

# Centre for Research in Early Childhood Early Years Partnership SCITT

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates    Stage 1: 22 May 2017    Stage 2: 13 November 2017

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This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and one 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 from 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

## Information about the primary partnership

- The Centre for Research in Early Childhood Early Years Partnership (CREC EYP) provides early primary phase school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS). CREC EYP is a small SCITT provider based in St Thomas Centre Nursery School and Children's Centre in Birmingham. In 2016, the partnership expanded to include Cambridge Nursery Schools Teaching Schools Alliance, and a second School Direct cohort was established with Huntingdon Nursery School as the lead school. CREC EYP originated from a partnership of the Birmingham Nursery Schools Teaching School Alliance with the EYP Centre for Research in Early Childhood and developed a teacher training approach specialising in early years.
- St Thomas Centre Nursery School is the lead school and administrative centre for the Schools Direct cohort on behalf of the West Midlands regions. At the time of stage 1 of the inspection, there were 13 trainees in Cambridgeshire and five in the West Midlands. The SCITT operates across four local authorities: Birmingham, Cambridgeshire, Coventry and Solihull. There are currently 40 schools in the partnership. All schools were judged to be outstanding or good by Ofsted at their last inspection.
- CREC EYP is a provider of School Direct training. The course lasts for one year and leads to QTS. The course carries 60 credits towards a master's degree.
- The SCITT works in partnership with Birmingham City University for academic accreditation and Wandsworth SCITT for external moderation.
- 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 five schools and observed eight trainees teach. During stage 2, inspectors visited nine schools and observed nine newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach.
- Across both stages of the inspection, inspectors held discussions with trainees or NQTs, school-based mentors, class teachers, induction tutors and headteachers. Inspectors also met partnership representatives and trainers. In addition, inspectors had telephone conversations with four headteachers or assistant headteachers, two NQTs and one induction tutor.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including training files and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors looked at 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 to confirm that the partnership met all statutory criteria and requirements for initial teacher training and for safeguarding.

## **Inspection team**

Deana Holdaway HMI (lead inspector, stage 2) (assistant lead inspector, stage 1)

Heather Simpson HMI (lead inspector, stage 1)

Rob Hackfath HMI (assistant lead inspector, stage 2)

Joanne Evans OI (team inspector, stage 2)

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

### **Key strengths of the primary partnership**

- CREC EYP has a strong and deeply rooted ambition to produce highly competent early years specialist practitioners and future leaders.
- CREC EYP has a well-established research-based vision for excellent early years provision which shines through its philosophy and practice.
- Leaders are able to reflect, self-evaluate, develop on-going improvements and keep training up to date and purposeful.
- High-quality training capitalises on local expertise and promotes trainees' academic and pedagogical understanding.
- High-quality school- and nursery-based training ensures that trainees see educational theory rooted in successful practice. Trainees value working with up-to-date and experienced practitioners on a daily basis.
- Trainees and NQTs are reflective, demonstrate strengths in many of the teachers' standards and exhibit very high standards of professional conduct.
- Leaders are uncompromising in their selection and recruitment of trainees who are resilient and willing to act on advice and guidance.
- 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 are provided with sufficient experience of Reception and key stage 1 year groups to further develop their readiness for employment
- provide more opportunities for nursery-based trainees to apply their knowledge and develop their practice in the Reception and key stage 1 curriculum
- ensure that trainees purposefully deploy additional adults in the classroom so that pupils are supported effectively at all times.

## Inspection judgements

1. CREC EYP's vision for ongoing improvement is underpinned by a shared ambition for excellence. Leaders and partners at all levels share a passion for high-quality early years provision. CREC EYP is driven by its determination to create highly skilled and knowledgeable teachers with the potential to become future leaders to further raise the profile and importance of first-rate early years education.
2. The strategic group and management team demonstrate high levels of expertise and experience in school leadership, early years practice and educational research. They have successfully developed a model of 'one SCITT with two strands' based in Birmingham and Cambridgeshire to further capitalise on available expertise. Leaders readily identify specialisms within the partnership schools to strengthen training programmes. Placements and planned visits for trainees enable them to experience a diverse range of settings and schools.
3. Both partners contribute fully to identifying further improvements and reviewing their success against agreed actions. CREC EYP successfully builds on self-evaluations to create a 'climate of dialogue' focused on improvement. Planned actions are practical and well-informed by leaders' close analysis of trainees' progress over time, accurate self-assessment and external evaluations. All targets for ongoing development are realistic and achievable but retain a sense of ambition and purpose.
4. Following the identification in stage 1 of inconsistencies in the quality of mentoring, leaders speedily took action to bring about improvement. CREC EYP provided training for mentors and communicated clear expectations of the mentors' responsibilities based firmly on the national standards expected of mentors. In addition, CREC EYP revised all mentoring documentation to ensure that feedback to trainees focused precisely on their progress against the teachers' standards. Support mentors check on the quality of mentoring to ensure that CREC EYP's expectations are met consistently across the partnership. Programme managers closely monitor records of meetings to speedily identify emerging weaknesses and inform future training.
5. Local headteachers and representatives from both areas contribute fully to trainee recruitment. The agreed criteria for trainee selection is suitably detailed and requires appropriate levels of qualifications, evidence of the necessary aptitudes for teaching and a requirement to demonstrate a capacity for learning. Leaders explained that they must be sure that each successful recruit is, 'someone we believe we would employ following training'. All trainees who left in 2017 exceeded the minimum level of practice expected of teachers. All trainees successfully found employment by the end of their training in 2016 and 2017.

