

# Altius Alliance SCITT Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates    Stage 1: 15 May 2017    Stage 2: 9 October 2017

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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 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>Secondary QTS</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	1
<b>The outcomes for trainees</b>	1
<b>The quality of training across the partnership</b>	1
<b>The quality of leadership and management across the partnership</b>	1

## **Information about the secondary partnership**

- The Altius Alliance school-led partnership for initial teacher training (SCITT) provides secondary teacher training for graduates. Trainees who successfully complete their training are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS) and gain a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) from Manchester Metropolitan University.
- The SCITT has provided initial teacher training (ITT) since September 2015. The partnership was inspected for the first time at the end of its second year as an accredited provider of QTS.
- The accredited entity for the SCITT is the Laurus Trust. The SCITT is based at a 'home' school, Cheadle Hulme High School, where all trainees complete at least one of their three school experience placements.
- Second placements are completed in partnership schools in Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Manchester. Third placements are completed either in the 'home' school or the contrasting second placement school.
- The partnership includes four teaching schools, comprehensive and selective secondary schools, primary schools, a special school and a pupil referral unit (PRU).
- During stage 1 of the inspection 23 trainees were being trained. All of the trainees were on a provider-led, 11 to 16 training route specialising in: biology, chemistry, drama, English, geography, history, mathematics or modern foreign languages in French, German or Spanish.
- During stage 2 of the inspection 20 trainees were being trained in biology, chemistry, physics, English, geography and modern foreign languages in German or Spanish.

## **Information about the secondary ITE inspection**

- Inspectors visited three schools at stage 1, observing seven trainees teach their subject specialism and one trainee teach numeracy skills, during a form period. They reviewed trainees' teaching and standards files, subject knowledge audits, tasks and assignments.
- Inspectors held discussion meetings with trainees, subject and professional mentors, specialist leaders in education (SLEs), headteachers, trainers, leaders and managers, members of the SCITT's leadership and strategic groups, the chief executive and the vice-chair of the trust.
- Inspectors checked that the partnership was compliant with statutory requirements including the ITT criteria. They also reviewed a wide range of evidence provided by the partnership. This included a self-evaluation

document, improvement planning, recruitment and selection procedures, stakeholder evaluations, trainee tracking and assessment information, minutes of meetings, the partnership agreement, external examiner reports, the SCITT handbook and the content of subject and professional issues training.

- Inspectors also took into account 18 responses received to the trainee online questionnaire in the summer term 2017.
- At stage 2 inspectors visited five schools, observing eight newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach. One of the schools was visited at both stages of the inspection. An inspector also attended a recruitment open evening for potential 2018/19 applicants and met with a group of trainees from the 2017/18 cohort.
- Inspectors reviewed NQTs' career entry profiles and the actions taken by leaders and managers to improve the quality of training and outcomes between the two stages of the inspection.

## **Inspection team**

Angela Milner HMI (lead inspector)

Jonathan Smart HMI (assistant lead inspector)

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 1**

### **Key strengths of the secondary partnership**

- A clear vision for excellence is known and shared by everyone within this outstanding ITE partnership. High levels of collaboration are based on extremely positive relationships and mutual respect. Strong leaders and managers instil a robust emphasis on continuous self-improvement throughout the partnership. They are held in great regard and have extremely high expectations of themselves, school-based colleagues, trainees and NQTs.
- Exceptional formal and informal communications, comprehensive documentation and stringent monitoring, review and moderation by leaders and managers ensure remarkable levels of consistency in the quality of training and the accuracy of assessment across the partnership.
- Recruitment and selection procedures are comprehensive, rigorous and successful. This ensures that trainees with the necessary skills, attitudes and aptitudes to become effective teachers are admitted to the SCITT.
- Trainees' and NQTs' subject knowledge and understanding of pedagogy and the curriculum are very well developed by the impressive subject and professional issues training. The SCITT ensures that trainees have the opportunity to hone their practical teaching skills in an intellectually

rigorous context. Training draws on the considerable strengths and expertise of school-based colleagues and provides trainees with substantial opportunities to 'learn from the best'.

