

# The Pilgrim Partnership ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage one: 29 June 2015, Stage two: 7 December 2015

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This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted 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 on evidence from each phase and separate route 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>Secondary QTS</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	2	2
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	2	2
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	2	2
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	2	2

## Overview of the ITE partnership

The overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership is good in the primary and in the secondary phases.

This is because the trainees achieve well as a result of good quality training and effective leadership and management.

### Key findings

- The partnership recruits trainees who become good, and better, teachers and makes a positive contribution to the quality of teaching in the local area as well as in the wider region.
- Primary and secondary trainees demonstrate high levels of personal and professional conduct. They promote good relationships and manage behaviour very well.

### To improve, the ITE partnership should:

- sharpen the focus of training and monitoring on pupils' learning and achievement, particularly that of more-able pupils
- improve the quality of the targets to support the development of trainees and, in particular, improve the targets used to support trainees' transition into their first year of teaching.

## Information about this ITE partnership

- The Pilgrim Partnership is a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider which was first accredited in 2000. Initially, the provider trained teachers for the early years and Key Stage 1. Over time, the provision has expanded to include training for the full primary age range. In 2013, the partnership incorporated employment-based initial teacher training provided by the East Northamptonshire Initial Training College and now includes initial teacher training for secondary teachers.
- The governance of The Pilgrim Partnership is provided by Sharnbrook Academy Federation.
- The partnership offers one year postgraduate courses leading to qualified teacher status (QTS). In 2014–15, there were 75 primary trainees and 30 secondary trainees. As well as trainees following the provider-led route, the provider also provides School Direct and Assessment Only (AO) routes into teaching. From the current academic

year, these courses will lead to postgraduate certificates in education (PGCE). Accreditation is provided by the University of Hertfordshire.

## The primary phase

### Information about the primary partnership

- The provider works in partnership with around 50 primary, lower and middle schools, which are located mainly in Bedford, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. The partnership works with several teaching school alliances: Peter Pan Teaching School Alliance in Bedford, Pilgrim Learning Teaching School Alliance in north Bedfordshire, Samuel Pepys Alliance, two special schools in Cambridgeshire, The West Hertfordshire Teaching Schools Partnership and, for 2015–16, The Wroxham School.
- The provider-led (SCITT) courses are run in parallel with School Direct training. At stage one of the inspection, there were: 34 trainees following provider-based (SCITT) courses, including seven who were focusing on the 3–7 age group; 21 School Direct trainees following the primary course; 11 School Direct trainees following the Early Years route; and nine School Direct salaried trainees. In addition, seven trainees were following an Assessment Only (AO) route into teaching.

### Information about the primary ITE inspection

- There were three inspectors on the stage one inspection team. They visited nine schools. During these visits, they observed 12 trainees jointly with their mentors, met with other trainees in the schools, scrutinised teaching files and evidence of trainees' achievements against the teachers' standards, and discussed these achievements with their mentors and school leaders.
- During stage two of the inspection, three inspectors visited eight schools and observed nine newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The inspectors also met with a group of eight NQTs and had a telephone discussion with another NQT.
- Inspectors met with leaders, tutors, mentors and partnership school colleagues. They considered a wide range of documentary evidence, including evidence of self-evaluation and improvement planning, course handbooks and employment and completion information.

- They also took account of 47 responses from trainees to Ofsted's online trainee questionnaire, the most recent NQT survey and the partnership's own surveys of the views of trainees.

## **Inspection team**

Sheena MacDonald HMI, Overall lead inspector  
Michelle Winter HMI, Assistant phase lead inspector  
Carole Baker OI, Team inspector stage one  
Chris Moodie HMI, Team inspector stage two

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

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

- The partnership recruits high-quality trainees who become good or better teachers.
- Trainees are responsible and adaptable. They take responsibility for their own development and are highly professional.
- Trainees provide interesting learning opportunities for pupils that promote positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour.
- The training ensures that trainees have good subject knowledge across the primary curriculum, especially in English and early reading.
- School partners make a strong contribution to the training and trainees benefit from a wide range of training opportunities, both centre- and school-based.
- Partnerships and communication with schools are strong and effective. School leaders are loyal to the partnership, and they value and respect the primary leaders and managers.

