

The Basingstoke Alliance SCITT ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 23 May 2016

Stage 2: 17 October 2016

This inspection was carried out by 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 on evidence from each 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

	Secondary 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

The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- This is the first inspection of the Basingstoke Alliance school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnership, which was established in 2014 in order to support recruitment of secondary teachers in the Basingstoke area. Trainees follow core, School Direct or School Direct (salaried) routes and following successful completion, achieve qualified teacher status (QTS).
- The partnership offers a programme of central training and school-based training, placements and mentoring. Central training previously took place at the lead school, Dove House School Academy, the headteacher of which is the accounting officer for the partnership. Recently, central training has moved to a larger venue at the Everest Community Academy in Basingstoke, which is one of the partner schools.
- Trainees complete their training at placement schools in the Basingstoke area and in Winchester, Andover and Salisbury. There are currently 12 secondary schools in the partnership.
- Training is provided in English, mathematics, physical education, design and technology, geography, science, history, computer science and modern languages.
- The partnership offers enhanced training in special educational needs and/or disabilities, based at Dove House School Academy, which is a special school catering for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties.
- In July 2016, 19 trainees completed their training, including 13 on the core route and six trainees on School Direct (salaried).

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited three schools at stage 1, observing seven trainees. They also met with trainees to review their evidence in relation to the teachers' standards. At stage 2, inspectors visited three schools and observed seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs).
- Inspectors held meetings with individual trainees and NQTs, the programme manager, accounting officer and other key partnership staff. Inspectors also met with headteachers, school leaders, SCITT coordinators in the partnership schools, subject board tutors, induction leaders and mentors. A training session was observed at stage 2. Inspectors took into account the nine responses to the trainee online questionnaire, completed in May 2016. Inspectors also evaluated the actions taken by the leaders of the partnership to improve outcomes, training, and leadership and management between the two stages of the inspection.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentary evidence, including information on recruitment and selection, statutory safeguarding and compliance with the initial teacher training criteria, evidence of assessment and feedback, trainees' teaching evidence, reflections, assignments and targets in the career entry development profile (CEDP). The inspection team also reviewed the partnership's self-evaluation, improvement plans, training materials and analysis of outcomes for trainees.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, Her Majesty's Inspector, lead inspector (stages 1 and 2)

Lisa Moore, Her Majesty's Inspector, , assistant lead inspector (stage 1)

Simon Hughes, Her Majesty's Inspector, assistant lead inspector (stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- The high completion and employment rates for trainees on all routes, since the partnership was established.
- The high proportion of trainees whose teaching is good or outstanding.
- Well-planned and coherent programmes of training provided centrally and within the partnership schools, which prepare trainees well to meet local recruitment needs.
- Effective training which prepares trainees well for managing pupils' behaviour and catering for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Ambitious and energetic leadership from the programme manager, who has fostered close relationships with the partnership schools and created efficient systems to quality assure training and mentoring.

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

The partnership should:

- Ensure that training and mentoring fully prepare trainees to provide more stretch and challenge for the most able pupils in their classes.
- Build on the recent improvements in mentoring in order to achieve even greater consistency.
- Broaden trainees' experience of 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Deepen trainees' understanding of up-to-date and relevant education theory and research.

Inspection judgements

1. The overall effectiveness of the Basingstoke Alliance SCITT is good. Leaders have made sure that the programme is fully compliant with all the statutory requirements for ITE. Trainees are recruited and selected with meticulous attention to safeguarding, equality and diversity, in addition to ensuring that only those applicants with the right attributes and aptitude embark on the course.
2. The Basingstoke Alliance has quickly developed a strong reputation among local schools and further afield. Local recruitment needs are being met through the programme and trainees are making a positive contribution to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment in the partnership schools.
3. Leaders are rightly proud that all trainees have obtained employment since setting up the partnership nearly three years ago. Completion rates are also high, with only a very few trainees leaving the programme early because of complex personal or health reasons.
4. A comprehensive training programme, careful quality assurance and increasingly effective mentoring ensure that trainees complete the course as accomplished NQTs, nearly all of whom are at least good, with an increasing proportion who are outstanding.
5. There are very few variations in trainees' attainment by subject, gender or training route because the partnership acts promptly to provide additional support and challenge where needed.
6. Trainees are well prepared to teach. Their particular strengths include:
 - planning to take into account the diverse needs and abilities of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and also those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - skilled use of well-designed and motivating resources to capture pupils' interest, including helpful materials to support pupils' progress in mathematics
 - the ability to thread an emphasis on improving pupils' communication, reading and writing through their planning and teaching
 - confident day-to-day management of the behaviour of a range of pupils.