- Skilful subject mentoring, supported very effectively by expert specialist leaders in education (SLEs), enables trainees to reflect on their practice and understand their strengths and areas for development. NQTs teach their subject specialism to a high standard from the start of their induction year and have an appetite for further professional development.
- Exceptionally well-designed training enables trainees and NQTs to thrive. They are committed to being the best teachers that they can be. Trainees and NQTs are professional, proactive and insightfully reflective. They demonstrate high levels of personal and professional conduct. The majority of trainees achieve the highest level of attainment in relation to the teachers' standards at the end of their training.
- Trainees and NQTs use very effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. They develop positive and respectful relationships and create a purposeful atmosphere in their classrooms which enables pupils to learn. Trainees and NQTs are particularly skilled in using questioning strategies to identify pupils' prior learning and misconceptions and in planning and resourcing sequences of learning for pupils.
- The SCITT has an excellent reputation for producing NQTs who are confident and competent teachers. They are very well equipped to contribute to subject departments and to take on pastoral roles in employing schools. A significant proportion of trainees gain employment as NQTs in schools in challenging circumstances and/or in schools that have been judged less than good at their last inspection.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- improve completion rates
- enhance the strategies that trainees use, including the deployment of learning support assistants, to maximise the progress that different groups of pupils make in their learning.

## **Inspection judgements**

1. The overall effectiveness of the Altius Alliance SCITT is outstanding. Leaders and managers are rightly held in very high regard. Their clear vision for excellence 'producing outstanding secondary subject teachers in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects' is known and shared by everyone involved in the partnership.

2. Significant levels of collaboration, positive relationships and mutual respect are the hallmarks of this highly successful secondary ITE partnership. Leaders and managers have extremely high expectations of themselves, school-based colleagues, trainees and NQTs. For example, the partnership's code of conduct places a strong emphasis on training as a professional. It contains high expectations for attendance, punctuality, behaviour, dress, the use of social media and the safe use of technology. Trainees are known as 'associate teachers' and willingly adhere to the SCITT's exacting standards.
3. School-based colleagues are fully involved in shaping provision, recruitment and selection processes and the partnership's leadership and management. Trustees are fully aware of their governance responsibilities for the SCITT. They provide highly effective support and challenge to impassioned leaders and managers. Very effective systems and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with the ITT criteria and other statutory requirements relating to equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination and safeguarding, including e-safety.
4. The partnership's culture is one of continuous self-improvement. Extremely frequent and comprehensive evaluation procedures involve a range of key stakeholders and enable the partnership to set clear improvement priorities and continually improve the quality of training and outcomes for trainees. Completion and employment rates for the first cohort of trainees were above national benchmarks. However, completion rates dipped in 2016/17 because a small number of trainees deferred their training. The partnership has compared their completion rates with those of other partnerships. As a result, the SCITT has identified reductions to workload requirements as an important priority in its improvement plan for 2017/18.
5. Leaders and managers are exceptionally responsive to feedback. They attend local, regional and national events and use the information gained to improve continually the quality of training and outcomes for trainees. During 2016/17, leaders and managers ensured successfully that the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' learning and progress lies at the heart of every element of the SCITT's training. As a result, the proportion of trainees achieving the highest level of attainment in relation to the teachers' standards doubled from the previous year.
6. The partnership is ambitious and demonstrates an outstanding capacity for further improvement. Highly effective actions were taken between the two stages of the inspection to secure further improvements. The training content has been reviewed for 2017/18 to ensure that there is a coherent focus on training in special educational needs and disabilities, and mental health issues. The first planned session in this area had already taken place

by the time of the stage 2 inspection. It had been highly beneficial to and positively evaluated by the 2017/18 trainees. Observations of trainees' teaching, by the partnership in the second half of the summer term, showed that trainees were better able to plan and use appropriate strategies to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including more-able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors also saw evidence of the impact that this additional training had on NQTs' planning and teaching at stage 2 of the inspection.

