

Essex and Thames Primary SCITT ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 22 June – 24 June 2015

Stage 2: 30 November – 2 December 2015

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 upon evidence from 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?	2
The outcomes for trainees	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	2

Information about the primary partnership

- The Essex and Thames Primary partnership provides early years and primary (3–11 years) school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) for graduates. Trainees who successfully complete their training are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS) and gain a postgraduate certificate of education from Canterbury Christ Church University. Until very recently, the partnership was known as the Thames Primary Consortium.
- The partnership consists of 127 partnership schools within Essex. From September 2016, the partnership is offering a part-time training programme.
- At stage 1 of the inspection there were 78 trainees. At stage 2, 69 had completed their training to become newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Of the trainees who had not completed, one withdrew and the remaining trainees are completing their training this year.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- At stage 1 inspectors visited eight schools and observed 12 trainees jointly with class or school mentors and met with seven headteachers. At stage 2 they visited eight schools and observed 12 NQTs and met with seven current trainees. They reviewed trainee assessment documentation and targets for induction. Inspectors visited one of the schools at both stages of the inspection.
- Inspectors held discussions with trainees and NQTs, partnership leaders and tutors, headteachers, class mentors and school mentors. Inspectors took account of 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey of trainees and 13 responses to the national survey of NQTs. Inspectors also considered the actions taken by leaders between the two stages of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including checks on compliance with the initial teacher training criteria (QTS) and statutory safeguarding requirements, records of trainees' teaching and evidence of how well trainees' teaching meets the teachers' standards. The inspection team also reviewed the partnership's improvement plan, self-evaluation document, assessment and grading information and website.

Inspection team

Stage 1

Alison Bradley HMI	Lead inspector
Louise Adams HMI	Assistant lead inspector
Robert Lovett	Team inspector

Stage 2

Louise Adams HMI	Lead inspector
Robert Lovett	Assistant lead inspector
Helen Wiseman	Team inspector

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- Leaders' clear vision for excellence and their strong commitment to providing high-quality training and support. They welcome external feedback and take prompt action to improve provision further.
- The strong and mutually supportive relationships with local schools. Leaders seek, and respond positively to, feedback from headteachers in order to further improve training and to ensure that local recruitment needs for skilled, committed and enthusiastic teachers are met.
- The rigorous selection and recruitment processes, and the effective personal and professional support, particularly for those who experience difficulties. These result in the recruitment of good-quality trainees and consistently high retention rates.
- The high-quality training and development of key skills in teaching English and mathematics, managing behaviour and establishing a stimulating and positive learning environment. Training is carefully tailored to meet the needs of all trainees so that they are at least good by the end of their training.
- The way in which the partnership develops enthusiastic, reflective trainees, who respond positively to feedback and seek to become very effective teachers.

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

The partnership should:

- Embed the new trainee assessment systems so that sufficient and accurate account is taken of the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' learning in lessons and over time.
- Ensure that mentors set accurate targets for trainees, which are closely linked to the teachers' standards, at each stage of transition and at the end of the course.
- Embed the new quality assurance processes and systems so that there is consistently high quality in all aspects of the partnership's work, particularly mentoring by class teachers.

Inspection judgements

1. The overall effectiveness of the Essex and Thames Primary SCITT is good. Leaders are ambitious for the partnership and have high expectations of tutors, trainers and trainees. Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. Any identified weaknesses are tackled swiftly and effectively. Leaders welcome

external feedback and respond positively, always seeking ways to become even better. This is reflected in the rapid response and appropriate actions taken since the stage 1 inspection visit.

2. The strategic leadership of the partnership has been strengthened by recent reorganisation. The clearly defined leadership and administrative roles ensure that all aspects of recruitment, selection and training are carried out to a high standard. The responsibility for quality assurance has been incorporated carefully into the new organisation. Leaders have sensibly ensured that the new structure is able to accommodate variations in the number of trainees.
3. Processes for trainee recruitment and selection are rigorous. The partnership involves headteachers from local schools in interview activities. When selecting appropriate candidates, evidence is considered from a wide range of activities. Applicants have opportunities to show their ability to work co-operatively, be professional and communicate effectively, as well as demonstrate their teaching potential. Particular attention is given to identifying trainees who demonstrate resilience and the ability to form positive relationships.
4. The partnership meets the needs of local schools very well. Headteachers and school mentors speak very positively about the quality of trainees and NQTs and about the partnership in general. Headteachers rightly identify the partnership training as a very effective mechanism for producing good teachers who have the potential to be outstanding. The partnership regularly seeks feedback from schools and takes action to improve further. This was demonstrated through the changes made in response to headteachers' feedback about the complexities of managing staffing when trainees were in and out of school for training sessions. As a result, training is now organised to minimise disruption to schools.
5. The partnership ensures that trainees are well prepared for teaching. All trainees who complete the course exceed the minimum standards for qualified teacher status. All teach well and some teach very well. Completion rates are usually very high; numbers were lower in 2015 due to unforeseen individual circumstances.
6. Headteachers confirm that NQTs are well prepared for the role of teacher. Trainees and NQTs demonstrate consistently high levels of personal and professional conduct. They reflect on how well they are doing, receive feedback positively and are keen to develop themselves to become outstanding teachers. Trainees and NQTs understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe.
7. Effective ongoing support is provided through relevant NQT training sessions, which build on previous learning. NQTs appreciate the personal support they are offered through social opportunities organised by the

partnership. This combination of formal and informal contact enables NQTs to continue to develop, as well as providing them with support.

