

Essex Primary SCITT ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report
Inspection dates 11–14 June 2018

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) 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

	Early years ITT (EYTS)
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

The early years ITT phase

Information about the early years ITT partnership

- Essex Primary SCITT ITE partnership provides an early years qualification over one year for graduates who are employed in a nursery or early years setting. Successful trainees who complete this route are awarded early years teacher status (EYTS)
- The early years initial teacher training (ITT) course consists of settings in four different local authorities.
- At the time of the re-inspection there were 23 trainees following this training route.

Information about the early years ITT inspection

- The re-inspection was carried out by two inspectors, who visited 10 settings. Trainees were observed teaching, and some received feedback from their mentors.
- The inspectors reviewed trainees' evidence files and held discussions with either their course mentors or work-based mentors. The inspectors considered the targets that had been provided for both trainees and former trainees. In addition to this, inspectors held meetings with course tutors and lead consultants about the quality of the central training.
- The inspectors reviewed the partnership's strategic improvement plan and a wide range of other documents, including the partnership's recruitment and selection procedures, trainee tracking and assessment information, evidence of how well trainees meet the early years teaching standards, training materials and the course handbook.
- Statutory safeguarding and compliance checks were made against the ITT requirements.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, HMI (lead inspector)

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Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the early years ITT partnership

- Since the previous inspection in November 2017, the early years ITT partnership has continued to develop at pace, under the careful guidance and determination

of the strategic director. Leaders' prompt and effective actions have ensured that trainees receive consistently high-quality training.

- Lead consultants and course mentors are very knowledgeable, effective and highly regarded by trainees. They have an accurate view of the strengths of the partnership and ongoing areas for improvement. Their strong focus on refining aspects of the central training and precise feedback to trainees indicate that there is clear capacity for further improvement.
- Trainees are highly successful. All trainees this year are due to complete their training to a high standard. Many have gained promotion and leadership positions because of studying for the EYTS qualification. They contribute effectively to the education of babies and children within the region.
- Trainees establish positive and productive relationships with their course mentors and each other. Trainees display exemplary professional conduct and high-quality skills in managing and promoting positive behaviour in children. They are highly motivated and very keen to learn.
- Leaders' strong reflective practice permeates all aspects of the partnership's work. Leaders attract trainees who become highly skilled at carefully planning and adapting learning activities, so children can develop well and make the best progress. Trainees reflect accurately on their own strengths and areas for further development.
- Placements are of a good quality. Trainees undertake placements for all the phases of 0–5 years. As a result, trainees have a secure understanding of child development. Most are adept at planning learning that meets the needs of the children in their care.

What does the early years ITT partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

- ensure that trainees are provided with further age-specific training and opportunities to develop children's early reading skills
- provide trainees with further opportunities to understand and plan for children who speak English as an additional language
- build on the knowledge and skills that trainees bring with them in a more timely and precise way
- make clear the requirements of the work-based mentor, so that roles and responsibilities are defined and applied consistently and that settings contribute more fully to the monitoring of trainees' progress
- ensure that the expertise in settings is used more fully to contribute to the design and delivery of training.

Inspection judgements

1. The improvements that were evident at the time of the previous inspection have continued and been sustained. Leaders continue to develop and refine the quality of training, so that it is resulting in better outcomes for all groups of trainees. The strategic director, together with her senior team, has built on an accurate understanding of what needed to be done to improve. They have focused carefully on the areas for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection and demonstrate a strong capacity for continued improvement.
2. The strategic director has set high expectations for herself and her team of leaders. She seeks ways to continually improve leaders' and mentors' practice and the provision for all trainees, so all can succeed. Evidence from meetings with course mentors and trainees indicates that there is a culture of high expectations and ongoing reflection.
3. Leaders use their strategic improvement plan well, so they continue to become highly effective in training and developing skilled early years teachers. They have set ambitious targets which clearly identify the areas for improvement and a realistic timescale by which to achieve their aims. Feedback from current trainees, course mentors, external quality assurance and the steering group has demonstrated that leaders have put into practice their plans and secured significant improvements. There is a clear evaluation of successes, which results in further plans for future development.
4. At the previous inspection, the roles and responsibilities of the new lead consultants were being developed. These consultants have continued to have a significant impact on increasing the effectiveness of the central training. As a result, the curriculum is well planned, and the quality of training continues to improve at pace. Currently, there are plans to increase the number of lead consultants to strengthen the leadership team further. One of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection was to improve the quality of training and mentoring for trainees. Lead consultants responded quickly and have ensured that the number of central training days has increased and the content is well considered. These days are well regarded by trainees. The enthusiasm of the tutors and the lead consultants effectively motivates trainees. Trainees particularly value the opportunities to work with their peers and the time trainees spend together discussing their progress.
5. Leaders have ensured that subject-specific central training in phonics and mathematics has been enhanced for the current trainees and continues to improve. The partnership commissions effective tutors from the primary phase. However, the development of trainees' secure understanding in promoting early reading for the specific age group they teach is not as well established and is an area for further improvement. Course-based mentors are typically skilled, knowledgeable and respected. They visit trainees more often than was previously the case. Trainees value the specific feedback and appropriate

challenge they receive during visits. One trainee's comment echoed the sentiments of others: 'My course mentor has helped me improve my confidence in my practice. She is very supportive; she is also challenging.'

