

United Teaching National SCITT

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 12 June 2017

Stage 2: 20 November 2017

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) 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 each phase and separate route 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

	Primary and secondary 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

Primary and secondary routes

Information about this ITE partnership

- United Teaching is a national school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnership run by United Learning multi-academy trust. It is organised into three geographical hubs – south, north west and Yorkshire and Humber – overseen by one executive team.
- There are over 50 schools in the trust, including primary, secondary, all-through and independent, many of which offer placements to trainees. The lead school is Paddington Academy in Westminster, London.
- The SCITT offers a one-year full-time course leading to qualified teacher status (QTS). Trainees are also awarded the postgraduate certificate in education, validated by the University College London, Institute of Education, on successful completion of the course.
- In stage one of this inspection, there were 96 trainees on the course. This comprised 22 on the primary route and 74 on the secondary route. Secondary trainees were specialising in one of the following subjects: biology; business studies; chemistry; computer science; design and technology; English; geography; history; mathematics; modern foreign languages (French and Spanish); physical education (PE); physics; and religious education (RE). Trainees were following either salaried or tuition fee routes.
- In stage two of this inspection, 58 trainees had embarked on the course, including eight primary trainees.

Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited seven partnership schools during stage one of this inspection. They observed the teaching of nine secondary and four primary trainees.
- During stage two, four primary and eight secondary newly qualified teachers (NQTs) were observed in five partnership and four non-partnership schools.
- Inspectors held meetings with the national SCITT leads and other SCITT leaders; the chief executive officer, the accounting officer and representatives of the executive board; trainees, NQTs, trainees' mentors, NQTs' mentors and visiting professional mentors; and school leaders. Some discussions and meetings were carried out on the telephone or by video calling.
- The inspectors evaluated a wide range of SCITT documentation, including documents relating to: quality assurance; self-evaluation and improvement-planning; information about trainees' attainment; recruitment and selection; internal and external moderation; course structure and content; and feedback from trainees gathered by the provider.

Inspection team

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Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the primary and secondary partnership

- The national SCITT leads are highly professional, upholding dedication and diligence to the successful establishment of the SCITT. They ensure that communications across the partnership are efficient, regular and frequent. Technology is used well to facilitate this effective communication so that any disadvantage of geographical distance between schools is generally overcome.
- The national SCITT leads and visiting professional mentors have a thorough knowledge of individual trainees and their mentors. They know well the strengths and areas of best practice across the partnership. Leaders consider each trainees' needs to complete the course successfully.
- Good-quality centre and school-based training ensures that trainees exceed the minimum level of practice expected of teachers and attain good outcomes.
- Trainees and NQTs apply effectively their school's behaviour management policy, promoting a calm and industrious atmosphere in their lessons. They use questioning well to develop pupils' vocabulary and clarify any misunderstandings. Trainees are well organised and use a variety of teaching strategies and resources to motivate their pupils and stimulate learning.
- Mentors have high expectations and are ambitious for their trainees. They evaluate trainees' performance accurately and set appropriate targets to support their progression. Mentors play a valuable role in supporting the development of their trainees' subject knowledge.
- Leaders' regular tracking of trainees' progress enables prompt identification of any areas needing improvement so that additional support and training are provided. Actions taken to support those trainees identified as at risk of withdrawal from the course have been effective in enabling them to complete it successfully.
- Mentors and NQTs benefit from high-quality professional development opportunities across the partnership, such as the leadership pathways for NQTs.
- Leaders identify accurately the strengths of the partnership and have a clear strategic vision for further developments and improvements. Leaders are responsive to external advice and support as well as feedback from trainees.

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

The partnership must:

- ensure that all trainees have access to high-quality training in their placement schools that includes opportunities to:
 - develop their subject knowledge
 - work with pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities
 - work with pupils who speak English as an additional language
 - plan effectively for most-able pupils
- ensure that all primary trainees have access to high-quality training in their placement schools that includes opportunities to:
 - observe good practice and teach phonics
 - observe good practice and teach PE
- ensure that centre-based training in safeguarding is reinforced effectively and consistently on school placements so that trainees are able to apply a thorough understanding to their practice in a range of schools.

