

# Mersey Boroughs ITT Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 4 July 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

	<b>Primary QTS</b>
<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 primary phase

### Information about the primary partnership

- The Mersey Boroughs ITT partnership is a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider. It offers primary core and School Direct teacher training specialising in the early years (3–7), primary (5–11) and key stage 2 (7–11) age phases. Trainees who successfully complete their training are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS) and either a professional (Level 6) or postgraduate (Level 7) certificate of education from Sheffield Hallam University.
- The SCITT has provided initial teacher education (ITE) since September 2014 and was inspected for the first time at the end of its second year as an accredited provider of QTS. The lead school, St Mary and St Paul's Primary School, Prescot, previously provided primary School Direct training, in conjunction with Liverpool Hope University.
- School Direct (3–7) provision, was offered for the first time in 2015/16, in partnership with Everton Nursery School and Family Centre.
- The partnership consists of 25 partnership schools in five local authorities: Knowsley, St. Helens, Sefton, Liverpool and Halton. The partnership has strong links with The Oaks Teaching School Alliance, Knowsley First and Everton Nursery School and Family Centre. It has also developed links with the Keys Federation in Wigan.
- During stage one of the inspection, 44 trainees were being trained. Thirty-four of the trainees were training for the 5–11 phase, three for the 7–11 phase and seven for the 3–7 phase.
- Thirty-eight trainees were recruited in 2016/17. Twenty-two for the 5–11 phase, seven for the 7–11 phase and nine for the 3–7 phase.
- The partnership has confirmed it will not be offering a 3–7 phase from September 2017.

### Information about the primary ITE inspection

- At stage one, inspectors visited seven partnership schools, observing nine trainees teach. At stage two, inspectors visited six schools and observed seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach. One trainee was observed at both stages of the inspection.
- Inspectors read trainees' profiles of professional development, standards files and task workbooks. They also held discussions with individual trainees, NQTs, school-based tutors, induction mentors, trainers, members of the quality assurance team, headteachers, leaders and managers and members of the partnership's executive and management committees. In

addition, the lead inspector observed part of a development day for school-based tutors at stage one.

- The lead inspector checked that the partnership was compliant with statutory requirements, including those in place for safeguarding, and the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL's) ITT criteria. She also reviewed the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement planning documents, recruitment and selection procedures, trainee tracking and assessment documentation, the partnership agreement, external examiner and external adviser reports and the content of the training programmes.
- Inspectors took into account 39 responses to the trainee online questionnaire which trainees completed in June 2016.
- Inspectors also reviewed transition documentation provided by the partnership to employing schools and the actions taken by leaders and managers to improve training and outcomes between the two stages of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Angela Milner, Her Majesty's Inspector (lead inspector)

Sonja Oyen, Ofsted Inspector (assistant lead inspector) stage one

Emma Hollis-Brown, Ofsted Inspector (assistant lead inspector) stage two

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

### The key strengths

- The Mersey Boroughs ITT partnership provides a close-knit, collegial partnership based on 'trust and respect,' with a clear vision for school-led ITE provision in Merseyside, linked to improvements in the quality of education for pupils.
- The partnership provides comprehensive and highly valued initial teacher training and continuing professional development for NQTs and recently qualified teachers (RQTs).
- All trainees awarded QTS, to date, secure employment and remain in the teaching profession.
- Experienced practitioners from schools are fully involved in all aspects of the partnership; a significant proportion of partnership schools are in areas of socio-economic disadvantage and some are judged to require improvement.
- Leaders and managers and quality assurance tutors play a key role in effective partnership communications and provide support for trainees, schools and school-based trainers; the partnership is rightly proud of the personal and professional support it provides for trainees and NQTs.