6. Trainees' targets have become increasingly precise and, as a result, trainees know what they need to do to improve. Mentors inform the lead consultants of the strengths and weaknesses seen during these visits. This information is then effectively used to adapt the central training, with a focus on common areas of weakness.
7. The effectiveness of work-based mentors is more variable. The partnership is not clear enough about the expectations of work-based mentors. Settings often put in place effective mentoring procedures. Where this happens, work-based mentors make an important contribution to the progress trainees make. However, this is not consistent across the settings because the partnership has not laid out clear guidance and expectations for work-based mentors. Trainees value the day-to-day contact, support and care offered by their work-based mentors.
8. Former trainees have been provided with suitable targets for their ongoing development. Through additional network meetings, the needs of former trainees are being met and they feel supported.
9. Trainees show exemplary levels of personal and professional conduct. They are highly committed to working with 0–5 year olds. Trainees reflect effectively on their practice and demonstrate a high degree of motivation to succeed. Their portfolios are well kept and trainees' achievement in their assignments shows good progress over time, with many achieving high standards.
10. Trainees have a good understanding of age-related expectations and plan well for the differing needs of babies, toddlers and pre-school children. They use the information they hold to plan well for individuals, especially those who are most able. Their use of questioning and modelling of appropriate language is highly effective. Consequently, trainees extend the thinking of the most able children by asking challenging questions that encourage children to explain their answers, or by suggesting further activities.
11. Trainees develop children's knowledge and skills in mathematics well. Trainees appreciate the central training they receive and are supported well in their placements. They weave counting skills into the learning activities they plan. Children experience a wide range of practical and stimulating activities to develop their sense of number. Trainees are very successful at using the outdoor learning environments to support the development of mathematical language.

12. Trainees can identify children's barriers to learning, including those of children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and identify suitable activities to help children overcome these. However, some trainees are less confident when considering appropriate strategies for children who may speak English as an additional language. Leaders have firm plans to ensure that trainees visit settings that have a larger proportion of children from diverse backgrounds, but this is not currently in place.
13. Trainees demonstrate and fulfil their wider responsibilities well in their roles and placements. Their demonstration of this early years teachers' standard is a particular strength. Trainees contribute effectively to the life and ethos of the settings in which they work. Nursery and other setting managers confirm this to be the case. Many of the trainees have secured promotions or leadership positions following their successful completion of the course.
14. Outcomes are good. All trainees exceed the minimum standards expected by the end of their training, with a large proportion reaching an outstanding grade. Over time, completion rates are above average.
15. The partnership has taken effective steps to improve the accuracy and collection of assessment information. Trainees are assessed against each subset of the early years teachers' standards. The records the partnership holds are thorough and accurately show the progress that trainees make from the first set of observations in the autumn term. However, leaders do not use the information they gather about trainees' starting points in a timely way, so they can build on trainees' prior knowledge and skills. Measuring trainees' progress from their initial and audited starting points is an area requiring further improvement.
16. A few trainees have been chosen this year to trial a 'change project' to demonstrate their leadership skills. The impact of this project work has been highly successful for the trainees and the settings in which they work. Consequently, plans are underway to give every trainee the opportunity to carry out a project to extend their leadership experience.
17. Trainees have good opportunities to experience a range of high-quality placements. Leaders have created a good practice directory to enable trainees to identify and visit settings that offer a contrast to their place of employment. Consequently, trainees are building their knowledge and skills in working with babies and children who may be disadvantaged or who may have SEN and/or disabilities.
18. Trainees are accountable for children's progress. Most are adept at using assessment and observations to plan for the differing needs of young children and babies, so they develop well. Trainees are highly reflective about what has worked well and what could improve in their practice. They are very committed

to working with, and understanding the development of, the children in their care.

19. Trainees spoken with during the inspection value the placement opportunities to see how children develop in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. This was an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Through setting meaningful tasks for trainees to complete during the placements, leaders have ensured that each trainee has a good understanding of the continuum of learning beyond the early years.
20. Trainees have a secure understanding of their responsibilities regarding children's safety and are confident in reporting any concerns they may have.
21. The recruitment and selection of trainees are robust. Leaders now include settings as well as school partners in the recruitment process. Trainees state that, 'They set high expectations from the start for us to progress well.'
22. Leaders ensure that there is robust quality assurance of their work. Quality assurance is carried out internally by the lead consultants and through external verification of the quality of trainees' evidence. Both help to support the accuracy of leaders' judgements. Feedback from those who quality assure the work of the partnership confirms that the provision has significantly improved, and their assessment judgements are now accurate. Inspection evidence confirms this to be the case.
23. The partnership fully complies with the early years ITT requirements. Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. Trainees' qualifications and their suitability to work with children are checked and accurately recorded.

Annex: Partnership schools/settings

The following settings were visited to observe trainees' teaching:

Brampton Day Nursery, Huntingdon

Daisy Chain Playgroup, Southend

Little Acorns Pre-school, Leigh-on-Sea

Loddon Nursery School, Norwich

Mildene Playgroup, Colchester

Orchard Barns Kindergarten, Colchester

Shenfield Day Nursery, Brentwood

Sallywags Day Nursery, Cambridge

Whipper-Snappers Daycare Nursery and Kids Club, Felsted

Yaxley and Mellis Pre-school, Eye

ITE partnership details

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Phases provided	Early years
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Stage 2	13–15 November 2017
Previous inspection report	https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/2742759/urn/70092.pdf
Provider address	Essex Primary SCITT ITE Partnership c/o Moulsham Infant School Princes Road Chelmsford CM2 9DG



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