

Cheshire East SCITT Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 19 June 2017 Stage 2: 27 November 2017

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and an Ofsted Inspector (OI) 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

	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

Information about the secondary partnership

- The Cheshire East school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnership provides secondary training (11 to 16 age range) for graduates. Trainees who successfully complete their training programme are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS) and gain a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) and 60 Master's credits 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 for QTS.
- The SCITT is based at the lead school, Holmes Chapel Comprehensive. The partnership consists of 11 secondary schools based in Cheshire East, including a faith school and a free school. There are two associate partner schools, one special school in Cheshire West and Chester, and an all-through school in North Manchester.
- During stage 1 of the inspection, eight trainees were following training routes specialising in English, mathematics or modern foreign languages.
- During stage 2, 13 trainees were being trained in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, chemistry, history or geography.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- The inspector visited four schools at stage 1, observing six trainees teach their subject specialisms. She reviewed trainees' teaching and standards files, subject knowledge audits, tasks and assignments.
- The inspector held meetings with trainees, subject and professional mentors, headteachers, leaders and managers, trainers, members of the strategic board, subject specialist leads, representatives from the quality assurance committee and members of the compliance team.
- The inspector checked that the partnership was compliant with statutory requirements, including the ITT criteria. She also reviewed a range of evidence provided by the partnership. This included: the self-evaluation document; improvement plan; employment and completion rates; recruitment and selection materials; trainee tracking documents; external examiner reports; the partnership agreement; the SCITT handbook; the content of the professional studies programme; and trainees' assignments and their assessment information.
- During stage 2 of the inspection, the inspector visited four schools and observed four newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach. She met with trainees, NQTs, subject and professional mentors, subject specialist leads, members of the strategic board and senior leaders from partner and employing schools. The inspector also reviewed career-entry profiles and the key actions taken by leaders and managers to improve the quality of training and outcomes between the two stages of the inspection.

- The inspector took into account eight responses received to the trainee online questionnaire in the summer of 2017.

Inspection team

Janet Palmer OI (lead inspector, stage 1)

Anne Seneviratne HMI (lead inspector, stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the secondary partnership

- This close-knit partnership is built on strong relationships and effective collaboration. Leaders model this way of working to their trainees. As NQTs, they are equipped with the skills to form similarly positive relationships with their pupils.
- The pastoral care of trainees is exemplary. The personalised support that trainees receive has a significant impact on the good progress that they make and the high standards that they reach.
- Leaders ensure that the training programme is responsive and flexible. Training throughout the course focuses on meeting the needs of individual trainees. The overall effectiveness of the training programme means that NQTs are well-prepared for their roles and are able to make a strong contribution to their employing schools.
- Trainees have nothing but praise for the support that they receive from the SCITT director and administrator. Trainees also benefit enormously from the support and expertise of their mentors. High-quality mentoring is a particularly strong feature throughout the partnership.
- The training programme enables trainees to develop good subject knowledge. A strong team of specialist leaders ensures that trainees have a good understanding of the pedagogy, curriculum and assessment issues in their respective subjects.
- Recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous and successful. Consequently, completion rates are very high and every trainee gains employment in the teaching profession.

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

The partnership should:

- develop further the opportunities for trainees to deepen their understanding of the needs of disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able
- ensure that it engages more strongly with schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances and those judged to require further improvement.

Inspection judgements

1. All trainees make strong progress on the training programme and exceed the minimum level required by the teachers' standards. The quality of all trainees' teaching over time is good and some is outstanding. There are no significant attainment differences between groups of trainees.
2. Employment rates are particularly impressive. In both cohorts, every trainee has been successful in securing a teaching post. This reflects how highly regarded trainees are, both within the partnership and further afield.
3. Completion rates are very high. This is a result of highly effective selection procedures and the excellent pastoral care that trainees receive throughout the programme.
4. Recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous. Leaders only select trainees if they demonstrate the necessary skills, aptitude and passion to become effective teachers. The trainees selected are able to cope with the demands of the course and meet the high expectations that leaders have of them.
5. The very personalised pastoral care that trainees receive is exceptional and contributes significantly to the partnership's high completion, attainment and employment rates. Trainees speak of feeling 'completely supported'. One NQT described the amount of support that she received as 'incredible'. Trainees particularly value how accessible and responsive the SCITT director and administrator are.
6. Leaders ensure that the training programme is tailored to meet the needs of the trainees. As the course progresses, leaders respond to trainees' individual requirements swiftly and effectively. In this way, leaders make certain that all trainees are fully equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding that they require to make a successful and confident start to their teaching career. One NQT commented, 'The bespoke nature of the training was absolutely brilliant.'
7. NQTs are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of their course. They would all recommend the SCITT to others, and indeed have done so. These very favourable views were summed up in one NQT's comment, 'I have nothing but

positive things to say about the SCITT.’ Trainees are equally full of praise for all aspects of the programme. They told the inspector how pleased they were that they had chosen to train at this SCITT.

