

# Three Counties Alliance SCITT ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 20 June 2016 Stage 2: 28 November 2016

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This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted inspector 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 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?	2
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	2
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	2
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	2

## The secondary phase

### Information about the secondary partnership

- Three Counties Alliance school-centred consortium for initial teacher training (SCITT) ITE partnership provides secondary teacher training for graduates. Trainees are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS) when they complete their training successfully and gain a postgraduate certificate in education from Sheffield Hallam University.
- The SCITT has provided ITE since September 2014 and this was its first inspection as an accredited provider of QTS.
- The partnership consists of 18 schools in eight local authorities. The partnership is quickly developing strong links with Sheffield Hallam University, its new higher education partner.
- During stage one of the inspection, 40 trainees were training with the SCITT. They specialised in a range of subjects, including some shortage subjects: English, mathematics, art and design, design technology, modern foreign languages, business studies, psychology, history, music and physical education. In its first year of operation, the SCITT provided training for age ranges 11–16 and 14–19 in two subjects: business studies and psychology. Training in these subjects is no longer offered.
- During stage two of the inspection, 18 trainees were being trained. Currently, the SCITT provides training for the 11–16 age range only.
- The partnership is offering training in the primary school phase in 2017–18.
- During its second year of operation the SCITT appointed a new executive lead, who has been in post since January 2016.

### Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- At stage 1, inspectors visited five partnership schools, observing nine trainees teach, and undertook reviews of trainees' files of evidence against the teachers' standards. Inspectors held discussions with individual trainees, professional and subject mentors, headteachers, SCITT leaders and managers, including the principal of the lead school and trainers and mentors who contribute to the training and assessment processes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the SCITT's self-evaluation and planning documents, recruitment and selection procedures, assessment and progress tracking information, together with external examiners' reports and the content of the training programme. They checked that the partnership complies with statutory requirements,

including those relating to safeguarding and the National College for Teaching and Leadership's (NCTL) ITT criteria.

- Inspectors took into account the responses to the trainee online questionnaire and trainees' evaluations of training sessions delivered throughout the year.
- At stage 2, inspectors visited four schools and observed seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach. They reviewed the files of a further NQT and a small sample of current trainees' files. They held discussions with NQTs, headteachers, induction mentors, leaders and managers of the SCITT and the newly formed SCITT governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed current documentation and records, including the current self-evaluation document and improvement plan, end-of-training information, employment information and career entry profiles. They also reviewed the actions taken by leaders and managers to improve training and outcomes between the two stages of the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Campbell OI (lead inspector)

Bernard Campbell HMI (assistant lead inspector)

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

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

- leaders' and governors' well-articulated ambition to provide high-quality training to contribute to the supply of good teachers in secondary schools
- consistently high employment rates – the vast majority of trainees find employment in the region and half of trainees in 2016 found employment in partnership schools
- high completion rates which reflect the overall effectiveness of the training programme
- the appointment of the current executive lead, whose direction has led to improvement in trainees' attainment against the teachers' standards. The proportion of trainees awarded good and outstanding for individual standards increased in 2016.
- clear documentation and sharp quality assurance which provide a coherent training pathway that supports mentors and trainees alike
- trainees who are reflective and respond positively to advice
- much of trainees' teaching is good and some is outstanding. Overall, trainees and NQTs are well prepared to teach and have particular strengths in managing behaviour and forming positive relationships with pupils.

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

### The partnership should:

- strengthen trainees' ability to use information about pupils' progress and pupils' responses during lessons, to ensure that pupils are challenged and supported at the right level to maximise their progress
- eliminate the remaining variation in the quality of mentoring
- improve leadership and management further by:
  - sharpening evaluation and setting short, sharp interim steps for success for improvement priorities
  - evaluating how well NQTs are prepared to teach in employing schools as part of the partnership's work to develop and broaden continuing professional development.

### Inspection judgements

1. The overall effectiveness of the Three Counties Alliance SCITT secondary partnership is good. Leaders and managers are ambitious and strive to provide high-quality training. Personalised training meets the needs of trainees and prepares them well to teach. The partnership is proud of its track record of high rates which contributes effectively to meeting local and national recruitment needs for the supply of good secondary teachers.
2. The lower than national average completion figures in 2016 contrast with the higher than average figure in 2015. Well-documented accounts reveal that an unusually high proportion of trainees have encountered significant personal or medical difficulties. Despite the consistent and uniformly positive views of trainees on the high quality of pastoral support, the withdrawal of six out of 40 trainees from the training could not be averted. Leaders have demonstrated a swift response and, for trainees who are facing difficulties, have organised additional support through a new 'buddy' system provided by NQTs. This, alongside the support provided by programme leaders and the flexible response of partner schools, is having a positive impact with only one withdrawal to date from the current cohort of trainees.
3. The proportion of trainees having completed the training programme successfully who find employment is above national averages. High employment rates have been sustained across both years of the SCITT's operation. Almost all NQTs find employment in regional schools and, in 2016, about half found employment in partnership schools. A small number of NQTs have been appointed to teaching posts outside of their QTS specialism,

reflecting the increasing confidence that partnership schools have in the quality of provision. Partnership schools value highly the opportunity to shape trainees' development during placements, and this contributes to their readiness for employment.