- Trainees and NQTs have highly appropriate professional attributes, are committed to teaching, very positive about their training and support and respond extremely well to advice and guidance.
- High-quality centre-based training equips trainees and NQTs extremely well with the subject and curriculum knowledge and practical skills required to be successful primary and early years teachers.
- Detailed evaluation processes ensure that the partnership is responsive to feedback and identifies what it needs to do to improve; priorities are shared across the partnership and the impact of actions taken is carefully measured.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- continue to improve timely completion rates, particularly for male trainees
- increase the proportion of trainees attaining the highest levels of attainment by ensuring that:
  - school-based tutors provide clear, next step written targets for trainees
  - feedback is sufficiently focused on the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' learning and progress
  - trainees use assessment information more effectively to check understanding, refine their teaching and deepen pupils' learning, particularly for the most able pupils
  - trainees are able to provide appropriate support and challenge for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

## **Inspection judgements**

1. The overall effectiveness of the Mersey Boroughs ITT partnership in securing consistently high-quality training and outcomes for trainees is good. This close-knit, collegial partnership is based on mutual 'trust and respect'. The partnership is ambitious and has high expectations. It has a clear vision for school-led ITE in Merseyside, linked to improvements in the quality of education for pupils.
2. Trainees and NQTs are committed to playing their part in the partnership's vision. They strive to become the best teachers they can be and to meet the needs of all the pupils they teach. The SCITT is very well-regarded by trainees, newly qualified teachers and partnership and employing schools. The SCITT has a growing reputation for producing trainees who are very well prepared for their employment as primary and early years teachers. Employing headteachers indicated NQTs were an

asset and arrived 'chomping at the bit' to play a full role in the wider life of their schools.

3. The partnership provides comprehensive and highly valued continuing professional development (CPD) for NQTs and RQTs in addition to good-quality initial teacher training. CPD conference days are well attended and very responsive to identified needs. Employing headteachers reported that their schools and staff benefit from the high-quality training and excellent ongoing professional development opportunities offered by the partnership.
4. All of the 2014/15 trainees gained employment, mostly in local schools. Similarly, all of the primary and early years trainees who successfully completed their training in 2015/16 were in employment by stage two of the inspection. Over two thirds of trainees gained employment in local schools, with approximately half working in partnership schools. Employment rates are above those of other primary ITE partnerships nationally and retention rates in the profession to date remain high.
5. The partnership places a strong emphasis on practical experience and personalised training. Trainees spend more than the minimum required 120 days working in schools. They have good opportunities to observe and learn from good and outstanding practitioners. Trainees also undertake helpful 'broadening experience visits' and 'mini placements' in secondary, nursery and special schools.
6. Trainees are based in a 'home school' for the academic year and complete their contrasting placement in the spring term. Most trainees willingly seize available opportunities to immerse themselves in the life of their 'home school.' They actively seek out opportunities to enhance their teaching skills with different year groups and to discover more about new initiatives such as two-year-old provision in schools. A few trainees become immersed in their own class and do not always take full advantage of the opportunities available to enhance their understanding and practical skills.
7. Partnership schools and settings provide good-quality training venues in diverse communities. They include a range of community and faith-based maintained schools, academies, specialist provision and nursery and early years settings. A significant proportion of the partnership's schools are in areas of socio-economic disadvantage and some are judged to require improvement. All trainees complete one of their two major placements in a school in challenging socio-economic circumstances. This practical experience together with an emphasis in their training on the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups prepares them well for teaching in such schools.

8. Partnership leaders, managers and quality assurance tutors play a key role in partnership communications and provide effective support for trainees, schools and school-based tutors. High-quality communications and easy-to-use documentation guide trainees' professional development and effectively support school-based and quality assurance tutors in their roles.
9. School-based tutors attend regular development days that enable them to share their experiences and work through useful 'what would you do?' scenarios. As well as this 'macro' training, the partnership is investing in more differentiated 'micro' training. This involves in-school coaching and mentoring for new and less experienced school-based tutors and class school-based tutors from coordinating school-based and quality assurance tutors. The quality of school-based tutor support is good. Regular observations of teaching, weekly meetings and target-setting processes take place.
10. The partnership is aware that there is some variation in the quality of oral and written feedback that trainees receive from school-based tutors. The most effective feedback engages trainees in discussion about the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning and progress and helps trainees to improve their professional skills. It provides constructive criticism and sharp, next step targets. Some written feedback from weekly meetings and mid-point reviews is expressed as actions rather than targets, or is too general and long term to have an immediate impact on the quality of trainees' teaching.
11. School-based tutors, headteachers and leaders and managers are fully involved in recruiting trainees with the potential to become effective teachers. Applicants are mostly from the North West and reflect the ethnic mix of the locality. A greater proportion of male and mature trainees are trained by this primary partnership in comparison with others nationally. Trainees commented positively on the rigour of the selection process.
12. Information gained from the selection process is used very effectively to identify trainees' starting points, provide pre-course reading and personalise initial training targets. Leaders and managers know their trainees, NQTs and RQTs extremely well and do all they can to meet the needs of individual trainees, throughout and beyond their initial training period. The partnership is rightly proud of the pastoral and professional support it provides. Heads of partnership schools said they also rated highly the support of leaders and managers and the quality and speed of communications.