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

#### **The partnership should:**

- enable all trainees to develop a better understanding of the differing contexts of schools, potential barriers to learning and strategies to overcome these, particularly barriers relating to disadvantaged pupils
- support trainees to focus on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning and, in particular, ensure that there is sufficient challenge for more-able pupils

- make better use of existing systems to ensure that mentors build on centre-based training and to check and improve the quality of mentors' feedback and target setting for trainees, including as they enter their first year of teaching
- improve recruitment rates by developing effective strategies to attract potential trainees.

## **Inspection judgements**

1. The overall effectiveness of the primary ITE partnership is good. The provider recruits, trains and provides a steady stream of good quality teachers who are keenly sought after and highly regarded by their schools. Headteachers and senior leaders are positive about the trainees and the NQTs from the partnership, and comment that they are highly professional, adaptable and good all-round teachers. They are proactive in seeking and acting on advice and are keen to benefit from opportunities to learn from school colleagues.
2. Trainees who complete the course exceed the minimum standards for qualified teacher status. The partnership's evaluation of trainees' teaching is broadly accurate. Outcomes for almost all trainees are at least good, with around half judged to be outstanding by the end of their course. Most trainees who start the course complete their training and take up teaching posts. As a result, completion rates are broadly average and employment rates are just above average.
3. Last year a higher proportion of the school direct trainees than SCITT trainees were judged to be outstanding. It is not yet clear whether this is a trend, as it is the first year that numbers of school direct trainees were high enough to make a meaningful comparison. Nonetheless, leaders are looking carefully at possible reasons for the differences and have already made some changes to the SCITT course.
4. Trainees and NQTs establish clear routines, have high expectations regarding behaviour and promote positive attitudes to learning by providing varied and lively learning experiences. They manage behaviour well and understand the links between behaviour and learning. They plan interesting and imaginative lessons, which build on previous learning. They plan carefully to match activities to pupils' differing abilities. Sometimes, they move too quickly from activity to activity and do not give pupils, particularly the most able, enough opportunities to think hard and learn in depth. This is compounded by mentors, tutors and trainees focusing too much on trainees' performance in teaching with too little analysis of the impact of teaching on the pupils' learning.
5. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate high levels of personal and professional conduct, becoming part of, and contributing to, wider school life. They work

well with other adults to promote learning for pupils, particularly those with additional needs. Trainees have a good understanding of different special needs. This was an aspect which NQTs, in response to the NQT survey, said they were lacking in confidence and so the training last year was enhanced. The provider offered well attended twilight sessions and trainee confidence has increased as a result.

6. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate a good understanding and ability to teach all aspects of English, including early reading and phonics. They are positive about the centre-based training in English and also benefit from opportunities to develop their understanding and skills during school placements. They plan lively, practical mathematics and science lessons, and say that they get good ideas and resources from the popular centre-based training in these subjects.
7. The centre-based training in other subjects is also popular and trainees were particularly positive about the Faith Tour as part of the religious education training. For some, this was their first introduction to the main faiths practised in the local area. Trainees have opportunities to plan and teach all subjects in the primary curriculum, including physical education (PE). Some of the subjects are covered in less depth than others due to restricted opportunities in some schools and timetabling arrangements. For example, the use of sports coaches in some primary schools limits the opportunities for trainees to plan and teach PE.
8. Trainees are positive about the timeliness and the quality of school placements. They have good opportunities to train in different schools and to teach different age groups. The schools provide good training environments where trainees take responsibility for their learning and are able to draw on the wider professional resources in schools. For example, by observing high-quality teaching of different age groups and subjects, and by seeking advice from subject leaders and special educational needs coordinators. However, school training and centre-based training are slightly detached from each other: mentors and trainees do not always make links between, or build on, the training taking place centrally. In all surveys, trainees and NQTs are generally positive about their training experiences and feel well prepared for teaching. Although the provider has mechanisms to gather and to act on trainee feedback, these are not always communicated effectively, so that trainees are uncertain how much their views are valued.
9. Many trainees have very good opportunities to train in urban settings with high levels of deprivation as well as settings with high levels of cultural and linguistic diversity. However, trainees do not always have sufficient opportunity to teach in schools with different socio-economic contexts or with pupils who are learning English, and very few trainees experience schools that are less than good. As a result, too many trainees lack a deep understanding of the importance of the context of the school, for example in the proportion