4. In its second year of operation, 100% of trainees completing the programme exceeded the minimum standard required by the teachers' standards. This proportion increased from 96% in 2015. There is no significant variation in the attainment of different groups of trainees. Inspection evidence from stage one of the inspection indicated that trainees were less secure in their use of assessment and in setting goals that stretch and challenge pupils. This was reflected in the cohort's attainment profile in 2015–16 against the relevant teachers' standards.
5. Overall the quality of training is good. Trainees consistently view the quality of training very positively, particularly that provided centrally by the SCITT. They are increasingly able to reflect on their training and practice. As a result, they sharpen planning for lessons and their classroom practice to meet pupils' needs more closely. To strengthen this aspect of training, leaders made changes to the programme in autumn 2016 to provide specific training to enable trainees to develop reflective practice. The impact of training is strengthening. Focused work since the current executive lead took up post at the beginning of the spring term 2016 has led to an increase in the proportion of trainees whose attainment is judged good or outstanding overall. With the exception of two standards that focus on assessment and setting challenging targets, approximately half of trainees were awarded outstanding and the remainder awarded good in other standards. The proportion of trainees awarded good in each area of the teachers' standards is reflected in the quality of teaching seen by trainees and NQTs.
6. Across both stages of the inspection, teaching observed by inspectors and the evidence of progress in pupils' work shows that, overall, much of the trainees' and NQTs' teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. In a small number of cases, teaching is not securely good. Inspectors agree that the partnership's assessments of trainees are accurate.
7. A small minority of trainees and NQTs do not use all the assessment information they have available to plan learning to ensure that it challenges pupils' learning at the right level. During lessons, pupils' responses to tasks and answers to questions are not used well enough so that pupils of all abilities are set challenging work that maximises their learning. As a consequence, this limits the progress that some pupils make, especially the most able. When trainees and NQTs make the best use of their information about pupils' progress, they plan and tailor their expectations of pupils, whatever their ability, with precision and pupils' progress is faster.

8. Trainees show particular strengths in their ability to establish positive working relationships with their pupils and colleagues in school. Training is very largely effective in equipping trainees with the skills they need to use a range of techniques to manage behaviour well. Centre-led training promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables trainees to make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Trainees have a firm understanding of fundamental British values. They model these in their conduct and demeanour, thus supporting pupils to develop a better understanding of the diverse society in which they live. Trainees and NQTs quickly adopt school behaviour management practices, establishing their lesson routines and day-to-day expectations of pupils' conduct. However, a small number of trainees do not make the best of these positive relationships to challenge pupils' learning and accelerate their progress as well as possible.
9. Trainees' subject and curriculum knowledge relevant to the secondary phase is good overall. Subject training is well supported by subject specialists drawn from partnership schools. All trainees have planned experiences in a primary school and in post-16 provision. This helps them gain insight into learning in other phases and improves their knowledge of transition between phases. Subject training has been enhanced since stage 1 of the inspection by requiring placement schools to provide early opportunities for trainees to teach in a second subject alongside their specialism during their first placement. This reflects the quick response of leaders to inspectors' emerging findings and provides more effective support for those trainees who seek employment in more than one subject on completion of their training. It is too soon to see the impact of this change in training on trainees' outcomes. NQTs who are teaching in non-specialist subjects are being supported by their employing schools and have opportunities to attend subject-specific training days led by the SCITT. Observation of a small number of such NQTs revealed sufficiently good subject knowledge for the age of pupils they are teaching.
10. During stage 1, a number of trainees reported, and the executive lead confirmed, that the quality of academic support provided for the PGCE element of their training had not been strong enough. Some NQTs at stage 2 reflected this view, indicating that they believed they would have done better with more focused support. The executive lead acted promptly to address this issue by adopting a different higher education institution partner to provide focused support to trainees as a group and individually. Support is beginning to be made available as the first assessments are drafted and written.
11. The detailed training provided in literacy and numeracy stands trainees in good stead during their placements and as they start their employment. Trainees' planning shows an awareness of the support they need to provide pupils in literacy and numeracy to ensure that they can access learning and demonstrate progress. Similarly, training at the centre and practical experience in different types of school, including a special school, provides insight into teaching that

meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The partnership provides opportunities for placement in schools judged to require improvement and others in challenging circumstances. Trainees quickly find records of these pupils' learning needs and prior attainment and take them into account in planning learning. Occasionally, trainees' teaching in classes with lower-ability pupils is less confident and pupils occasionally lose interest. However, overall, trainees' and NQTs' teaching enables pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make similar progress to others from their starting points.