Inspection judgements

1. The national SCITT leads are highly committed, competent and ambitious. They set fine examples of the high level of professionalism that they expect from all stakeholders in the partnership. They have played a crucial part in the successful and rapid establishment of the SCITT.
2. The executive team has an ambitious and coherent strategic plan for the further development of the SCITT. They have high expectations of partnership schools. There is a clear collective responsibility for the maintenance of existing good standards and the rapid implementation of new and revised systems for continued improvement.
3. All primary and secondary trainees are awarded QTS by the end of their training and exceed the minimum level of practice. Most trainees attain a high standard and demonstrate excellent practice in most of the teachers' standards. There is some variation in the rates of improvement and attainment between groups, routes and phases, with, for example, secondary trainees demonstrating a higher standard of attainment across the teachers' standards compared with primary trainees.
4. NQTs are prepared well to take on their roles with confidence and commitment. Building on the skills and knowledge gained through their centre-based training

and school experiences, they are ready to fulfil their responsibilities and to thrive.

5. Trainees and NQTs forge positive relationships with their pupils and their colleagues. They typically manage pupils' behaviour well, with high expectations for pupils' attentiveness and promoting calm and industrious working environments.
6. Primary and secondary trainees and NQTs rapidly acquire a range of effective assessment strategies to inform their planning and teaching. NQTs adapt swiftly to new policies and practice expected in their new schools so they assess pupils' progress accurately and regularly.
7. Trainees and NQTs use questioning well to clarify pupils' understanding and misconceptions. They develop and promote pupils' use of technical terminology and more complex vocabulary. NQTs are well organised and make effective use of a wide range of resources and technology to inspire their pupils' learning. However, on occasions, trainees and NQTs do not recognise swiftly enough that the most able pupils are ready to move on to more complex tasks.
8. Trainees acquire a range of effective strategies to support groups of pupils, for example pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders organise contrasting placements thoughtfully to enable trainees to work with pupils from diverse backgrounds and in a range of schools including those requiring improvement. When this works well, trainees gain valuable experience of teaching pupils from different ranges of abilities and socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds compared to their main placement schools. However, in some cases trainees have had limited opportunities to work with pupils with SEN and/or disabilities or EAL and so are less well prepared to teach pupils with these needs.
9. Trainees highlight their mentors' support in boosting their subject knowledge and pedagogy. Mentors facilitate trainees' observation of good practice and suggest informative reading and helpful resources. These opportunities are organised on a bespoke basis according to levels of expertise available in placement schools. Second placements are particularly helpful for secondary trainees to enable them to develop their subject pedagogy further. Overall, secondary NQTs have good subject knowledge. Secondary trainees improve their knowledge beyond their subject specialisms; for example, biology trainees observe physics A-level lessons and history trainees teach A-level politics. Overall, primary NQTs feel prepared to teach the breadth of the primary curriculum. They are able to draw routinely on their training to develop their teaching of mathematics. However, there is not a consistent approach to using subject audits to identify key areas in which trainees need more experience. There is some variation in how well trainees are able to develop their subject

knowledge in their placement schools. This is particularly the case for primary trainees.

10. Inspectors saw examples of excellent practice and evidence of high standards of training, especially in the base schools. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of training and range of experiences available to trainees across the partnership. Opportunities vary for primary trainees to develop confidence and practice in the teaching of PE and phonics. Some NQTs feel more secure than others about teaching PE and phonics because of their different experiences in their placement school. Similarly, there is considerable variation in trainees' and NQTs' experience and understanding of phases other than those they are training to teach. While some trainees, sometimes on second placements, have observed and possibly taught different phases, others have had limited opportunities to do so. Leaders have addressed these inconsistencies since stage one of this inspection. They have developed a more systematic overview of quality assurance across the partnership to ensure equality of opportunities for trainees to access high-quality training. Leaders now ensure that all trainees observe good practice and teach PE and phonics before they complete their training and gain appropriate experience of different phases.
11. Visiting professional mentors play an important role in supporting mentors and improving the quality of mentoring. Through joint observations, review of associated paperwork and target-setting, they ensure mentors' evaluations are accurate in terms of trainees' strengths and areas for improvement. In a few cases, gradings are over-generous. Leaders are taking appropriate action to ensure that assessments for trainees are consistently accurate.
12. Visiting professional mentors provide clear guidance on how mentors need to improve their practice. Leaders' newly revised documentation and procedures ensure that development points for mentors are explicit, linked to the mentors' standards. Mentors find their mandatory training helpful, including the six-weekly online sessions. Leaders' weekly email bulletins also ensure that mentors know the priorities for improvement across the partnership.
13. Trainees value the regular contact they have with their mentors, at their weekly meetings and at other times informally. Mentors' training ensures that their evaluations of trainees' teaching and targets are appropriately applied to the teachers' standards and inform specific targets to support trainees' progression. The SCITT's documentation provides clear guidance on all stakeholders' relative responsibilities. Trainees' folders are well kept as a result. Mentors help trainees if their organisational skills need to be better so that their time management and planning improve.
14. Trainees and mentors appreciate the centre-based training sessions that enable them to share ideas and good practice. The summer institute provides a strong