7. Exceptional formal and informal communications, comprehensive documentation and stringent monitoring, review and moderation by leaders and managers ensure remarkable levels of consistency in the quality of training and assessment across the partnership. Inspectors judged the partnership's assessment of trainees' attainment to be extremely accurate. The pass/fail boundary for the award of QTS is secure. Assessments are subject to a rigorous moderation process. This involves an experienced external examiner. There are no significant differences in attainment for trainees in terms of subjects, gender or age.
8. Recruitment and selection procedures are comprehensive, rigorous and successful in ensuring that trainees with the necessary skills, attitudes and aptitudes to become effective teachers are admitted to the SCITT. Very effective use is made of information gained at the recruitment and selection stage. This information is used to determine whether trainees need to undertake subject knowledge enhancement courses or gain additional school experience before commencing their training.
9. The SCITT provides a rich and varied placement experience for trainees. Much of the practical training takes place at the 'home' school but all trainees complete an invaluable, contrasting placement in a school where more pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Trainees then complete a tailored, third placement in either their 'home' school or a contrasting placement school. Transition arrangements between placements are coordinated in an exemplary manner.
10. Trainees benefit enormously from a range of enhancement opportunities and carefully chosen visits to other schools. For example, mathematics trainees were fully immersed in 'teaching for mastery' through their involvement in the 'home' school's mathematics hub, and their experience of 'Shanghai mathematics'. Helpful training in working with pupils who speak English as an additional language takes place in a school in Manchester, where the majority of pupils come from different linguistic backgrounds.

11. Trainees complete very well-designed reflective tasks, related to the teaching of phonics, mathematics and their specialist subject during their primary school experience. This enables trainees to gain a deeper understanding of secondary pupils' previous educational experience. Year 7 lessons taught by trainees and NQTs were generally very well planned to meet pupils' needs, abilities and interests.
12. Science trainees spent two days, in the summer term of 2016/17, working alongside an SLE. The SLE was supporting a science department in a school judged to require improvement. Two of these science trainees are now working as NQTs in this school. All trainees from both cohorts who successfully completed their training and sought roles as teachers gained employment. Over half of those trained in 2016/17 are employed in schools in challenging circumstances and/or those judged less than good at their last inspection.
13. The SCITT ensures that trainees have the opportunity to hone their practical teaching skills in an intellectually rigorous context. Training balances conceptual understanding with the practical toolkit trainees need to teach in schools. Extremely useful PGCE assignments and presentations enable trainees to examine critically the current educational system and develop their research-informed pedagogical practice.
14. Trainees' and NQTs' subject knowledge and understanding of pedagogy and the curriculum are very well developed by the current and cohesive subject and professional issues training. This is organised into three distinct and extremely effective phases: induction, development and consolidation. This highly developmental approach to training involves trainees in substantial amounts of co-planning and co-teaching before they are allowed to take on sole responsibility for their subject teaching. This stands them in extremely good stead for their induction year. NQTs apply their excellent levels of subject knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary well in their teaching. NQTs are passionate about teaching their subject and inspire a love of their subject in their pupils. They teach their specialism to a high standard from the start and have an appetite for further professional development.
15. Training is tailored carefully to meet different cohorts' and trainees' needs. For example, additional training and support was arranged from a local university for the one drama trainee in 2016/17. High-quality subject training draws on the strengths and expertise of mentors, SLEs and the departments and schools in which trainees are placed. It provides substantial opportunities for trainees to 'learn from the best'.
16. Skilful subject mentoring, in well-chosen departments, is supported very effectively by knowledgeable SLEs. They discuss and moderate judgements

and ensure that extremely precise targets for trainees' professional development are set. This thorough process enables trainees to reflect critically on their own practice. It also ensures that trainees have a detailed understanding of their own strengths and areas for further professional development.

