

Teach Kent and Sussex ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 10 June 2019

Stage 2: 11 November 2019

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 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?	1
The outcomes for trainees	1
The quality of training across the partnership	1
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

Primary and secondary routes

Information about this ITE partnership

- The Teach Kent and Sussex Partnership provides primary and secondary school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) for graduates. The partnership is based at Bennett Memorial Diocesan School in Tunbridge Wells. The partnership is part of the Tenax Schools Trust and grew out of an established teaching school alliance. There were 17 schools active in the partnership in 2018/19, covering the counties of Kent and East Sussex.
- A strategic board made up of headteachers of partnership schools, and a governing committee comprising trustees of the Tenax Schools Trust, provide oversight of the course. The SCITT strategic director and SCITT operations director are responsible for day-to-day leadership.
- The first cohort of 20 trainees completed their one-year course in 2018. This inspection took place at the end of the second year of the SCITT's operation, when there were 13 primary and 19 secondary trainees on the course. The primary course prepares trainees to teach pupils aged from five to 11, while the secondary course covers the 11 to 18 age range. Both courses lead to the award of qualified teacher status (QTS). In 2018/19, the majority of trainees followed the School Direct (fee-paying) route, while a small number of primary trainees took the School Direct (salaried) route.
- Trainees can also opt to take a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE), which is accredited by the University of Sussex.
- In the year of the inspection, the following subjects were offered at secondary level: art and design, biology, chemistry, computing, design and technology, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education (PE).

Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited 11 schools over the two stages of the inspection. Two of the schools visited at stage 1 were also visited at stage 2.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of seven trainees at stage 1 and seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs) at stage 2. One of the NQTs observed at stage 2 was also observed when a trainee at stage 1. During school visits, inspectors spoke to trainees and NQTs about their progress and their views of the course. Inspectors also met headteachers, senior leaders, induction tutors and mentors.
- Inspectors met with small groups of trainees and NQTs at both stages of the inspection to discuss their views on the training course.
- Meetings were held with the SCITT strategic director and SCITT operations director, senior mentors, mentors and subject studies tutors. Inspectors visited a

primary training session and observed part of a mentor training meeting. In addition, inspectors met members of the strategic board, governing committee and the chief executive officer of the academy trust.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, both that which was publicly available and that provided by the SCITT, including records of self-evaluation, course handbooks, results of surveys, partnership agreements and information about trainees' outcomes.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the trainee online questionnaire that was completed towards the end of the 2018/19 training year.
- Checks were carried out confirming that the course is compliant with the Department for Education's requirements for providers of ITE and that trainees receive adequate safeguarding training.

Inspection team

Gary Holden HMI (lead inspector)

David Edwards OI (assistant lead inspector)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

Key strengths of the primary and secondary partnership

- Leaders' distinctive vision is founded on deeply held values about the importance of subject knowledge, the nature of effective teaching, and the role of research. All partners share and promote these values consistently.
- Leaders have made highly effective use of existing links with the teaching school alliance from which the SCITT has grown. Partner schools are fully involved in the delivery and evaluation of the course.
- Outcomes for trainees, including rates of employment, compare very favourably with sector averages.
- Recruitment, selection and induction processes, including the setting of pre-course tasks and, where necessary, subject knowledge enhancement, are rigorous and thorough. As a result, trainees make a flying start to the course. By the end of the year they are exceptionally well prepared for their first post as an NQT.
- Carefully sequenced course content enables trainees to perform exceptionally well across all the teachers' standards. Primary trainees are proficient in the teaching of phonics, mathematics and PE, while secondary trainees demonstrate a deep understanding of the curriculum for their subject.

- Trainees and NQTs model the wider professional role of the teacher exceptionally well. They form productive relationships with colleagues and treat their pupils with courtesy and respect. They are excellent ambassadors for the profession.
- Systems for promoting and evaluating trainees' development are well coordinated and clearly understood by all partners. Staff in partner schools praise the responsiveness and efficiency of the small central team.
- Trainees and NQTs value the expert guidance and attentive pastoral care they receive from their mentors. Mentors regularly go the extra mile on behalf of trainees. More than one trainee said, 'I couldn't have done this without my mentor.'
- Leaders are deeply committed to their mission of providing excellent teachers for the region. All 32 trainees who began their course in 2018 achieved QTS in 2019. The SCITT has been highly successful in attracting career-changers who go on to secure employment in local schools, often in subjects or areas where recruitment has been challenging.