8. Trainees and NQTs are very reflective practitioners. As a result, they are able to identify their own strengths and areas for development accurately. Effective mentoring ensures that trainees’ reflections always focus on the impact that their teaching has on pupils’ progress.
9. It is clear from talking to pupils and looking at the work in their books that NQTs’ teaching is enabling them to make good progress. One pupil was very keen to tell the inspector the difference it had made to her learning since the NQT had started teaching her class a few weeks ago. This was supported by the quality of work in her book. Evidence from observations and scrutiny of pupils’ books shows that trainees and NQTs are able to successfully develop pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills in their teaching.
10. Trainees respond very positively to the high expectations that leaders have of them. In turn, the trainees and NQTs have the same high expectations of their pupils. In almost all classes seen during this inspection, trainees and NQTs challenged pupils, regardless of their ability, to achieve high standards. Because this was done in a supportive way, pupils relished this challenge, which had a positive impact on their progress.
11. The ability of trainees and NQTs to form positive relationships with their pupils is particularly impressive. Pupils value these strong relationships based on mutual respect. Trainees and NQTs have a strong classroom presence that enables them to create purposeful learning environments. They help their pupils to develop habits for effective learning. High-quality training on behaviour management means that trainees and NQTs are well equipped to deal effectively with any low-level disruption that may occur in their lessons.
12. During stage 1 of the inspection, the inspector identified that some trainees were not using questioning effectively to check pupils’ understanding and any misconceptions. Subject specialists now have a sharper focus on this aspect in their sessions. In addition, questioning is the topic of one of the centre-based training sessions in the new year. Observations during stage 2 of the inspection provided evidence of NQTs using questioning skilfully to check pupils’ understanding and extend their thinking.
13. Trainees benefit from the expertise of a strong team of subject specialist leads. The programme provides opportunities for trainees to develop, in depth, their understanding of subject-specific knowledge and pedagogy. This means that as NQTs they have a good grasp of curriculum and assessment issues within their subject areas. Subject specialists and mentors check trainees’ subject

knowledge audits frequently throughout the course to ensure ongoing competence and confidence in all areas.

14. In response to feedback at the end of stage 1 of the inspection, leaders have now amended the programme so that subject sessions are more evenly distributed throughout the year. The current trainees feel that this is giving them the opportunity to apply the theory from the sessions in their classroom practice. All the subject leaders are now delivering common themes on the same days, which link more closely with the generic weekly training sessions.
15. In order to develop trainees' subject knowledge further, the partnership has arranged for each of them to join the relevant professional association. Trainees also have access to online subject information. Leaders believe that this will help trainees to keep abreast of developments in their specialisms. Leaders acknowledge that they must monitor and evaluate the impact of these new developments throughout the year.
16. Trainees value the support and guidance that they receive from their subject mentors in schools. Mentors provide the right balance of support and challenge to help trainees develop their teaching skills successfully. High-quality training for all mentors and tight quality assurance procedures ensure that there is consistently strong mentoring across the partnership.
17. Inspection evidence indicates that trainees and NQTs do not have a deep enough understanding of the learning needs of disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able. Some trainees and NQTs have a tendency to conflate disadvantage with low ability or poor behaviour. In response to feedback on this issue at stage 1 of the inspection, leaders have arranged a training session on disadvantaged pupils. This had not taken place at the time of the inspection so it is not possible to comment on the impact it might have on improving trainees' understanding and practice in this area. Leaders acknowledge that the geographical context of the partnership means that there are very limited opportunities for trainees to experience meaningful placements and training in schools that are in challenging socio-economic circumstances.
18. Within the context of the schools in the partnership, leaders ensure that trainees have the opportunity to experience two contrasting placements. They also give them the opportunity to teach across the full age and ability range. Leaders recognise that most of the partnership schools have low proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Therefore, all trainees have at least one experience in other schools to develop their understanding of teaching and learning in these areas. Trainees feel that these experiences have a significant impact on improving their overall practice. Trainees also undertake a primary and special school placement and have the opportunity to experience post-16

teaching. They also have the opportunity to experience teaching English as an additional language.