6. CREC EYP leaders readily make use of available expertise to ensure good-quality training. Trainees value the training led by specialists and time working alongside practitioners who are, 'passionate about their subjects or areas of expertise'. They appreciate the time given to open discussion to explore their understanding and share ideas for future practice.
7. Training programmes prepare trainees and NQTs to accurately identify and assess pupils' learning difficulties, provide suitable support and appropriately amend future lesson plans. NQTs confidently accept the responsibility to meet pupils' initial needs before referring concerns to the special educational needs coordinators. They are well informed about the range of expertise available and how they should work with external agencies and parents to secure specialist support when needed.
8. Many of the trainees and NQTs observed during inspection demonstrate strengths when teaching mathematics and, as a consequence, make a positive impact on their pupils' learning. They ensure that mathematical concepts are reinforced well with practical resources and purposeful tasks. Their displays in classrooms provide reminders, explanations and examples of mathematical terms so that pupils can independently seek the help they need.
9. All of the trainees and NQTs demonstrate high levels of skill in managing pupils' behaviour. They exhibit mutual respect and sensitively correct pupils who occasionally wander from the excellent behaviour expected of them. The pupils know the daily routines so that no time is wasted and they quickly settle to whole class, group or individual sessions and tasks.
10. NQTs who trained with CREC EYP make a strong contribution to the supply of good or better teachers in local schools. They demonstrate considerable strengths against all of the teachers' standards. Headteachers and induction tutors confirmed that NQTs were accurately assessed at the end of their training, and targets for their continued development were, in the main, appropriate and specific.
11. All NQTs observed create stimulating, well-organised classrooms. They encourage pupils to contribute their knowledge to discussions and respond to carefully targeted questioning. NQTs plan lessons which engage, motivate and support pupils' ongoing progress. They make good use of available time and promote a love of learning. Those NQTs employed in Reception classes are getting to grips with baseline profiling with appropriate support from colleagues. NQTs reflect carefully on their practice and consider carefully how to ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress. All NQTs observed established, good professional relationships with staff, pupils and parents. They have become self-directed learners and seek additional opportunities to support their induction into the profession.

12. Observations at stage 1 of the inspection showed trainees' high level of competence when teaching phonics or other areas of learning to nursery classes. They taught phonics with precision and clarity. In addition, they ensured that children's learned skills were reinforced and applied in their spelling and writing. Trainees received a range of talks as well as observations in physical education (PE). They took time to consider school schemes of work and observed sports coaches. When leading other areas of learning, trainees confidently and clearly modelled appropriate subject-related vocabulary and expected the same from children. Trainees planned tasks which quickly engaged children's interest. Children knew what was expected of them and could make informed choices.
13. The majority of trainees are placed in nursery settings for most of their training time. However, most of the trainees found employment in Reception or key stage 1 classes. Some of these NQTs expressed a lack of confidence in teaching the full breadth of the curriculum and assuring age-related expectations in Reception and Years 1 and 2 classes. All trainees experience a placement in a key stage 1 class, but last year many of them missed key lessons such as PE because they were attending training sessions. CREC EYP has amended the timing of training sessions for this academic year to reduce trainees' time out of classes. Other NQTs were confident to teach phonics in a nursery setting but were less familiar with developing the necessary skills in Reception or Year 1. All NQTs acknowledged that they had received training in these key areas, but they felt they lacked the practical experience of developing what they had learned with pupils over time. Some of the NQTs observed at stage 2 of the inspection did not effectively deploy teaching assistants during taught sessions.
14. Almost all trainees completed their training in 2016 and 2017 and the small number who did not received substantial professional and pastoral support leading up to their decision to leave.
15. The partnership fully complies with the ITT criteria. CREC EYP 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 NQTs' teaching:

Allenscroft Children's Centre, Birmingham

Castle Bromwich Infant and Nursery School, Birmingham

Chivenor Primary School, Birmingham

Cromwell Academy, Huntingdon

Godmanchester Community Academy, Cambridgeshire

Histon Nursery School, Cambridgeshire

Huntingdon Nursery School, Cambridgeshire

Manea Community Primary School, Cambridgeshire

Pendragon Community Primary School, Cambridgeshire

Shenley Fields Nursery School, Birmingham

Stoke Heath Primary School, Coventry

St Thomas Centre Nursery School, Birmingham

Westwood Community Primary School, Cambridgeshire

## ITE partnership details

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Stage 2	13–15 November 2017
Lead inspector	Deana Holdaway HMI
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Early years and primary
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Previous inspection report	N/A
Provider address	St Thomas Centre Nursery School Bell Barn Road Birmingham B15 2AF





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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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