7. In response to one of the recommendations made at stage 1, trainees' and NQTs' planning and reflections are much more focused on the impact they want their teaching to have on pupils' progress in individual lessons and over time. For example, through a scrutiny of work presented to an inspector, one NQT was able to pinpoint exactly who had made the most progress in a practical textiles session and how this fitted in with the sequence of lessons. The teacher had a keen understanding of the exact impact of her individual lesson, in addition to where it linked to the long-term picture of pupils' progress.
8. A weakness identified at stage 1 was that trainees were not planning sufficient stretch and challenge for the most able pupils in their classes. Partnership and school leaders can now point to what NQTs do to lead enrichment activities for those pupils who may have particular gifts and talents. However, the training programme does not focus precisely enough on promoting good progress for the most able pupils in day-to-day teaching.
9. School leaders are unanimous in confirming that those NQTs who follow the Basingstoke programme are hardy and resilient in their initial weeks as qualified teachers. Trainees are well prepared for the workload and rigour of daily school life. Although all the NQTs have been struck by the amount of preparation and responsibility they have as new teachers, they are not surprised and are coping well. They are able to draw on their reserves of experience and support from the training programme.
10. Former trainees contribute fully to school life. Many NQTs are tutors and run after-school clubs. They conduct themselves professionally and are conscious that they are role models for pupils and their colleagues. Trainees are well prepared to carry out their duties to keep pupils safe. They have a thorough grounding in all aspects of child protection and a good understanding of the 'Prevent' duty. Increasingly, trainees are able to reflect more searchingly on the values and moral purpose they must uphold as members of the teaching profession.
11. Following the recommendations made at stage 1, the partnership took effective action to shape the central training programme in a logical and coherent way, linked to school-based training and subject input. School leaders can draw on what trainees have learned and practised in the central training programme and build on it in their own training and professional development sessions. Links between school-based training and the central materials then filter through to mentoring. Consequently, trainees' knowledge and skills are reinforced and quickly become habitual.

12. An example of the increased rigour of the programme is the introduction of the 'viva', which tests out trainees' verbal reflections on their own practice. The viva challenges trainees to explore the impact of their work on pupils' progress and their contribution to their placement schools. In addition, trainees are expected to complete tough written assignments, which are not only based on action research in their own classroom, but also draw on proven education theory. However, the inspection team agreed with partnership leaders that trainees' background reading is not as up to date as it could be.
13. Trainees particularly value the series of training sessions about special educational needs and/or disabilities, and also behaviour management. They put their training to notably good use in their planning and when managing pupils' behaviour. Most trainees and NQTs demonstrate a sound understanding of how to cater for pupils who have different special educational needs and/or disabilities. Trainees also benefit from subject-based training which is expert and responsive to any gaps in their own knowledge.
14. Since stage 1 of the inspection, school-based mentoring has improved. School leaders are committed to raising and maintaining the profile of mentoring in their schools because they have identified that it adds value to the school's performance. Mentoring supports and challenges trainees and NQTs, but also enhances the mentor's own teaching skills, attributes and performance. As one mentor commented, 'Mentoring brings you back to when you started.'
15. The partnership has introduced training for mentors, quality assures their work, and provides additional input and support where needed. Nevertheless, the partnership has rightly identified that there could be even greater consistency to ensure that all mentoring is of high quality. The programme manager has sensibly planned to devise a set of guiding principles for mentors in order to encourage trainees' deeper reflections. The partnership is shrewdly exploring possible routes for accreditation in order to raise the status of the mentor role still further.
16. Trainees' second placement schools are chosen carefully to provide a contrasting experience. At stage 1, trainees told inspectors that their second placement school enabled them to build up their confidence and become more autonomous. Trainees also benefit from a rewarding primary school-based experience.

17. Trainees' experience of the 16 to 19 study programmes has been less wide-ranging. Following the recommendations from stage 1 of the inspection process, the programme manager has successfully brokered a more intensive experience for trainees at the local sixth-form college, which will involve more hands-on teaching and assessment. The programme manager has also sensibly sought out an additional partnership with a local further education college, to further enhance trainees' understanding of pupils' next steps as they move on to the 16 to 19 phase of their education.
18. The current programme manager has been in post since September 2016, although the partnership wisely organised a sustained handover period during the summer term when she worked alongside the previous post-holder. Very quickly, the new programme manager has systematically overhauled procedures for quality assuring training, mentoring and assessment of trainees. She also formulated a longer-term plan for the partnership, which is ambitious and builds on its good reputation. Typical of her energetic and passionate approach is to look beyond the needs of the immediate area and bring a more demanding grounding in education theory to raise standards of the trainees further.
19. Programme leaders have a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership and constantly seek to improve their work. Assessments of trainees are comprehensive and reliable, and determine precise targets for starting the NQT year. Gradings for trainees are accurately validated by an external moderator, who also provides useful peer-to-peer support for the programme manager's self-evaluation.
20. The partnership has developed a clear and compelling vision for its role as a key driver of school improvement in Basingstoke. The programme manager has successfully cultivated strong relationships with schools and is both strategic and responsive to individual trainees' needs. School leaders rightly describe her as 'dynamic and approachable'.
21. Programme leaders have wisely sought out outstanding schools to be part of the partnership. Leaders also ensure that the programme makes a strong contribution to schools that are less than good, including one school recently judged to require special measures. Programme leaders took prompt action to ensure that trainees' experience was not compromised by being placed in a school in challenging circumstances, and additional support was provided for salaried trainees.

22. Leaders at all levels of the partnership work together efficiently, including the highly effective administrative team members who take a key lead in recruitment and selection. The headteacher of the school in which the partnership is based is also the accounting officer for the partnership. He provides crucial leadership support and critical insight for the programme manager.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School, Basingstoke

Dove House School Academy, Basingstoke

Kings' School, Winchester

The Costello School, Basingstoke

The Vyne School, Basingstoke

ITE partnership details

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	Stage 2 17–19 October 2016
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Previous inspection report	Not applicable
Provider address	Dove House School Academy Sutton Rd, Basingstoke RG21 5SU

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