19. Observations during the inspection show that trainees and NQTs are generally very adept at meeting the different needs of individual pupils during lessons. This includes those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The very effective way that trainees and NQTs do this has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
20. Transition arrangements between placements are very effective. For example, mentors from the two schools jointly observe the trainee and have a handover meeting. This ensures that the receiving mentor has a full understanding of the trainee's progress, strengths and targets for development.
21. Employing schools receive a career-entry profile containing the NQT's strengths and targets for development in the induction period. One induction tutor spoke of how helpful this document was in 'starting the dialogue' with the NQT at the beginning of their teaching career. The SCITT director provides ongoing support for NQTs and keeps in contact with them and their employing schools. She visits all NQTs in their new schools during their first term in post. Leaders invite NQTs to attend any training at the partnership that is relevant to their ongoing development.
22. Induction tutors speak very highly of the NQTs' resilience and self-awareness. They consider them to be highly reflective about their own practice. NQTs are confident in their roles and able to contribute to the wider life of the school, for example by taking part in residentials.
23. To develop trainees' knowledge and understanding of aspects of inclusion, an area that was highlighted at stage 1, leaders have included additional sessions in the weekly Friday training programme. Since these sessions had not taken place at the time of the inspection, it is not possible to comment on their impact.
24. At stage 1 of the inspection, the inspector identified a gap in the equalities training concerning trainees' knowledge and understanding of issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. Leaders responded to this by organising training on this subject for the new cohort of trainees. Half of last year's cohort also attended this session. The training was very well received and trainees said that it has raised their awareness, particularly the importance of using inclusive language.
25. The training programme covers issues relating to safeguarding and bullying. However, at stage 1, the inspector identified that the training did not sufficiently address the link between safeguarding and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. In response to this, the SCITT director has joined the PSHE Education Association to keep up to date with current issues

and ideas. Centre-based training on PSHE education is scheduled for March and all NQTs have been invited. There is also a planned session on emotional and mental health education. Leaders' actions show that PSHE education now has a higher profile in the partnership. This should mean that trainees and NQTs value and recognise the importance that this area of the curriculum plays in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. Leaders plan to evaluate whether this is the case later in the year.

26. Leaders' assessment of trainees against the teachers' standards is very thorough throughout the course. This enables them to make accurate final judgements about trainees' attainment on completion of their training. Leaders also ensure that their assessments are accurate by undertaking frequent joint observations, for example with subject mentors, subject specialists, ITT leads and the SCITT director.
27. Honest and open professional relationships and effective collaboration are at the heart of this partnership's success. Leaders model these qualities to trainees. They have high expectations of themselves and their trainees. This has a positive impact on trainees' progress and attainment.
28. Engagement across the partnership is strong. Leaders from the different schools play an active role in all aspects of the programme, from recruitment and selection through to NQTs' professional development. Effective quality assurance systems throughout the partnership ensure that all trainees benefit from consistently high-quality mentoring and training.
29. Leaders are reflective and responsive. They look for ways to improve and take action in response to any areas of concern that are raised through internal or external reviews. For example, they understand that for the partnership to step up to the next level they must engage more strongly with schools that are not yet good.
30. The self-evaluation document is based on sound evidence, benchmarked against national data. The improvement plan reflects the priorities identified in the self-evaluation document. It includes clear actions to bring about the necessary improvements.
31. Leaders in the partnership talk of their vision in terms of 'growing our own' high-quality teachers of English Baccalaureate subjects. Discussions with the inspector explored how having a stronger engagement with schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances and those judged to require further improvement could have a greater impact on improving the quality of education for pupils across the region.
32. The SCITT director and administrator work together well to ensure that the management and organisation of all aspects of the programme are highly

effective. Trainees value how smoothly everything runs, which helps them with their own planning and organisation.

33. The partnership complies fully with all requirements for ITE and has strong systems in place to check and verify this. Safeguarding requirements are fully met. Equality of opportunity is threaded through all aspects of recruitment and selection and support for trainees.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

Alsager School, Stoke-on-Trent

Congleton High School, Congleton

Eaton Bank Academy, Congleton

Fallibroome Academy, Macclesfield

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School, Holmes Chapel

Malbank School, Nantwich

Shavington Academy, Shavington

ITE partnership details

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Stage 2	27–29 November 2017
Lead inspector	Janet Palmer OI (stage 1) Anne Seneviratne HMI (stage 2)
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Secondary
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Previous inspection report	N/A
Provider address	Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School Selkirk Drive Holmes Chapel Cheshire CW4 7DX



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