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

The partnership should:

- ensure that capacity for undertaking rigorous quality assurance of all aspects of the course keeps pace with the growth of the SCITT
- accelerate the effective work already underway to strengthen primary trainees' subject knowledge across all foundation subjects.

Inspection judgements

1. The overall effectiveness of this popular and rapidly growing partnership is outstanding. Trainees achieve excellent outcomes because their training course, informed by the most up-to-date research available, is carefully sequenced and expertly led. In addition, well-trained mentors provide trainees with strong support and challenge during their school placements.
2. Trainees attain exceptionally well. For the last two years, all trainees awarded QTS have exceeded the minimum standard required. Employment rates are consistently high across both phases and in all subjects. There are no significant differences in outcomes for different groups of trainees. Headteachers who have taken on NQTs from this partnership say that they are impressed with their detailed subject knowledge, quality of teaching and high professional standards.

3. Leaders are committed to recruiting and training the very best teachers for local schools. The SCITT has been particularly successful in appealing to those who have come to teaching later in their careers and, in the secondary phase, to teach subjects in which there is a known shortage. All 32 trainees who took the course in 2018/19 successfully achieved QTS. Leaders firmly believe that their responsibility towards alumni of the course extends beyond the training year. They keep in touch with NQTs and offer training sessions during the year, the content of which is informed by feedback from employing schools about NQTs' ongoing needs.
4. The course provides trainees with an outstanding grounding in recent, highly credible research into teaching, learning and the curriculum. From the outset, trainees learn about how pupils gain and remember new knowledge. They develop a secure understanding of how curriculum content can be selected and sequenced to ensure that pupils master key concepts. Trainees and NQTs understand the principles of assessment. They routinely check that pupils have learned the desired material and give precise feedback on next steps.
5. Trainees and NQTs agree that the selection process for a place on the course is rigorous and fair. All interviews are conducted by SCITT leaders and staff from partnership schools. Trainees and NQTs felt that they had been put through their paces in order to gain their place on the course. At the same time, they said that a key factor for them in accepting a place was the warmth and integrity of course leaders and school-based staff.
6. Trainees approach their course in a serious and scholarly manner. Trainees are encouraged to reflect on the fundamental purposes of education. They understand the importance of evidence and research and bring to their teaching an infectious curiosity and willingness to improve their practice. At the same time, they know how to take care of their own well-being. Under the watchful eye of their mentors, they develop healthy and sustainable approaches to balancing life and work.
7. The whole partnership is involved in training new teachers. Staff selected to be school-based mentors excel in their roles. Many professional and subject studies sessions are led by teachers and leaders in partnership schools. At the same time, leaders bring in nationally renowned experts in curriculum, teaching and learning to share their research findings with trainees. These experts frequently stay on to lead seminars for schools in the partnership. In this way, the SCITT has a positive impact on the wider professional development of teachers and leaders.
8. Mentors bring a genuine sense of moral purpose to their work, which is given high status within the SCITT. Almost without exception, trainees and NQTs praise the positive role their mentors in both placement schools play in their development as teachers. Well-judged and timely training has given mentors the

skills they need to know when to push a trainee to achieve beyond their own expectations and when to hold back.

