

Portsmouth Primary SCITT

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 18 June 2018 Stage 2: 12 November 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 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?	1
The outcomes for trainees	1
The quality of training across the partnership	1
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- Portsmouth Primary SCITT is a long-established primary partnership provider of school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT). It was originally created at a time when there was considered to be a shortage of primary teachers in Portsmouth. The programme was seen as a way of training high-quality teachers who would predominantly, although not exclusively, work in the city.
- The strategic leadership of the SCITT currently sits with the University of Chichester multi-academy trust (MAT). There is an executive committee, which is a subgroup of the larger management committee that is made up of the headteachers of all schools that are in the partnership. The University of Portsmouth, which awards the academic qualifications, is also represented on the management committee.
- The course currently runs from a base on the site of Beacon View Primary Academy, Portsmouth. It is a one-year full-time primary course covering one of two possible age ranges: five to 11 years and three to seven years. As in recent years, at stage 1 of the inspection, all 27 trainees were on the five to 11 route. As well as qualified teacher status (QTS), the training leads to the award of either a postgraduate or professional graduate certificate of education (PGCE).

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- There were two inspectors at both stages of the inspection.
- Inspectors visited a total of eight schools across the two stages to gather evidence about the effectiveness of the teacher training partnership. At stage 2, these visits included a school that is not in the partnership. During these school visits, inspectors spoke with headteachers, other school leaders, mentors, trainees and former trainees to gather their views about the quality of the partnership's training.
- At stage 1, inspectors observed the teaching of eight trainees jointly with their mentors. Inspectors looked at the evidence in trainees' files to inform their evaluation of how well trainees were meeting the teachers' standards. At stage 2, seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs) were seen teaching. To inform their evaluations at both stages, inspectors took account of available evidence about the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings at both stages. These included discussions with the SCITT principal, business manager, lead link tutor, other link tutors and trainers, members of the executive committee and the University of Portsmouth representative from the management committee. In addition to informal discussions with former trainees during school visits, an inspector also met with an 'alumni group' of seven former trainees.
- An inspector observed a video coaching session.

- The inspection team reviewed a wide range of the partnership's documentation and records. An inspector closely scrutinised records relating to compliance with the criteria for ITE and statutory safeguarding requirements.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 responses from trainees to Ofsted's online questionnaire that were received in 2018.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn HMI, lead inspector

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Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

Key strengths of the primary partnership

- The high retention of former trainees in the profession is a strikingly positive feature of this outstanding partnership. Trainees are exceedingly well prepared for the realities and rigours of being a teacher. Employment rates are exceptionally high.
- There is a crystal clear and consistent sense of purpose throughout the partnership. At the heart of the partnership's success is a relentless determination to achieve the highest quality and standards, with the intended impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress as the focal point of all training.
- The partnership produces strong teachers. It fosters professionals who are adept at using their well-developed skills and reliable subject knowledge to promote a love of learning in pupils. This success extends to encouraging potentially or actually reluctant learners, or those with other barriers, to engage and achieve.
- Trainees are confident, articulate, receptive and extremely reflective. They, and their mentors and headteachers, are overwhelmingly positive about the benefits they gain from being in the partnership. Headteachers are fully committed to, and invested in, the partnership.
- In addition to their thorough preparation to teach English and mathematics, trainees are given firm foundations on which to continue to develop their teaching expertise right across the primary curriculum.
- Every potential and future professional is highly valued and nurtured by the partnership. Leaders, tutors and mentors know trainees extremely well and tailor both the pastoral and professional support they provide accordingly.
- The quality of mentoring is excellent. Trainees benefit from frequent and precise feedback, making the most of valuable placement time. As NQTs enter the profession, inspired by the partnership, part of their aspiration is often to become tomorrow's mentors. The high numbers of former trainees who achieve this ambition, and more, completes this virtuous circle.

- Leaders know the partnership inside out. They constantly seek ways to improve the quality of training. Leaders use a well-established cyclical approach of using what they know to inform future priorities. When planning actions for improvement, this approach is captured succinctly by the steps: 'What? So What? What now?'

