training and NQTs' teaching.
19. The process of trainee recruitment and selection is detailed and rigorous. Personal qualities, such as resilience and team work, are all tested alongside potential trainees' passion for teaching and their academic ability. Following further analysis, leaders have introduced a new question to their interviewing process aimed at improving completions by analysing the ways in which individuals cope under pressure. Leaders expect that this will help them to

identify those trainees who may not be able to cope with the demands of the course. It is too soon to judge the impact of this step.

20. The partnership meets its legislative requirements regarding equality and diversity, discrimination and safeguarding. Participants have their qualifications and their suitability to work with children checked and recorded. The partnership fully complies with the statutory criteria for ITT (QTS).

### **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and newly qualified teachers' (NQTs') teaching:

Baldersby St James Primary, Thirsk  
Bedale Church of England Primary, Bedale  
Brompton-on-Swale Church of England Primary, Richmond  
Cockfield Primary, Bishop Auckland  
Crook Primary School, Crook  
Federation of Abbey Schools, Darlington  
Prince Bishops Community Primary, Bishop Auckland  
Richmond Methodist Primary, Richmond  
Sedgefield Hardwick Primary, Sedgefield  
Topcliffe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary, Thirsk



## ITE partnership details

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	Stage 2 30 November 2015
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Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2011
Previous inspection report	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user</a>

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