

# Pioneers SCITT ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates

Re-inspection: 14 May 2019

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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

	<b>Primary and secondary 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

## Primary and secondary routes

### Information about this ITE partnership

- The Pioneers Partnership is a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnership. It provides teacher training for graduates through two main training routes: School Direct and School Direct salaried. Trainees who successfully complete their training are recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS). Trainees also gain a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) accredited by Leeds Beckett University.
- The Pioneers Partnership currently offers both primary (five to 11) and secondary (11 to 16) ITT programmes.
- The partnership was last inspected in September 2018. At that inspection, the overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement.
- During 2017/18, the partnership trained two primary trainees and 11 secondary trainees. At the time of the re-inspection, three primary trainees and 10 secondary trainees were being trained.
- The SCITT is led by Great Academies Education Trust and is based at the lead school, Middleton Technology School. The partnership currently consists of 14 schools. These are predominantly located in the Rochdale, Tameside and Oldham areas.
- Currently, the partnership offers the following secondary specialisms: art and design, biology, chemistry, computing, drama, design and technology, English, history, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages (Spanish and French), music, physics, physical education and religious education. The partnership also offers a primary specialism and a primary specialism with mathematics.

### Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited six schools, observing nine trainees. They reviewed trainees' online teaching records and their files of evidence of how they are meeting the teachers' standards. They also observed mentors giving feedback to trainees.
- Inspectors held meetings with the SCITT leaders and managers, trainees, newly qualified teachers (NQTs), subject and professional mentors, subject coaches, the NQT transition coordinator, members of the strategic board and the accounting officer. They also observed a centre-based training session. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the PGCE provider.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of evidence provided by the partnership. This included: the self-evaluation document; the improvement plan; employment and completion rates; recruitment and selection materials; trainee tracking documents; the partnership agreement; the SCITT handbook; content of the

centre-based training programme and quality assurance documents. The lead inspector checked that the partnership was compliant with statutory requirements, including the ITT criteria. Inspectors also took into account the five responses to the trainee online questionnaire, which trainees completed in 2019.

- The inspection focused particularly on the impact of the actions taken by leaders in response to the areas for improvement identified in the inspection in September 2018.

### **Inspection team**

Anne Seneviratne HMI (lead inspector)

Will Smith HMI (assistant lead inspector)

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Grade: 2**

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

- The partnership benefits from strong leadership. Leaders are reflective and responsive. Their swift and effective actions have had a significant impact on the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.
- The partnership is built on strong relationships and effective collaboration. Leaders model this way of working to their trainees so that they are equipped with the skills and qualities to form similarly positive relationships in their own practice.
- The strategic board provides effective support and challenge to the SCITT leaders. This, alongside strong quality assurance systems, contributes to the partnership's ethos of continual improvement. Strong strategic leadership has been instrumental in improving outcomes for trainees.
- Leaders have ensured that there is coherence and parity between the primary and secondary provision. Training has been strengthened for primary trainees, particularly in the teaching of phonics and subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Trainees value the highly personalised support that they receive. This timely support has a positive impact on the progress that trainees make during their training and into their first year of teaching.
- Training takes place in a cooperative and collaborative environment. The programme enables trainees to hone their classroom practice and become reflective and resilient practitioners.
- Trainees are highly successful in gaining employment in local schools. NQTs are well prepared for their roles and able to make a strong contribution to their employing schools.

- Clear systems and protocols, and well-designed documentation, contribute to trainees' success on the course. Recruitment and selection procedures have been strengthened. New procedures enable leaders to successfully identify those applicants who have the capacity to train to teach.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- improve the quality of mentoring further by ensuring that all mentors:
  - routinely attend calendared training sessions
  - have the necessary knowledge and skills to help trainees to develop a holistic understanding of curriculum and pedagogy in their subject areas.
- deepen and broaden trainees' subject knowledge and understanding so that they are able to sequence pupils' learning more effectively.
- improve the quality of the training programme further by ensuring that trainees have more opportunities to:
  - critically engage with different educational theories
  - deepen their understanding of the different approaches that can be used to enhance pupils' learning and personal development, and relate these to their own practice.