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

The partnership should:

- build on the successful training about meeting the needs of potentially vulnerable pupils by ensuring that trainees consistently challenge the most able pupils
- complete the current review and implement the resulting actions aimed at further strengthening strategic accountability.

Inspection judgements

1. For a prolonged period, the Portsmouth SCITT has been conspicuously successful in fulfilling its original purpose of being 'Set up by Portsmouth, for Portsmouth'. While the partnership's reach extends beyond the confines of the city, the SCITT has undoubtedly been a vital supply line of high-quality professionals for the city's schools over many years. Many Portsmouth schools employ former trainees, many of whom are now mentors, middle leaders and even deputy or headteachers.
2. Building on above-average completion rates, employment rates are exceptionally high. Critically, subsequent retention of former trainees in the profession is impressively high, bucking the national trend. Multiple factors contribute to this commendable picture: recruiting the right people initially; the strength of the mutual commitment across the partnership; the high-quality bespoke training; the strongly local slant to preparing trainees for the realities of teaching in the city; the lasting links for former trainees that are established through the training; ongoing support in the NQT year and beyond; and inspirational role models of former trainees coming back to run training sessions.
3. Another crucial factor in former trainees' resilience is that they gain a realistic understanding of the nature of the job and build strategies to cope. The highly systematic approach to the training and documentation gets trainees into good habits, helping them to develop self-sufficient and sustainable strategies. Trainees understand their accountability for pupils' progress and relish this challenge. But in addition to rightfully prioritising pupils' learning, the partnership carefully blends this accountability with the key message that trainees' 'self' and well-being are vital. This rounded, healthy approach is borne

out in reality by the style and culture of leadership of the partnership, which provides trainees with the perfect role model.

4. Recruiting those with a passion for and genuine interest in how pupils learn shines through in NQTs' ambition for their pupils and themselves. For many, it is not just about wanting to teach, but about wanting to teach in Portsmouth. The partnership's creative and searching approaches to recruitment and selection contribute to sustained success with completion rates and longer-term retention in the profession. At selection, structured scoring against a range of defined criteria is suitably balanced with careful consideration of the bigger picture, including questions and activities specifically aimed at testing candidates' potential.
5. At the other end of the training, targets for transition to the NQT year are tailored both to the individual NQT's areas for further improvement and, as far as possible, to knowledge of the school context or year group for their first teaching post. Employing headteachers, within and beyond the partnership, are extremely pleased with the quality of new teachers they employ. 'You know you are going to get a teacher walking through the door,' was how one headteacher put it. Their confidence is perfectly understandable. Trainees moving into their NQT year are typically exceeding the standards expected for that point in their career. Overall, they are strong teachers who have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
6. Succinctly captured by the partnership's strapline, 'It's learning, not teaching,' the focus on pupils' learning throughout the partnership is relentless. Trainees routinely, and ultimately habitually, reflect on the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress. They continually scrutinise what they can do to improve or build on pupils' learning next time. With this rightful focus feeding their passion about their chosen career, NQTs quickly find the profession hugely rewarding. 'When I get it right, their "aha" moments are priceless'; and, 'I will never get tired of the moment when it all clicks – when everything the child has learnt falls into place,' were just some of the comments made by NQTs exemplifying this.
7. Following partnership leaders' excellent example of care and nurture for trainees, both pastorally and professionally, NQTs are similarly attentive to their pupils' needs. Leaders, tutors and mentors know trainees extremely well and tailor their support accordingly. In turn, NQTs have a mature understanding of their pupils' different needs and potential or actual barriers to learning. With thoughtful and carefully planned approaches to overcome the anticipated obstacles, NQTs are typically successful in meeting a wide variety of needs. This is sometimes to the extent that significant challenges within a class would not be apparent to an observer.

