

The National Modern Languages SCITT

Bents Crescent, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S11 9QH

Inspection dates

17 to 20 May 2021

Inspection judgements

Secondary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to be a trainee at this ITE partnership?

This partnership is unique. It is a national partnership that equips trainees to teach languages in the secondary phase. Trainees are based in one of a growing number of hubs across the country. The partnership includes both independent and state schools. Trainees benefit from two or three school placements that complement each other. The number of languages that the partnership caters for is increasing and currently includes Mandarin, Russian and Italian, in addition to French, German and Spanish. The partnership places a high priority on giving trainees experience of teaching languages at key stage 5.

The focus on languages' curriculum and pedagogy runs like a rod of steel through the programme. Trainees are very well prepared to teach their subject. Leaders know that there is still work to do to ensure that all trainees are effective at supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Trainees are well supported centrally by SCITT lead staff, by hub leaders and by well-trained mentors in their placement schools. Trainees benefit from a well-developed programme of events before the course starts. Here, trainees meet each other, develop an understanding of the course and begin their academic programme. Many trainees are native speakers from other countries. Teaching about how the British education system operates is part of the programme. Communication between leaders and trainees is excellent. This is also the case between the director and course leader, hub leaders and mentors. The academic part of the course is well integrated. As such, trainees make meaningful links between research and practice.

Information about this ITE partnership

- There are currently 54 trainees in the partnership, three of whom are on the two-year, part-time course.
- The partnership equips trainees to teach languages in the secondary phase.
- Trainees are placed in secondary schools, both within the independent and the state sectors. There are currently hubs in South London, Abingdon, Sheffield, Oundle and Bolton.
- The partnership offers qualified teacher status with a post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE). Sheffield Hallam University is the awarding body for the PGCE part of the course.
- The partnership works with 108 schools across the country. Trainees are currently placed in 44 of these schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team consisted of two HMI.
- Inspectors spoke with the director, course leader and course administrator. Inspectors met with all five hub leaders and 12 mentors. Members of the inspection team spoke with members of the partnership board and the chief executive officer. Inspectors met with representatives from PGCE partners at Sheffield Hallam University and spoke with the SCITT ITE lecturer.
- Inspectors spoke to eight trainees during placement setting visits and an additional 13 trainees in meetings. The team spoke with trainees from all five hubs, some who are part time, and those teaching languages that are less commonly taught, such as Mandarin. Inspectors spoke to three newly qualified teachers who had trained through this partnership.
- The inspection consisted of one focused review, that of languages.
- Inspectors visited eight placement settings. Four visits were remote and four were in person. Settings from all five hubs were visited. Half of the visits were to independent schools and half to maintained schools.

What does the ITE partnership do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have high expectations of trainees. The programme is ambitious and stretching. For example, trainees are required to have a high level of subject knowledge. There is an expectation that trainees will be able to teach more than one language. Sensible targets are set to help individuals to improve their linguistic ability.

Trainees spend time in two or three schools across the year. The taught curriculum consists of a series of 'day schools', taught in the hubs. Here, experienced lecturers and serving teachers cover a carefully mapped out, cyclical curriculum based on ten 'strands', including key topics such as behaviour management. All of these topics are covered in the context of language teaching. Topics are built upon across the course of the year. Mentors in school ensure that these topics are reinforced in a timely way. Hub leaders and mentors

are language specialists and have a high level of subject expertise. The SCITT offers a well-developed mentor development programme.

The academic programme is closely aligned to day schools and the specifics of modern languages. The SCITT ITE lecturer acts as a 'bridge' between the university and the practical elements of the course. Trainees appreciate this. They are positive about the language-specific focus and their exposure to research. The partnership has a clear focus on teaching through the medium of the target language. Leaders also ensure that trainees hear about a wide range of language-teaching philosophies from national and international experts.

The partnership complies with the core content framework. For example, trainees understand how pupils learn and that key knowledge needs to be carefully sequenced within the curriculum. In many ways, the curriculum goes beyond these requirements through the clear focus on the specifics of the languages' curriculum and its delivery. Trainees understand the need for a focus on phonics, grammar and vocabulary in languages. The programme covers safeguarding, mental health issues and teacher professionalism. The impact of the programme is strong. Trainees are very well prepared for their newly qualified teacher year by the end of the course. However, inspectors found that trainees' understanding of how to adapt teaching for pupils with SEND was less secure.

Communication is strong across the partnership. This is crucial given the geography of the partnership. There is a clear line of sight from academic studies through to day schools in hubs and to mentor continual professional development and ITT programmes in school. Quality assurance processes are strong. School leaders appreciate these. School leaders and mentors reflect on the quality of their provision and course leaders use this to develop the programme further. The partnership strives to improve year on year.

Leaders are transitioning to a new system to assess the progress that trainees are making across the year. This is directly linked to the partnership's own ITE curriculum and subject-specific descriptors. Programme leaders accept that there is still more to do to ensure that this is consistently used across the partnership.

Partnership leaders are highly ambitious. Each year the number of hubs in the partnership has increased, and the ITE curriculum has developed. Leaders seek and respond to feedback. They are sensitive to trainees' workload, but there is still work to do to make sure that there are fewer 'pinch points' across the course of the year. Nonetheless, trainees talk with passion about the support that they receive from leaders.

The partnership is highly effective. Trainees leave the course very well prepared to teach languages. They leave with an excellent grounding in relevant research.

What does the ITE partnership need to do to improve the secondary phase?

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- The partnership ensures that trainees are taught how to adapt the curriculum and its delivery for pupils with SEND. The impact of this is variable. Some trainees have a superficial understanding of how to support pupils with SEND. Leaders should ensure that trainees develop a comprehensive understanding of how to adapt the curriculum to support pupils with SEND.
- Leaders are introducing a new system of assessment. This system assesses trainees' progress through the partnership's ITE curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all partner schools are fully aware of the new assessment system and that there is a consistent approach to assessing trainees' progress.
- Some mentors and trainees feel that some processes are too onerous. Some trainees report that workload is at times unmanageable. They appreciate that leaders listen and have tried to ensure that there are fewer 'pinch points' across the course of the year. However, there is work still to do in relation to this.

Does the ITE partnership secondary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The partnership meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

ITE Partnership details

Unique reference number	1253876
Inspection number	10181444

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) in accordance with the 'Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook'.

This framework and handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2020.

Type of ITE Partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Secondary
Date of previous inspection	N/A

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Reeves	Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Partnership schools

Inspectors contacted trainees and staff at the following settings, schools and colleges, as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE Phase(s)	Date joined partnership	Current Ofsted grade
All Saints' Catholic High School	138337	Secondary	September 2017	Good
Cheadle Hulme School	106157	Secondary	February 2020	Meets standards
Dulwich College	2106000	Secondary	September 2017	Meets standards
Harris Academy Beckenham	137121	Secondary	September 2020	Outstanding
South Axholme Academy	137742	Secondary	September 2020	Good
Stamford High School	9256027	Secondary	September 2018	Meets standards
St Helen and St Katharine	9316096	Secondary	September 2018	Meets standards
Westfield School	145562	Secondary	September 2018	No current grade

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