## **Inspection judgements**

1. The response of leaders to the findings of the last inspection has been rapid and decisive. The director of the SCITT, ably supported by the director of the teaching school and the SCITT improvement partner, provided by Great Academies Trust, has ensured that the overall provision for trainees has improved considerably in a short period of time. Across the partnership there is a tangible confidence in the quality of the SCITT director's leadership.
2. The new strategic board that was formed in July 2018 has significantly enhanced the overall quality of leadership in the partnership. This group comprises individuals who have the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise to provide effective support and challenge to the SCITT leader and her colleagues. Members of the board demonstrate a strong commitment to, and investment in, the partnership. As well as playing an important role in quality-assuring current provision, they are also instrumental in setting the strategic direction for future development of the training programme.
3. At the last inspection, the primary phase of the programme was described as somewhat of a 'bolt on' to the secondary programme. This is now no longer the case. Leaders have ensured that there is both coherence and parity between the

two phases of the programme. Leaders ensure that the centre-based training is relevant for both primary and secondary trainees. In addition, primary trainees receive focused training in phase-specific areas. This means that they are well prepared to teach early reading, including phonics and other subjects in the primary curriculum. The training also ensures that primary trainees have the opportunity to plan and teach mathematics and physical education lessons. This ensures that they are well-equipped to deliver these subjects as NQTs. There is now much greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities for the day-to-day leadership of the primary phase of the programme.

4. While rightly proud of what they have achieved, leaders are acutely aware of the aspects of the provision that they need to improve further. During the inspection, leaders demonstrated their astute grasp of the current overall quality of the provision, alongside their capacity to improve this further. They shared with inspectors their very clear thoughts about how they plan to take the partnership to the next level. For example, they explained their plans for enhancing the quality of provision through collaboration with other local high-performing SCITTs.
5. Engagement and communication across the partnership is strong. This is now a close-knit partnership built on open and honest relationships. Colleagues in partnership schools feel valued and they play an active role in all aspects of the training programme. As one professional mentor explained, 'We used to feel like passengers; now we are an integral part.'
6. Rigorous quality assurance of all aspects of the training programme has been the key to improvements over the last eight months. The director of the SCITT has been meticulous in her approach to quality-assuring the provision for the current cohort of trainees. Strong systems are now in place to systematically monitor the quality of provision for the increased number of trainees in the next academic year.
7. The director of the SCITT has significantly improved the management and organisation of all aspects of the programme. There are now very clear systems and protocols, which have led to a more consistently high-quality experience for trainees. Well-designed documentation helps trainees to reflect on how their practice relates to the teachers' standards. It also helps them to compile and collate relevant evidence to demonstrate how they are meeting and exceeding these standards.
8. Partner schools are heavily involved in recruitment and selection. The improved procedures have been designed to enable leaders to successfully identify those applicants who have the capacity to train to teach. They also enable leaders to identify any specific support that trainees may need in order to complete the course successfully.

9. Trainees are very positive about their training programme. They are keen to recommend it to others. They speak very highly of the ongoing personalised support that they receive which helps them to overcome any challenges that they may face during their training. One trainee was so pleased with her overall experience that she said, 'I don't think I could have been on a better course.'
10. Most mentors have benefited from high-quality training on how to give effective feedback and set appropriate targets for trainees. This, alongside the introduction of consistent systems and more rigorous quality assurance, has improved the overall quality of mentoring. That said, some inconsistencies remain across the partnership and a small number of trainees do not benefit from consistently strong mentoring. Leaders described how they have been 'changing the culture' this year in relation to expectations of mentors. Despite this, some mentors still do not routinely attend the necessary training sessions provided by SCITT leaders. Inspection evidence shows that there is a clear correlation between attendance at training sessions and the quality of mentoring.
11. The training that mentors receive equips them to develop trainees' day-to-day classroom practice and they generally do this effectively. However, not all mentors have the necessary knowledge and skills to help trainees develop a holistic understanding of curriculum and pedagogy in their subject areas or age phases.
12. Leaders have recognised the need for a greater focus on developing trainees' subject knowledge, particularly on the secondary programme. Subject coaches, most of whom are specialist leaders in education, meet with trainees four times throughout the year. These are bespoke sessions for each trainee designed to help them with the subject element of their lesson-planning. In addition, science trainees attend additional courses and events to enhance their knowledge, particularly in science subjects outside of their own discipline. While this is an improvement on previous practice, more remains to be done in relation to this aspect of the training. Trainees do not have a deep and broad enough knowledge and understanding of their subject beyond the next unit of work that they are planning to teach. This means that they are not able to sequence pupils' learning as effectively as they could.
13. The collaborative ethos of the centre-based training creates a supportive environment that is conducive to learning. The sessions are well planned and enable trainees to hone their classroom practice. The programme ensures that trainees understand the importance of developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The programme also ensures that trainees are well prepared to fulfil the wider aspects of the role of a teacher. For example, they understand the important role that they play in safeguarding pupils and preventing bullying and discrimination.