8. Coursework assignments focus effectively on deepening trainees' understanding of how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of different pupils. Examples were seen of considerable depth and detail of planning for individual needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or those who speak English as an additional language. However, NQTs are less consistently adept at fully challenging the most able pupils to enable them to fulfil their potential.
9. Trainees rightly respect their trainers as credible experts in their fields. The content of sessions at the centre is fully responsive to current national and local priorities and of consistently high quality. The partnership's own surveys show high levels of trainee satisfaction in the quality of their training. The response from trainees to Ofsted's online survey was strikingly positive across the board.
10. Mathematics training is entirely consistent with current thinking and research, going beyond subject knowledge to ensure high-quality coverage of concepts such as mastery and fluency. The 'preparing-to-teach confidence audits' in mathematics include detailed prompts to structure trainees' personal reflections. These require a full self-evaluation and are not just a 'tick-box' exercise. Consequently, any gaps are identified and thoroughly addressed. Trainees use their training to great effect through effective demonstrations for pupils and clear and effective direct teaching of concepts. Their careful planning takes account of the needs of pupils with different levels of understanding.
11. Trainees and NQTs use their strong English subject knowledge very well in practice, including explicit and accurate teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling. For example, trainees' high expectations and grasp of technical vocabulary lends depth to their teaching and pupils' learning of the meaning and use of these terms. Phonics and early reading training are rigorous, thorough and, understandably, particularly appreciated by trainees. Trainees' knowledge, understanding and application of phonics, including the ability to enunciate pure sounds, are thoroughly tested and improved. For some trainees, this tight assessment and use of 'pull back groups' for additional training made a real difference in lifting competence in this area. Consequently, trainees' teaching of phonics is accurate and includes a rich and engaging range of phonics activities to build pupils' learning over time.
12. Trainees are inspired by the range of expert input from subject specialists across the wider curriculum, including some trainers who are headteachers and former trainees. Physical education (PE) is prioritised through placements, by encouraging trainees to observe as many lessons as possible, in addition to actually teaching wherever possible. NQTs can give convincing examples of how they have implemented their very practical training in PE effectively. Some describe how the training enabled them to overcome personal barriers and develop positive attitudes to the subject. The course also specifies that trainees have opportunities to teach each other in modern foreign languages, even if

they have not had the chance to practise their skills on placement. This exemplifies the value the partnership attaches to all subjects in the primary curriculum.

13. Behaviour management emerges as a typical strength for most trainees and NQTs. NQTs speak confidently about which strategies are working effectively for them and why. They demonstrate resilience and self-sufficiency in evaluating and adapting what is not working as well as it could. The excellent relationships that most NQTs have built with their first classes have enabled some to be proactive and successful in preventing or tackling potential bullying, and in communicating confidently with both pupils and their parents.
14. One of the reasons that trainees take such significant strides in their professional practice in a relatively short time is that leaders and trainers ensure training is carefully tilted towards the needs of each group of trainees. Over time, outcomes for different groups of trainees, for example by gender or ethnicity, are consistently strong. It is not only the depth and detail of the partnership's knowledge of each trainee, but the skilful use of this knowledge that is so powerful. A range of highly effective actions to refine the training results in a truly personalised experience and input for individuals.
15. Considerable care is taken to assess each trainee's competencies and provide whatever is necessary to help them bridge the gap between their current performance and their identified potential. Tight and effective systems enable incredibly close and frequent checking of trainees' progress and how well they are putting their training into practice. Consequently, no time is wasted in identifying and responding to areas of need. Similarly, the assessment and subsequent addressing of gaps in trainees' subject knowledge and understanding are excellent and deeply embedded. The added advantage of the 'assess, teach, assess' approach is that it provides ongoing effective modelling of successful classroom strategies for trainees, including prompt intervention to provide additional support where necessary.
16. With the support of trainers, mentors and leaders, trainees use the partnership's very well-conceived 'Bridging the gap' self-assessment tool conscientiously to identify specific areas for improvement. Consequently, the resulting targets and actions are specific and detailed. The system promotes depth of self-reflection and self-sufficiency as part of lasting professional development. The video coaching part of the 'Bridging the gap' programme is a very strong feature which has a notable impact on trainees' practice. The depth, precision and practical grounding in the associated discussions between coach and trainee are impressive.
17. The partnership goes beyond just ensuring that placements are suitably and helpfully contrasting. Where necessary, it invests considerable care in matching placements to each trainee's development priorities. For example, this might

mean matching a trainee who has weaknesses in mathematics with a mentor with the relevant expertise or specialism. Carefully designed and well-conceived documentation supports the success of school placements and is used consistently across the partnership. Leaders are diligent in ensuring that schools judged by Ofsted to require improvement are not excluded from the partnership, but careful checks are made to ensure that such schools have the capacity to support trainees effectively. The partnership includes schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances.