foundation for trainees at the start of their course, preparing them well for what is expected of them in school. NQTs value their opportunities to contribute to training, and provide excellent role models for the new trainees. Leaders manage well the use of video-conferencing facilities to enable trainees and mentors to work together in spite of large geographical distances between their schools. In addition, leaders have responded to feedback from trainees and NQTs by setting up regional training centres to reduce the amount of travelling needed to attend centre-based training.

15. Trainees receive safeguarding training as a matter of priority at the start of their course, including in the summer institute. There is some variation in how well this is reinforced and built upon in placement schools. As a result, there is inconsistency in how familiar trainees and NQTs are with key national and local safeguarding risks. They are generally well-informed about the risks of cyberbullying and the importance of e-safety, applying this routinely to their teaching. While some are confident and well-versed in issues relating to, for example, the 'Prevent' duty, radicalisation and risks of extremism, others' awareness is vague and superficial.
16. Communications across the partnership are efficient, frequent and regular, including weekly contact between the schools and the national SCITT leads. Leaders' comprehensive review of trainees' attainment and targets ensures that underachievement by individuals and groups is identified rapidly. Trainees are supported well if they are having difficulties completing the course and are falling behind. Interventions and revisions to training have been effective in improving completion rates so that they are now above national levels. The attainment of male trainees has improved as a result of effective targeted support for this group.
17. Leaders' self-evaluation of outcomes informs longer-term improvement planning appropriately. Leaders are responsive to feedback from a range of sources to support this process.
18. Leaders have well-organised recruitment and selection processes. They adopt a range of marketing strategies to successfully attract applications from trainees representing a diversity of backgrounds and experience. Leaders have rightly adapted the recruitment process further this year to enable more thorough assessment of trainees' resilience and commitment. As a result, no trainees have left the course this academic year.
19. The promotion of continuing professional and leadership development from the earliest stages of a teacher's career is integral to the ethos of United Teaching to 'grow a teacher'. NQTs and mentors relish the encouragement to pursue their career aspirations through further training and leadership responsibilities. Employment rates are above national and regional levels.

20. Documents accompanying NQTs as they embark on their role comprise the United Teaching record of achievement and aspiration. These generally support smooth transition and inform the key areas of focus for the NQTs' further development. This is especially the case when NQTs continue employment in their main placement school. There are a few instances, when NQTs have taken up posts in non-partnership schools, when transition documents have been less helpful to school leaders. This is when targets have not been sufficiently detailed and do not match the new school's evaluations.
21. The SCITT is compliant with the initial teacher training statutory criteria and requirements and all relevant legislation.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and NQTs' teaching

Barnsley Academy, Barnsley, South Yorkshire

Caterham School, Caterham, Surrey

Guildford High School, Guildford, Surrey

Hanwell Fields Community School, Banbury, Oxfordshire

The Hurlingham Academy, Hammersmith and Fulham, London

Kettering Buccleuch Academy, Kettering, Northamptonshire

Lambeth Academy, Lambeth, London

North Oxfordshire Academy, Banbury, Oxfordshire

Paddington Academy, Westminster, London

Swindon Academy, Swindon, Wiltshire

The following schools which are not part of the partnership were also visited to observe NQTs' teaching:

Collis Primary School, Teddington, Richmond-upon-Thames, London

Horizon Community College, Barnsley, South Yorkshire

St James' Church of England Primary School, Southwark, London

St John Bosco College, Wandsworth, London

ITE partnership details

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Lead inspector	Amanda Carter-Fraser HMI
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
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Date of previous inspection	N/A
Previous inspection report	https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user
Provider address	Paddington Academy 50 Marylands Road London W9 2DR



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