

Central England SCITT Teacher Training Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 8 May 2017 Stage 2: 25 September 2017

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 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

- Central England Teacher Training (CETT) provides school-centred initial teacher training in the primary phase. The SCITT is based in Victoria Academies Trust in Smethwick, Sandwell. The partnership operates in four local authorities; Sandwell, Birmingham, Walsall and Staffordshire. Victoria Parl Primary Academy is the lead school and administrative centre. There are currently seven schools in the partnership. At the time of stage 1 of the inspection the partnership schools were judged as outstanding or good by Ofsted. Almost all of the schools are in highly disadvantaged areas.
- CETT is a provider of School Direct and core postgraduate training routes leading to the award of qualified teacher status (QTS). The courses last for one year. They incorporate a postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) and 60 credits towards a Master's degree. Of the 17 trainees at the time of stage 1 of the inspection, five were on the School Direct route and 12 were on the core route. The training programmes for trainees on the School Direct and core route are the same except for the organisation of school placements. The core route offers two placements in two different schools in addition to short experiences in a secondary or nursery and a special school. The partnership provides training in the 3 to 7 and 5 to 11 age ranges.
- The SCITT works in partnership with Birmingham University and Lindens Teaching School Alliance (TSA). The School Direct trainees are all aligned with the TSA.
- The partnership recruited its first trainees for the academic year 2015/16 and has not been previously inspected.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- During stage 1 of the inspection, inspectors visited seven schools and observed nine trainees teach. During stage 2, inspectors visited five schools and observed nine newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach.
- Across both stages of the inspection inspectors held discussions with trainees, school-based mentors, class teachers, induction tutors and headteachers. Inspectors also met partnership representatives and trainers.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including 15 returns of NQT questionnaires, training files and pupils' books. In addition, inspectors examined: the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement plans; completion, employment and attainment documentation; training and induction documents; assessment information, mentors' feedback and targets set for trainees' continued development as NQTs. Checks were carried out confirming that the partnership meets all statutory criteria and requirements for initial teacher training and for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Deana Holdaway HMI	Lead inspector (Stage 2 only)
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Heather Simpson HMI	Lead inspector (Stage 1 only)
Rob Hackfath HMI	Assistant lead inspector (Stage 2 only)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the primary partnership

- The clearly communicated vision and ambition together with a united dedication to ongoing improvement.
- The high level of contribution and accountability established by the model of distributed leadership with specific responsibilities for strategy, leadership and partnership.
- The strong commitment of all leaders and staff within the partnership to deliver a high-quality training programme and create good or better teachers.
- The well-focused training in mathematics and English ensures that trainees and NQTs understand and adopt a range of subject-related strategies, pedagogies and approaches in their teaching.
- Trainees and NQTs who are well prepared to manage pupils' challenging behaviour.
- High-quality school-based training where trainees see educational theory rooted in practice. Trainees value working alongside up-to-date, experienced and skilled practitioners.
- Trainees' ability to reflect on their practice. By the time they qualify as NQTs they are rightly proud of their strengths, suitably aware of their limitations and confident to seek help and expertise where needed.
- All trainees who completed their training in 2016 and 2017 secured employment.

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

The partnership should:

- Ensure that trainees and NQTs plan for pupils' different abilities by making more accurate use of formative assessments in lessons.
- Ensure that trainees experience a deeper knowledge of a wide range of subjects to enable them to teach the breadth of the primary curriculum more confidently.

- Fully implement and monitor the success of recent initiatives to ensure consistently high-quality mentoring.

Inspection judgements

1. CETT lives by its vision of train, teach, transform. Leaders and partners share an ambition for excellence and demonstrate high levels of commitment and dedication to achieve their goals. Everyone involved in the partnership shares a strong sense of mission to be the best they can be.
2. The distributed leadership model includes three key groups: strategy, leadership and partnership. This structure enables a high level of individual contribution and accountability to make the most of ideas, expertise and knowledge. Course leaders closely monitor and evaluate the progress of new initiatives. However, the impact of recent initiatives, for example in ensuring the consistent quality of mentoring, has still to be realised in practice. Leaders ensure a high level of engagement with partnership schools and actively seek the views of stakeholders to review, adapt and improve course design and content.
3. The recruitment and selection process is robust and demonstrates CETT's high expectations of trainees hoping to enter the teaching profession. Leaders actively seek a suitable range of candidates with appropriate qualifications and aptitudes for teaching. However, following a strategic decision by leaders to embed consistency across the partnership, trainee numbers were reduced from 22 in 2016 to nine in 2017. Headteachers from partnership schools are fully involved with the interview and selection process, which helps to ensure that trainees are well suited to meet local priorities. All trainees leaving in 2017 exceeded the minimum level of practice and just under a half achieved the highest standard.
4. Leaders acknowledge that last year not all trainees received consistent experiences across school placements. Leaders scrutinised all placement schools to identify their individual features so that trainees experience a greater spread and balance of school characteristics. Placements are also now planned according to trainees' prior experience.
5. Following the identification in stage 1 of a relative weakness in the consistency of mentors' feedback, leaders have recently provided more training for mentors. In addition, more detailed guidance for mentors has been produced to ensure their feedback to trainees is consistently clear, evaluative and concise. Further training is planned throughout the year and systems to assure the quality of mentors' work have been introduced. In addition, leaders developed a new format for reporting on lesson observations so that feedback focuses more sharply on tracking trainees' progress and development against each of the teachers' standards.