9. Mentors track trainees' progress meticulously. They challenge trainees to evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Mentors set specific, tightly focused, short-term targets that help the majority of trainees make strong progress from their starting points.
10. Systems for making final judgements about trainees' attainment are searching and rigorous. Leaders check that assessment is accurate and that the end-of-course targets are tailored to provide a seamless transition from the training to the NQT year. School leaders of receiving schools confirm that the targets NQTs bring with them are the right ones and that the partnership's transition information is detailed and helpful.
11. Trainees and NQTs have extremely high expectations of themselves and their pupils. They use their excellent subject and pedagogical knowledge to plan individual lessons and sequences of lessons that enable pupils to learn and remember new knowledge, skills and concepts securely. For example, in a secondary history lesson, an NQT used a quiz to recap previously taught material so that pupils could use their newly recalled knowledge to carry out a challenging discussion and writing task.
12. The quality of teaching in the core and foundation curriculum in the primary phase is very high. Primary trainees and NQTs have a very secure grasp of the teaching of phonics and early mathematics. Course leaders ensure that trainees have a thorough grounding in the foundation subjects, including PE. Very occasionally, a trainee's subject knowledge in one of the foundation subjects is not fully developed by the end of the course. Leaders have already begun to re-shape elements of the subject studies course for future cohorts to ensure that all trainees have the necessary depth of subject knowledge in all subjects.
13. Trainees and NQTs manage pupils' behaviour with confidence. They say that the guidance they get on classroom management in the taught element of their course is very helpful. Nearly all trainees and NQTs establish clear routines, build positive relationships with their pupils and respond to any misbehaviour in line with their placement schools' procedures. A distinctive feature of trainees and NQTs from this partnership is the courtesy and politeness they show to their pupils, which helps to create a climate of mutual respect in their classrooms.
14. All trainees model exceptionally high professional standards, relating warmly to colleagues and pupils alike. They have a detailed understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and of their duties under equalities legislation. They know how to establish proper boundaries, including using social media in an appropriate way. They play a full role in the life of their schools and are excellent ambassadors for the profession.

15. Trainees benefit from carefully chosen and complementary placements that include experience of post-16 teaching in the secondary phase. The partnership works with a growing range of schools, including those serving disadvantaged communities. As a result, trainees are prepared well to teach in a variety of contexts. Trainees and NQTs have a sound awareness of the barriers to learning that some groups of pupils may face, including pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Course leaders make sure that trainees have experience of meeting the needs of different groups of pupils in carefully chosen placement schools. For example, trainees carry out focused visits to a pupil referral unit, a special school and an inner-city school with a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
16. Leaders draw on a wide range of information, including analysis of outcomes, trainees' views and mentors' feedback, to evaluate all aspects of the course. They use this information to put in place rigorous and ambitious plans for improvement. The strategic board, which has strong partnership representation, holds leaders stringently to account. In visits to partner schools, SCITT leaders engage in joint activities that help mentors to moderate their judgements of trainees' progress. Currently, these systems work exceptionally well. However, leaders are rightly considering how they will ensure that these quality assurance processes keep pace with the SCITT's rapid growth.
17. Leaders and members of the strategic board take account of trainees' views when making decisions about the course. For example, in light of trainees' feedback about the demands of the course at particular times of the year, leaders have reduced the amount of recording that trainees and mentors are required to complete.
18. All members of the partnership are committed to supporting trainees' well-being. A number of trainees and NQTs expressed gratitude for the care and support they received from mentors and course leaders when they experienced difficulties. Leaders ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to remove barriers for those trainees who have declared SEND.
19. The partnership has outstanding capacity to improve. Leaders display a relentless and restless desire to improve and build on existing strengths. All partnership schools have a deep commitment to the SCITT's aims and values. The strategic board and governing committee provide exceptionally strong oversight of the SCITT's work and strong ambition for its future.
20. The course is compliant with all initial teacher training criteria and with safeguarding regulations. Leaders meet in full their responsibilities in relation to equalities legislation.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

Beacon Academy, Crowborough

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Tunbridge Wells

Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Primary School, Tonbridge

Broadwater Down Primary School, Tunbridge Wells

Claremont Primary School, Tunbridge Wells

Lamberhurst St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Lamberhurst

Mascalls Academy, Paddock Wood

Southborough Church of England Primary School, Tunbridge Wells

Speldhurst Church of England Primary School, Speldhurst

St Gregory's Catholic School, Tunbridge Wells

Trinity School, Sevenoaks

ITE partnership details

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Lead inspector	Gary Holden HMI
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Previous inspection report	N/A
Provider address	Bennett Memorial Diocesan School Culverden Down Tunbridge Wells Kent TN4 9SH



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