of disadvantaged pupils and the potential barriers to learning for these pupils. This was raised during stage one of the inspection and the provider has acted swiftly to amend the course during the early part of this year to ensure that these aspects are highlighted and addressed for the current trainees.

10. Trainees are very positive about the support, training and encouragement they receive in school from their mentors, class teachers and professional tutors. Most mentors carry out their responsibilities very well, regularly observing trainees' teaching and meeting every week to discuss progress and next steps. Feedback from lesson observations is regular, detailed and helpful. However, on occasion, feedback and target setting focus too much on one-off lessons and trainees' skills, rather than the impact of their teaching on learning. The records of the weekly meetings show that the quality of target setting also varies. Sometimes targets are more of a 'to do' list rather than sharp developmental targets linked to the teachers' standards.
11. The provider has set up communication systems to support NQTs during their first year of teaching and a conference is planned for later in the year. However, as with the trainee targets, the targets identified at the end of the course are not always sharp enough to set NQTs on a clear path of improvement at the beginning of their career. The information provided for schools and NQTs is not always sufficiently clear about their strengths and weaknesses as teachers.
12. Leaders check that the regular weekly mentor-trainee review meetings are taking place and are alert to any concerns that might be raised. However, in the past, leaders have not looked closely enough at the quality and impact of the mentoring. They are addressing this now very thoroughly, through a variety of activities on progress and target setting for mentors, trainees and professional tutors. The first of the three mentor meetings that take place over the year was used to examine useful targets and produce examples of good practice. The course leader is also working with colleagues in the National Association of School Based Teacher-Trainers to develop good practice.
13. The work on target setting indicates how leaders and managers have, with energy and determination, set about addressing the emerging weaknesses identified at stage one of the inspection. The considerable change experienced by the provider over the previous two years led to a degree of uncertainty and lack of clarity. Leaders have now removed this uncertainty, and they demonstrate a much clearer sense of purpose and direction. The most noticeable improvement from stage one is that roles and responsibilities are now clear.
14. Leaders have improved provision in response to the views of school partners. For example, the timing and focus of the Contextual Based Learning and

second placements have changed in response to school and trainee feedback. The improvement plan is sharper, with measurable criteria to assess the impact on trainees. Leaders are beginning to establish links between the secondary and primary provision; however, these are at an initial stage and it is too early to see the benefits of cross-phase working for trainees.

15. The partnerships and communication with schools are strong and effective. School leaders are involved in leading and shaping the provision. They make valuable contributions to centre- as well as school-based training. School colleagues also take part in recruitment activities and make sure that trainees who come on the course have the qualities and attributes to become good teachers. Nonetheless, the numbers recruited for the current year are well short of the target and leaders recognise that further development is required to ensure that more trainees benefit from this good provision.
16. The partnership complies with the initial teacher training (ITT) criteria and meets all the relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity, and eliminating discrimination.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