18. Mentors, both new and experienced, are very well trained and effective. Commendably, above all else, mentors focus sharply on pupils' learning and progress when giving trainees feedback. They systematically support trainees to sustain improvements in their practice by returning to previous targets and reflecting with them on what they could do differently. Another notable feature of mentoring success is the consistency of support for trainees' progress and development across placements. Mentors keep in close contact during the contrasting placement. Therefore, they know how the trainee has progressed and seamlessly pick up pertinent development threads when the trainee returns for the final placement.
19. The result of these numerous and significant strengths in the partnership's training is that trainees' attainment is typically high by the end of their training. Secure and reliable systems and processes to moderate the partnership's assessments of trainees' attainment help to ensure the validity of the judgements made. Verification by headteachers, subject-specialist trainers and a variety of link tutors, including some who work with other partnerships, enhances the rigour of the assessment process. The intelligent use of the information generated and the constant focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress ultimately provides the safety net that maintains the reliability of assessments at all levels.
20. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the partnership and tirelessly identify pertinent priorities for further improvement. Their evaluations pay close attention to current and previous partnership performance, as well as other local and national priorities. The partnership improvement plan identifies logical and reasonable actions towards securing improvement alongside 'indicators of success' that are measurable wherever possible. Leaders use termly milestone evaluations well to ensure that improvements are on track and that, where necessary, plans can be adjusted accordingly.
21. Unsurprisingly, trainees, mentors and headteachers recognise the 'exceptional' leadership of the SCITT principal, who is reliably supported by the much-praised business manager. There is unwavering collective engagement and commitment to the partnership from all involved. SCITT leaders are proactive and responsive in seeking and using others' views about the partnership. Headteachers report that this close collaboration enables them to contribute to

'meaningful decision-making'. In turn, the strong commitment from the partnership's headteachers and schools significantly enhances the benefits for trainees. Headteachers universally and willingly fulfil the personal pledge demanded by the partnership to do joint observations and participate in trainee appraisal, and this adds tremendous value.

22. Leaders pay close attention to published guidance and follow recognised audits to check methodically that all statutory requirements are met and that the partnership is compliant. Trainees speak knowledgeably about different aspects of safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. Some can give examples of how they have already put their safeguarding training into action on placement or in their first jobs.
23. At stage 1 of the inspection, following the migration of the accounting officer's school to the MAT, the partnership's governance arrangements were not entirely clear. Due to the current strength and reliability of the SCITT's leadership, there was no detectable detrimental impact on the quality of training or the effectiveness of the partnership. However, in a prompt response to emerging findings at stage 1, interim arrangements for the strategic leadership, governance and accountability have been clarified. Terms of reference for the executive and management committees have been updated and there are imminent plans for their ratification and implementation. Wisely, leaders are currently reviewing and exploring alternative pathways to find the best long-term solution for the governance of the partnership.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

Arundel Court Primary School, Portsmouth

Flying Bull Academy, Portsmouth

Medina Primary School, Portsmouth

Meredith Infant School, Portsmouth

Milton Park Primary School, Portsmouth

Pegasus Primary School, Oxford

St Paul's Primary School, Portsmouth

Stamshaw Infant School, Portsmouth

ITE partnership details

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Stage 1	
Stage 2	12–14 November 2018
Lead inspector	Clive Dunn HMI
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2011
Previous inspection report	https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/41/70061
Provider address	Beacon View Primary Academy Allaway Avenue Portsmouth Hampshire PO6 3PS



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