12. Trainees show a very secure knowledge of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Trainees respond positively to centre-led training by ensuring that they also quickly assimilate local safeguarding arrangements in their placement schools. Training ensures that trainees are fully aware of their own responsibilities to use technology and social networks safely, and to ensure that pupils also do so. Trainees' broad knowledge of safeguarding issues is a strength of their professional conduct.
13. Trainees and NQTs make a positive contribution to the wider life of their schools. Training helps trainees quickly adopt a positive and active outlook. Mentors and trainees confirm that trainees quickly become involved in a range of additional activities that enrich pupils' learning and experiences and also contribute to trainees' professional development and employability. In some instances, trainees contribute to departmental development activities, and to the current SCITT training programme at the centre. In other cases, trainees and NQTs provide additional lessons and run clubs after school, for example a Year 7 English homework club. Some NQTs are members of subject specialist groups working across different schools, particularly in subjects with fewer members of staff, such as computing science. By sharing their ideas for teaching, NQTs continue to develop and hone their teaching skills and contribute to their own and others' professional development.
14. Documentation to promote better, more consistent mentoring has been updated and provided to partnership schools and all trainees. Mentors and leaders in school say they are confident that they now know what is expected, by when, and how to set about it. Nevertheless, there remains some inconsistency in the quality of mentoring; some schools are not following the new guidance fully. Not all trainees benefit from high-quality advice, guidance and target setting. A sharper focus on quality assuring the effectiveness of mentoring is giving early signs that mentors' week-by-week work with trainees to improve their practice and progress is becoming more effective.
15. The evidence from quality assurance visits during the current term points to a greater proportion of trainees on track to be graded as outstanding at this early stage of the programme than was the case at the same stage last year.

Scrutiny of a small sample of current trainees' files and supporting documentation shows a sharper focus on the use of assessment to promote pupils' learning and progress. However, it is too early to confirm that mentoring is having a sustained and heightened impact on the progress trainees make or to show that trainees challenge pupils at the correct level, and adjust learning in lessons by taking into account pupils' responses to tasks.

16. The targets agreed with trainees at the end of the course are helpful for the most part. They smooth the transition to NQT status and are used well by NQTs and employing schools as a starting point for further development. Occasionally, targets lack the precision that will help NQTs' mentors to formulate a sharply focused plan to support their NQT.
17. Leaders have acted quickly to put in place measures to improve provision in those areas indicated to be less effective by inspectors at the end of stage 1 of the inspection, and in response to the views given them by trainees, NQTs and schools. They have amended the training programme, for example by introducing a full two weeks' initial induction training at the centre, to which the new university partner contributed. This has ensured common messages to all trainees about professional conduct, safeguarding and a first round of training on teaching and assessment. By doing so, leaders have raised expectations of trainees and the partner schools. They have also shown good capacity to continue to improve.
18. Recruitment and selection processes are rigorous and partnership schools make an active contribution. Rigorous selection is securing high-calibre trainees and schools see this as part of the success of the partnership in securing a supply of good teachers to meet local recruitment needs. Partnership schools have demonstrated their confidence in the training by employing an increased proportion of NQTs from the SCITT in 2016.
19. Leaders accurately analyse end-of-training information about trainees' achievement and views of the programme and they know the strengths and weaker aspects of the training programme. They set them as key priorities for improvement with global annual targets. However, leaders do not evaluate with enough detail to elicit the reasons for areas that are weaker, including trainees' weaker ability to set challenging and stretching targets for pupils. Equally, evaluation of successful improvement activity is not fully developed.
20. Governors have sound knowledge of the self-evaluation and improvement documents. They know the key priorities on which to challenge leaders. They have scheduled points during the year to evaluate the impact of leaders' work to bring about improvement. This brings a more rigorous approach to accountability but the lack of interim milestones, or of identified steps to success, limits how well they might carry out this function. Governors' wide experience in the field of initial teacher education supports the SCITT in



developing the vision of the partnership to broaden its scope and secure high-quality outcomes for trainees. The governing body and executive lead are beginning to formulate plans to strengthen the links between initial teacher education and NQTs' professional development. For example, the new partnership with Sheffield Hallam University is providing online accredited learning for high-quality mentorship.

21. Leaders and governors ensure that the partnership complies with the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) criteria for initial teacher training (ITT). The programme meets the statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity and for eliminating discrimination. Leaders ensure that the requirements for safeguarding are met.

### **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Horizon Community College, Barnsley

Kirk Balk Academy, Hoyland

Minsthorpe Community College, South Emsall

Netherwood ALC, Wombwell

Ridgewood School, Scawsby

The Snaith School, Snaith

Thornhill Community Academy, Dewsbury

## ITE partnership details

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