St. Andrews C of E VC Lower School, Biggleswade  
Bromham C of E VC Lower School, Bromham, Bedford  
Greenleas School, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard  
Livingstone Primary School, Bedford  
Bovingdon Primary Academy, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead  
Southcott Lower School, Leighton Buzzard  
Castle Lower School, Bedford  
Ursula Taylor Church of England School, Bedford  
Edith Cavell Lower School, Bedford  
Wilshere-Dacre Junior Academy, Hitchin  
Shackleton Primary School, Bedford  
Goldington Academy, Bedford  
Priory Lower School, Bedford  
Shortstown Primary School, Shortstown, Bedford  
Scott Lower School, Bedford  
Brickhill Lower School, Brickhill, Bedford  
Queens Park Academy, Bedford

## The secondary phase

### Information about this secondary ITE partnership

- The Pilgrim ITE Partnership provided training for its first cohort of secondary trainees in September 2013. The partnership incorporates employment-based provision, previously known as The East Northamptonshire Initial Training College. The secondary partnership is based at Lincroft School within the Sharnbrook Academy Federation.
- The partnership aims to address the need for high-quality teachers in Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and the surrounding area. Secondary training (11–16 age range) is provided in English, mathematics, science (chemistry, physics and biology), religious education, history, geography, social sciences, design and technology, computer science, dance, drama, music, modern languages, business studies and physical education.
- The partnership provides school direct (salaried and non-salaried) and secondary training routes leading to qualified teacher status (QTS). Trainees are recruited to a full-time programme lasting one year. In 2014–15, the cohort of 30 trainees was an increase on the 13 trainees in 2013–14. There are currently 38 trainees.

### Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited seven schools at stage one, observing nine trainees teach. They also observed a training session and reviewed other evidence related to the teachers' standards. At stage two, inspectors visited 10 schools, observing nine newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach. Four schools were visited at both stages of the inspection.
- Inspectors held discussions with trainees and NQTs, ITE leaders and managers, headteachers, mentors, subject coordinators and ITT coordinators. Inspectors observed a training session. They took account of 14 responses to Ofsted's trainee online questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including information on recruitment and selection, trainee tracking and assessment reports, records of trainees' teaching and evidence of how well trainees' teaching meets the teachers' standards. Inspectors carried out checks on compliance with statutory requirements, including safeguarding and the initial teacher training criteria. The inspection team also reviewed the partnership's analysis of trainee outcomes, evaluations of training, improvement planning and the partnership's website and took account of the actions taken by leaders and managers between the two stages of the inspection.

## **Inspection team**

Ian Middleton HMI, lead inspector (stages one and two)

Jason Howard HMI, assistant lead inspector (stages one and two)

## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:**

- The recruitment of trainees very well suited to teaching, including many with prior experience of working in educational settings. Completion and employment rates are high.
- The development of trainees' passion for teaching and their wider contribution to school life. The partnership's track record in physical education, dance, drama and modern languages is particularly strong.
- The use of engaging training activities, mirrored in trainees' teaching. This has a particularly positive impact on their behaviour management and support for pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs.
- The support for trainees and quality of feedback provided by mentors, underpinned by effective leadership of training, high-quality guidance for mentors and subject coordination that sets high expectations of all.
- The range of relevant topics and assignments. In addition to breadth within subjects, trainees benefit from opportunities to learn about good practice in subjects across the curriculum offered by the provider.
- The efficient management and effective communication which secure strong commitment from partnership schools, including their direct contribution to the course programme.

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

#### **The partnership should:**

- Support trainees' progression as newly qualified teachers by:
  - setting more precise targets with trainees and checking that these have been adapted to the NQT's school and its context
  - continuing to sharpen the focus of training and monitoring on pupils' learning and achievement, particularly that of the more-able pupils
  - ensuring that all trainees experience a diverse range of schools, learning more about improvement in schools that are not yet good.

- Promote continuing improvement across the partnership by:
  - increasing recruitment and attainment in shortage subjects by building on the great success of other subjects
  - strengthening links between the primary and secondary provision in the context of local transition from three- to two-tier education
  - supporting the development of subject networks, particularly in subjects that recruit very small numbers across a widening area.