13. The partnership recruits and trains appropriately qualified and experienced trainees who aspire to become competent primary and early years teachers. All of the trainees who successfully completed their training in 2014/15 achieved good or better levels of attainment and demonstrated consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.
14. All trainees who completed their training in 2015/16 met the minimum level of practice expected of teachers and a slightly greater proportion of the second cohort of trainees achieved outstanding levels of attainment. High standards of personal and professional conduct remain a key characteristic of the partnership's trainees and NQTs.
15. The difference between male and female trainees achieving the highest attainment levels, identified as an area for improvement by the partnership at the end of 2014/15, narrowed in 2015/16. Inspection evidence confirms that there are no significant differences between the attainment outcomes for groups of trainees or for those training in the three age phases.
16. Inspectors judged the assessment of trainees and the priorities set for the NQT induction year to be accurate. Records of learning journeys and work in pupils' books and on data tracking sheets show that pupils, taught by trainees, make expected or better progress over time. Early years trainees, in the 3–7 phase, observed teaching by inspectors were particularly strong.
17. The proportion of trainees who complete their training and gain qualified teacher status (QTS) is improving. It was below national benchmarks in 2014/15 and in line with national norms in 2015/16. The majority of trainees who withdraw from or defer their training are male. Greater attention paid to testing resilience and raising applicants' awareness of workload demands at interview has helped to increase completion rates.
18. Trainees and NQTs have highly appropriate professional attributes, are committed to teaching, very positive about their training and respond extremely well to advice and guidance. Headteachers report that they are flexible, adaptable and responsive. Trainees and NQTs use their good subject and curriculum knowledge and effective marking to plan for progression within and across sequences of lessons and carefully evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Trainees and NQTs make good use of carefully chosen resources to inspire and motivate their pupils. They also use questioning, scaffolded tasks and the effective modelling of activities well to engage pupils and enhance their progress.

19. Trainees receive a carefully designed, up-to-date and progressive training experience. The training provided for 5–11 and 7–11 trainees, at the SCITT's training base, is identical and highly relevant. It focuses on developing trainees' subject and curriculum knowledge and developing their practical teaching skills. Subject knowledge is carefully audited and enhanced throughout the training. Resources provided at the SCITT centre enable trainees to widen their knowledge and understanding of different teaching and learning strategies and to draw on materials produced by subject associations. This approach prepares trainees and NQTs very well for delivering the breadth of the national curriculum, including for physical education.
20. During 2015/16, trainees on the 3–7 route received unique training based on high-quality early years practice in schools and settings in Liverpool. In 2016/17, the 3–7 trainees are attending some of the training provided for primary trainees, to ensure they have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the key stage 1 curriculum, in addition to the strong focus on the early years foundation stage.
21. Centre-based training is well delivered by a combination of expert leaders and managers, leading teachers, former strategy consultants, ITE lecturers, colleagues from Knowsley local authority, diocesan advisers, heads and practitioners. Trainers understand the importance of trainees being able to 'have a go, receive feedback and reflect' on what they have done. Structured tasks are used very well to support trainees' professional development and help to synthesise centre- and school-based training experiences.
22. Training places a strong emphasis from the start on classroom organisation and developing appropriate behaviour management strategies. Trainees and NQTs use their organisational skills and positive relationships with pupils to create effective environments for learning, where pupils are encouraged and supported to achieve. They quietly manage classes and establish productive working relationships with support staff.
23. Trainees are fully aware of the consequences of bullying and the strategies used by schools to prevent this from occurring. They also have a good understanding of how to promote fundamental British values and how to keep children safe from harm. An employing headteacher reported that an RQT was putting what she had learned from her initial training and CPD to good effect in developing a personal, social, health and economic curriculum for her school. An NQT discussed how she had been enthused by her recent training about online protection and was seeking to become an ambassador in this important area.