8. Inspectors observed many strengths in trainees' teaching. All lessons included clear, well-established class routines, positive relationships with pupils and the effective use of a range of behaviour management strategies. A distinctive element of the course is the mandatory voice development training, which encourages trainees to control and adapt their voice effectively for different purposes. Inspectors commented particularly on how calm, controlled and positive all trainees and NQTs were when managing potentially challenging pupils or situations.
9. Trainees and NQTs plan lessons well to support learning and to engage pupils' interest. They understand the importance of checking pupils' learning in lessons and use their time effectively to support individuals and small groups to make more progress. Trainees and NQTs check work in books frequently and adhere to their school's marking and feedback policy. At stage 1 trainees did not always make direct links between their teaching and the impact on pupils' progress over time. Since then, this has been a focus of the NQT training and NQTs are now relating teaching and learning more closely. The very recent changes to trainees' assessment are helping current trainees to make these links more readily. The use of 'evidence bundles', which bring together evidence of pupils' progress over time, helps trainees to recognise the positive effects of their teaching on pupils' progress over a sequence of lessons.
10. Trainees speak very positively about the nurturing personal and professional support they receive from the partnership. Tutors carefully tailor the course and their input to meet the needs of individuals. Any trainees with gaps in their knowledge and understanding receive additional learning opportunities to get up-to-speed. An example of this was a trainee who had no previous experience of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The tutor organised specific school-based tasks to build her confidence and expertise. Similarly, trainees who experience personal difficulties are supported very well. Several trainees commented on the way in which tutors 'go the extra mile'. School mentors liaise closely with personal tutors and trainees so that the support is co-ordinated well.
11. Trainees are assessed effectively against the teachers' standards although occasional inconsistencies occur in grading, reflecting variations in class mentors' expertise and expectations. New assessment processes have recently been introduced so there is less ambiguity about what is required for each grade. It is too soon to be clear whether they are effective. Where class mentoring is weaker, feedback and targets lack precision so that trainees are not always clear enough about what and how they need to improve. Formal quality assurance processes have been introduced to improve consistency, precision and rigour, so that all class mentors

provide the best possible support and development for trainees. However, it is too early to see improvements in the quality of support these mentors provide.

12. All trainees teach across more than one key stage. Due to the demographic of the area, it is not always possible for trainees to teach in different types of schools. In order to meet their individual needs, trainees are consulted about what further experiences they would appreciate, and this is taken carefully into account when organising placements. The partnership offers opportunities for trainees to experience a range of school contexts through one-day visits, and is exploring ways of developing this further.
13. Trainees and NQTs rightly express confidence in the training they receive to help them meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Good examples of this are the information and support provided for teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language and the assessment tasks related to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (DSEN). As a result, NQTs say they feel very confident to adapt their teaching to meet the learning needs of different pupils.
14. The partnership provides very effective training to enable trainees to teach reading, writing, phonics and mathematics through regular lectures and relevant research-based assignments. Other subjects, including art, music and physical education, are developed through 'hands on' sessions which demonstrate a range of strategies. Consequently, trainees and NQTs display very good subject knowledge in all subjects.
15. The partnership makes good use of the opportunities provided by partnership schools and Canterbury Christ Church University to ensure that trainees benefit from a combination of personal research, practical experiences and theory. Research is actively encouraged and modelled well by leaders and lecturers.
16. Many trainees undertake additional, optional 'enrichment' training in areas such as leadership and special educational needs. As a result, they feel more confident. The leadership course is now also offered to NQTs to develop their skills to lead subjects in the future.
17. Appropriate arrangements are in place to check trainees' qualifications and their suitability to work with children, in accordance with the most recent government requirements. The partnership complies with the criteria for initial teacher training.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

Abacus Primary School, Wickford
Briscoe Primary School & Nursery Academy, Basildon
Darlinghurst School, Leigh-on-Sea
Fairways Primary School, Leigh-on-Sea
Graham James Primary Academy, Stanford-le-Hope
Hadleigh Infant and Nursery School, Benfleet
La Salette Catholic Primary School, Rainham
Long Ridings Primary School, Brentwood
Orsett Church of England Primary School, Grays
Pitsea Junior School, Basildon
Powers Hall Academy, Witham
Runwell Community Primary School, Wickford
Temple Sutton Primary School, Southend-on-Sea
The Phoenix Primary School, Basildon
West Leigh Junior School, Leigh-on-Sea

ITE partnership details

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Lead inspector	Alison Bradley HMI – Stage 1 Louise Adams HMI – Stage 2
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	27 June – 1 July 2011
Previous inspection report	https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user
Provider address	Runwell Primary School Canewdon Gardens Wickford Essex SS11 7BJ