## Inspection Judgements

17. The overall effectiveness of the secondary ITE partnership is good. A relevant course programme, aspirational leadership and committed partnership schools combine to provide training which is highly rated by trainees and headteachers.
18. Following their training, all trainees are successful in gaining teaching posts. Their commitment to teaching is reflected in their continuing professional development and willingness to take on additional responsibility. This includes former trainees who contribute to the training and mentoring of new trainees. In one school, a newly qualified drama teacher had delivered whole school training on using information about pupils' progress to plan effectively. In another, a history specialist had helped her colleagues assess according to new A-level criteria. However, not all partnership schools give newly qualified teachers such opportunities. The information non-partnership schools receive on NQTs is not always comprehensive or early enough.
19. Recruitment and selection procedures are effective in ensuring that trainees are well suited to teaching. The partnership successfully recruits many with prior experience of working in educational settings, for example as teaching assistants. These trainees draw on their experience of working with pupils who find learning difficult. Trainees' support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is a strength. The trainees' visit to a special school, supplemented by talks and assignments that consolidate and deepen trainees' understanding, is a particularly effective aspect of the course.
20. Trainee numbers have improved consistently since the secondary provision started, in a context of declining teacher recruitment nationally. Stronger recruitment for 2016 indicates that improved recruitment strategies, including a more engaging and informative website in place at stage two of the inspection, are proving effective. However, targets are not yet achieved and the number of trainees in English, mathematics and science, although rising, remains small.
21. The partnership ensures that all trainees receive good quality training, however large or small their subject group. Subject coordinators, who have contributed to high pupil achievement in their subject, are effective in

ensuring that trainees benefit from consistently strong subject mentoring. In subjects such as physical education and modern languages, subject leaders use their subject knowledge to great effect, making high expectations explicit to trainees and mentors. The aspiration of experienced teachers to lead and coordinate a subject reflects the high level of professional respect for ITE that has grown across partnership schools. Although networking between trainees is a strength, their involvement in regional or national subject networks is inconsistent. A physical education trainee shared the benefits of his frequent contact with subject specialists in non-partnership schools through regional sports events. However, such opportunities are less well developed in other subjects, and not all newly qualified teachers keep in touch with the schools in which they had been trained. Leaders recognise that subject coordinators within the partnership are well informed and well connected, and that they are well placed to help newly qualified teachers avoid possible professional isolation.

22. Trainees rate the centre-based training highly. A wide range of relevant topics are explored, delivered by modelling teaching methods that engage trainees' interest. Trainees' lesson planning typically includes a series of practical activities that structure pupils' learning. Although this approach is effective in driving the pace of learning and in promoting pupils' progress during lessons, there is limited evidence of sustained work in pupils' books, particularly of in-depth work by more-able pupils. Trainees know their pupils well and they use assessment information to plan for different pupils' needs. However, in lessons pupils are sometimes given too much choice when trainees attempt to match pupils to the difficulty of work. As a result, the work undertaken by the most-able pupils is not always challenging enough.
23. By the end of their training, trainees exceed the minimum level of practice as defined by the teachers' standards. Consistent strengths are trainees' subject and curriculum knowledge, their behaviour management, wider professional responsibilities, and their personal and professional conduct. Trainees develop the knowledge and skills to help disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers. Most develop the resilience to succeed in challenging circumstances. One trainee felt that a second placement in a school judged to require improvement had been particularly valuable. He had gained experience of improvement planning and staff training that was swiftly evaluated in the classroom.
24. Trainees and trainers show a good understanding of the teachers' standards. Reference to the teachers' standards is integrated well into taught sessions and progress reviews. Trainees build a wide range of evidence to reach a good or outstanding level of teaching by the end of their training. Trainees all demonstrate excellent practice in some of the standards. However, they do not receive sufficiently precise targets for improvement towards the end of

their training, and not enough newly qualified teachers revisit the teachers' standards to refine those aspects of their teaching that are not as strong.