14. The ability of trainees to form positive relationships with their pupils is particularly impressive. Most trainees have a very 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 most trainees are well equipped to deal effectively with any low-level disruption that may occur in their lessons.
15. The training programme has many strengths, not least the way in which the content and delivery enable trainees to become reflective and resilient practitioners. However, it does not provide enough scope for trainees to engage critically with different educational theories. This means that their awareness of the range of thinking and research related to various educational topics is not developed sufficiently.
16. This is a school-centred programme and most of the trainees' learning happens during their placements. Despite the small size of the partnership, leaders ensure that there is some contrast between their two placements. That said, trainees' practice is sometimes limited to the specific procedures and perspectives in their placement schools. Trainees do not get enough opportunities to deepen their understanding of the different approaches that can be used to enhance pupils' learning and personal development and relate these to their own practice.
17. Leaders have strengthened the training programme so that there is a greater focus on trainees having a secure understanding of how to plan for different groups of pupils, such as the most able and those who are disadvantaged. Observations during the inspection show that trainees are generally adept at meeting the different needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, it was very clear in a science lesson that the trainee's thorough knowledge of her pupils with SEND enabled her to plan the activities in such a way that they were able to engage with the learning and make good progress.
18. Leaders have improved the arrangements for the enrichment programme that takes place towards the end of the training programme. This now enables trainees to experience different educational phases and aspects of school life in more depth. For example, trainees now have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of SEND further by spending up to a week in a special school.
19. The introduction of a dedicated transition coordinator means that NQTs are now provided with effective ongoing support. The NQT transition coordinator keeps in touch with all NQTs and provides more personalised support if required. For example, one NQT had emailed her to say how much he appreciated her support, which had really helped him with his classroom practice. The NQT transition coordinator is working closely with the director of the SCITT to ensure

that all transition documentation is helpful to NQTs as they embark on their teaching career.

20. Outcomes for primary and secondary trainees are good. High-quality training means that trainees attain well by the time they complete their training programme. Leaders have strengthened their assessment procedures. The process is more thorough and means that leaders are in a better position to make an accurate assessment of trainees against all of the teachers' standards than they were at the time of the last inspection. Inspectors were satisfied that leaders' assessment of current trainees are an accurate reflection of the quality of their teaching.
21. Well-documented case study information shows that the very small number of trainees who defer their study while on the training programme do so for valid reasons related to their personal circumstances. On these rare occasions, leaders keep in close contact with the trainees to support them to make a successful return to the course when appropriate.
22. Employment rates are high. In 2017/18, all trainees secured a teaching post, most of them in partnership schools. Of the current trainees, nearly all have already secured a position, many in their placement schools. The partnership has involvement with schools that have an Ofsted judgement that is less than good. The partnership's training programme means that trainees are well placed to work in these types of schools and those that are in challenging socio-economic circumstances.
23. 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' teaching:

Boarshaw Primary School, Middleton

Falinge Park High School, Shawclough

Middleton Technology School, Middleton

Shawclough Primary School, Rochdale

St Anne's CofE Academy, Middleton

Wardle High School, Wardle



## ITE partnership details

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Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	23 September 2018
Previous inspection report	<a href="https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user">https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user</a>
Provider address	Pioneers Partnership SCITT Middleton Technology School Kenyon Lane Manchester M24 2GT



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