17. Exceptionally well-designed training enables trainees and NQTs to thrive. They are self-motivated and committed to being the best teachers that they can possibly be. Trainees and NQTs are professional, proactive and insightfully reflective. They demonstrate very high levels of personal and professional conduct. Responses to the trainee online questionnaire were highly positive about all aspects of the training. Trainees and NQTs told inspectors it had been a privilege to train with the SCITT. Trainees, NQTs and school-based mentors were particularly appreciative of the high standard of everything that the partnership did. They also praised the excellent levels of support provided by leaders and managers and the opportunities to seek and act upon their advice.
18. Trainees and NQTs reflect in great depth on their own practice and have a very good understanding of how pupils learn and their role in removing barriers to learning. However, they do not always maximise the progress made by all groups of pupils, or deploy learning support assistants effectively to support pupils' learning. Trainees and NQTs use a range of creative approaches and resources, including information and communication technology, to stimulate and engage pupils in their learning. Trainees' and NQTs' pupils are 'thirsty to learn'. NQTs are particularly skilled in using questioning strategies to identify pupils' prior learning and misconceptions, and in planning and resourcing sequences of learning for pupils.
19. Trainees gain considerable practical experience of teaching pupils of differing abilities in key stages 3 and 4. Their experience of teaching examination classes and useful key stage 5 experiences, at the 'home' school and in a vocational college, stand them in good stead for employment in schools. Trainees and NQTs have a very good understanding of curriculum and assessment arrangements, including new examination specifications. They also make very effective use of formative and summative assessments to inform their planning and teaching.
20. Trainees and NQTs were effusive in their praise of the training that they received in behaviour management. Its effectiveness can be seen in the success with which trainees and NQTs manage pupils' behaviour. They use tried and tested strategies, which are underpinned by positive and respectful relationships, to create a purposeful atmosphere in which pupils can learn. Trainees and NQTs understand different types of bullying,



including cyber bullying, and know how to deal with it. Trainees and NQTs are confident and knowledgeable about equality and safeguarding issues. They understand their responsibilities to protect pupils, including from exposure to radicalised views of the world, and know what actions to take if they have any concerns about their pupils.

21. The professional issues training has been audited against recent ITE expert reports including 'developing behaviour management content' and the 'framework of core content for ITT'. Trainees receive innovative training to raise their awareness of broader professional issues such as mental health, articulacy and literacy. Trainees are expected to undertake pastoral duties in their 'home' school. This includes useful opportunities to teach literacy and numeracy to pupils in form periods. This experience sharpens their understanding of the importance of promoting these skills as part of their subject teaching. NQTs pay good attention to promoting pupils' speaking, listening, note-taking and writing skills. They also check spelling, punctuation and grammar errors carefully in pupils' books. NQTs use marking purposefully, following departmental and school policies.
22. The SCITT already has an excellent reputation for producing NQTs who are confident and competent teachers. The vast majority of trainees gain employment in schools within and beyond the partnership, within the North West region. Headteachers employing NQTs from the SCITT were very positive about how well trainees were prepared for both their subject teaching and pastoral roles and identified their potential as 'agents of change' in their schools. Science subject specialists were successfully teaching all three sciences up to GCSE level. Linguists were able to teach an additional language to their subject specialism. One NQT had already taken on responsibility for planning the scheme of work for a Year 7 group in history. Most induction coordinators indicated how useful the transition documentation, provided by the SCITT, had been in establishing starting points for their NQTs' induction year.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

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

Cheadle Hulme High School, Cheadle Hulme

Manchester Communication Academy, Manchester

Manchester Health Academy, Wythenshawe

Marple Hall School, Marple

St Patrick's RC High School and Arts College, Eccles

Stockport School, Stockport

Werneth School, Romiley

## ITE partnership details

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Lead inspector	Angela Milner HMI
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Previous inspection report	N/A
Provider address	Altius Alliance SCITT Cheadle Hulme High School Woods Lane Cheadle Hulme Cheshire SK8 7JX



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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