25. The partnership is compliant with the ITT criteria and meets all the relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity, and eliminating discrimination. Course leaders are aware of the limited diversity of partnership schools, and have suitable plans to widen trainees' experience of working with minority ethnic pupils. Current links with partnership schools in the primary phase that are ethnically diverse are underdeveloped. Trainees and NQTs recognise their responsibilities under the Prevent strategy, promote British values explicitly and understand how to help keep pupils safe from extremism and radicalisation.
26. The placements that trainees experience contribute to their understanding of pupils' progression. Although their teaching is focused on Key Stages 3 and 4, all gain experience of primary schools and sixth forms. Course leaders give considerable attention to variations in subject provision in different partnership schools when placing trainees. For example, they consider departments that have particular strengths or offer different experiences or examinations. The recent involvement of course leaders in subject reviews in partnership schools is helping to build a more comprehensive picture of provision. This is contributing to the partnership's capacity to expand effectively across a wider geographical area while ensuring that the quality remains at least good.
27. Mentors provide trainees with regular, well-structured feedback. This reflects the training provided for mentors, which has been enhanced since stage one of the inspection. Mentors are making sure that the quality of their recorded feedback matches the high quality of their discussions. Mentors and trainees use assessment information analytically when reviewing their impact on pupils' progress over time. However, mentors and trainees do not refer to examples of pupils' work often enough. A highly effective modern languages trainee used displays of pupils' work to make her high expectations of pupils explicit. Her impact as a teacher on students' progress was equally positive.
28. Good communication contributes well to the coherence of the training. Trainees value the accessibility and support of partnership leaders and school-based mentors. The efficient management of the partnership contributes to continuity for trainees between centre- and school-based training and between placements. However, newly qualified teachers are making inconsistent progress because the information provided for schools is not always clear enough to ensure continuity between training and their employment as newly qualified teachers.

29. Accurate self-evaluation provides a secure basis for further improvement. In addition, responses to external scrutiny, including examiners' reports, indicate that the partnership uses feedback effectively. Since stage one of the inspection, the clearer vision, roles and responsibilities across the partnership, supported by better improvement planning, provide a secure foundation for the future. However, strategies are not yet sufficiently advanced to ensure that high-quality provision is sustained in a context of transition from three- to two-tier education locally. Better links between the primary and secondary partnership committees are evident, although their impact on course development is uncertain at this early stage.
30. The secondary strategic board is very clear about individual roles and responsibilities and how these combine to make the partnership's vision a reality. The impact of refining these roles is already evident in improved recruitment. Strong commitment from senior leaders in partnership schools is the norm. They value the contribution made by the partnership to the development of teaching and learning in their schools. Trainees, mentors and school leaders point to the drive and dedication of the secondary course director as pivotal. The partnership's clearer and more distributed roles and responsibilities since stage one of the inspection are commensurate with the future expansion planned by the partnership.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and NQTs' teaching:

Arthur Mellows Village College, Peterborough  
Harrold Priory Middle School, Harrold, Bedfordshire  
Huxlow Science College, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire  
Lincroft School, Oakley, Bedfordshire  
Manor School Sports College, Raunds, Northamptonshire  
Montsaye Academy, Rothwell, Northamptonshire  
Prince William School, Oundle, Northamptonshire  
Sharnbrook Upper School, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire  
Sir Christopher Hatton Academy, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire  
Robert Smythe Academy, Market Harborough, Leicestershire  
The Rushden Academy, Rushden, Northamptonshire  
The Ferrers School, High Ferrers, Northamptonshire  
Walton High School, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire  
Wollaston School, Wollaston, Northamptonshire

## ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70143
Inspection number	10004304
Inspection dates	Stage 1 29 June–1 July 2015
	Stage 2 7–9 December 2015
Lead inspector	Sheena MacDonald HMI
Type of ITE partnership	School Centred Initial Teacher Training
Phases provided	Primary and Secondary
Date of previous inspection	June 2010
Previous inspection report	

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