24. Trainees teach English, communication, language and literacy, and phonics competently. They know how to plan and teach sequences of English lessons and specific lessons using systematic synthetic phonics. They skilfully use subject-specific terminology and ensure that pupils also use this accurately. In a Reception class, taught by a trainee, children used phonic strategies extremely well to write invitations to their pirate party. Another trainee working with Year 5 pupils ensured that pupils made very effective use of a thesaurus to extend their knowledge of a range of adjectives and to improve the quality of their writing.
25. Trainees' and NQTs' very good understanding of the mastery curriculum means they teach mathematics with confidence and use a range of practical resources very well. An NQT used a mastery approach extremely effectively to enable Year 4 pupils to consolidate and practise their understanding of multiplication and place value. She constantly reinforced the importance of 'knowing and using your times tables'. In one Reception class a trainee on the 3–7 route skilfully engaged children in finding numbers, creating a number line, counting to check it was correct and then double checking this by asking children to count forwards and backwards and to add zero to some of the numbers.
26. Trainees and NQTs are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of most aspects of their training which they describe as 'enjoyable but challenging, amazing and fantastic'. Primary trainees have, however, raised concerns in partnership surveys about the quality of their training for those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and pupils who are the most able.
27. Although training raises awareness and provides appropriate starting points for work with pupils who speak English as an additional language, trainees lack sufficient understanding and practical experience of teaching these pupils in schools. The partnership has responded quickly to ensure that training provided in the spring term of 2017 includes small-group work with pupils who speak English as an additional language.
28. Trainees and NQTs understand the importance of questioning and adapting their teaching to provide appropriate support and challenge for different groups of pupils. However, trainees do not always use assessment information during lessons to check on understanding, refine their teaching and deepen pupils' learning or provide activities pitched at the right level for the most able pupils.
29. Inspection evidence confirmed that trainees and NQTs cater well for pupils who have a special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because the training they receive looks not only at legislation and the code of practice but what inclusive practice means for teachers. One NQT

working in a special school used her training very well to meet the needs of secondary-aged pupils working on the use of punctuation and grammar to consolidate sentence structures. Her approach ensured that pupils could access and make progress within the curriculum.

30. Leaders and managers provide effective strategic and operational leadership of the partnership. They actively seek and are very responsive to feedback from a range of stakeholders. Improvement plans draw on a wide range of evaluative information. They identify realistic priorities for improvement and contain clear measurable outcomes to measure the impact of actions taken.
31. The partnership takes effective steps to secure the quality and consistency of provision across the partnership and to focus on identified priorities for improvement. Accurate final assessments for the award of QTS are endorsed by an external examiner. The partnership also employs an external adviser in addition to the examiner role. He carefully monitors the impact of actions taken to improve training and outcomes and reports termly to the partnership's ITT director and executive board.
32. Stakeholders enthusiastically engage in the work of the partnership's executive and management committees. Members receive useful termly reports about ITE developments from the ITT director and detailed evaluations of stakeholders' views about their training. The committees continually monitor information and the partnership's improvement plan.
33. The requirements of the ITT criteria and relevant legislation relating to equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination and safeguarding are fully met. Schools are fully involved in all aspects of the partnership including its leadership and management; the review, evaluation and development of provision; the selection of trainees and the design and delivery of training and assessment.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Abbots Lea Special School, Liverpool

Bishop David Sheppard Church of England Primary School, Southport

Four Oaks Primary School, Liverpool

Holland Moor Primary School, Skelmersdale

Holy Rosary Catholic Primary School, Liverpool

Knowsley Village Primary School, Prescot

Lander Road Primary School, Bootle

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School, Liverpool

Spinney Avenue Primary School, Widnes

St Mary and St Paul's Primary School, Prescot

St Peters Church of England Primary School, Hindley

Wargrave Primary School, Newton-le-Willows

Whiston Willis Primary School, Prescot

## ITE partnership details

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Stage 1	
Stage 2	28–30 November 2016
Lead inspector	Angela Milner, Her Majesty's Inspector
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Previous inspection report	N/A
Provider address	St Mary & St Paul's Church of England Primary School Bryer Road Prescot Liverpool L35 5DN



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