6. CETT leaders are quick to identify and utilise the expertise within and beyond the partnership to develop trainees' subject knowledge. CETT works in partnership with Birmingham University and Lindens Teaching School Alliance. Subject leaders demonstrate good levels of knowledge and experience and some are recognised experts in their field. They are suitably aware of current research, innovation and the range of pedagogy relevant to their subject or phase. Particular strengths are evident in the training of mathematics, English and behaviour management.
7. CETT conducts audits of trainees' subject knowledge at the recruitment stage and twice more during the training year. Relative weaknesses are identified and targets for improvement are set. Results from such audits inform training sessions and become features of future tutorials. For example, sessions were provided in grammar and assessment following audits of trainees' knowledge. The number of training sessions varies according to the subject being taught. Subject leaders provide regular training over a period of time and ongoing dialogue to help trainees plan and deliver effective lessons.
8. Trainees receive significant training in core subjects. They receive sessions on a range of subjects and gain much from their practical experience on school placements. Following stage 1 of the inspection, CETT added a training session on modern foreign languages (MFL) and reviewed how well technology was covered. Former trainees reported that their school placements helped them to appreciate the curriculum requirements in technology. However, in discussions with inspectors they said that they were less confident in teaching MFL.
9. CETT providers are strongly aware of the emotional resilience and commitment required of the teaching profession and therefore test out trainees' personal attributes at the application stage. This focus is retained throughout training so that support and encouragement are always on hand, balanced with high expectations of professional behaviours and attitudes. During school placements, trainees work closely with class teachers to build on their own skills. All trainees value the time spent in schools either as placements or visits. They were unanimous in their belief that their placements ensured good practical experience.
10. CETT creates trainees and NQTs who are highly respected. By the time they enter the profession, much of their teaching is good. Headteachers and induction tutors confirmed that NQTs are well prepared for their employment and responsibilities. They believed that the assessments of trainees were accurate and their induction targets identified the most pertinent priorities for ongoing development. NQTs enter the profession able to 'hit the ground running', particularly in managing challenging classes, setting clear boundaries and demonstrating high levels of mutual respect. As a result, pupils settle quickly and try hard to live up to expectations of them.

11. Many of the trainees and NQTs observed demonstrated high expectations of pupils. They ensured that mathematical concepts, resources, tasks and challenges successfully deepened pupils' knowledge and understanding. In English lessons trainees and NQTs were able to draw on a range of engaging stimulus and create clear links between shared learning objectives and planned tasks. As a consequence, pupils were suitably challenged and motivated to do their best. Trainees and NQTs have a suitable level of confidence and competence in teaching phonics and physical education. They are aware of the range of approaches, available resources and the necessary skills to secure pupils' development. Occasionally, the slow pace of lessons and planned tasks which failed to sufficiently support or challenge pupils of different abilities prevented pupils from making the progress of which they were capable, particularly the most able pupils.
12. NQTs are well prepared to adopt the wider professional responsibilities of their teaching posts. One headteacher said of her newly appointed teacher, 'You'd never know she was an NQT.' All of the NQTs visited had quickly established themselves within the professional community of the school. They contributed confidently to meetings and training but knew where to seek expertise when needed. For example, one NQT worked closely with the school's special education needs coordinator to ensure that her pupils had the appropriate, well-targeted support. Induction tutors reported on the willingness of NQTs to engage in their own professional development. Some NQTs are rightly considering how best to gain relevant experience to help them prepare for future leadership roles.
13. Training sessions regarding assessment at the end of the course helped trainees gain clarity about end-of-year age-related expectations. Their school placements helped them to appreciate that schools adopted a variety of systems to track pupils' progress. However, trainees and NQTs were less secure in making formative assessments of their pupils to inform future planning or amend their teaching within lessons. Leaders have now added a training session on assessment before the trainees' first placement. Trainees will have a school-based task and opportunities to observe and record how experienced colleagues assess day to day.
14. NQTs who trained with CETT make a strong contribution to the supply of good or better teachers in local schools. Almost all trainees completed their training and the small number who did not received substantial support leading up to their decision to leave. In 2016 and 2017, all trainees who completed the course gained employment at the end of their training.
15. The partnership fully complies with the ITT criteria. It also meets all relevant safeguarding and other statutory requirements for promoting equality and diversity.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

All Saints Church of England Primary School, West Bromwich

Clifton Primary School Birmingham

Devonshire Infant Academy, Smethwick

Devonshire Junior Academy, Smethwick

Fibbersley Park Primary Academy, Willenhall

Northfield Manor Primary Academy Birmingham

Parkfield Community School, Birmingham

Rowley Park Primary Academy Stafford

Victoria Park Primary Academy, Smethwick

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70326
Inspection number	10022283
Inspection dates	08/05/2017
Stage 1	
Stage 2	25/09/2017
Lead inspector	Deana Holdaway HMI
Type of ITE partnership	School Centred ITT
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Previous inspection report	Not applicable
Provider address	Victoria Academies Trust 99 Ballot Street Smethwick B66 3HH



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