

Consilium SCITT

Buile Hill Visual Arts College, Eccles Old Road, Salford M6 8RD

Inspection dates

24–27 May 2021

Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education and training

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

Trainees are let down by Consilium SCITT. Trainees do not benefit from a well-planned training programme. Leaders do not plan an initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum that ensures that trainees are adequately prepared to teach their subject or age-phase.

Many trainees do not feel well supported by programme tutors. They told us that communication is unclear across the partnership. Trainees said that they receive confusing and contradictory messages about their training programme. This has a negative impact on the workload and the well-being of some trainees.

Trainees are generally appreciative of the support that they receive from their mentors in placement schools. Despite this, much of the mentoring is of poor quality. Trainees are not assessed in a way that is helpful to their development. The ongoing targets that they are set to improve their teaching are often vague and sometimes encourage poor practice.

The ITE programmes do not prepare trainees for the realities of teaching. Trainees acquire a disjointed understanding of how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Primary-phase trainees are prepared to teach early reading and mathematics. However, they do not learn how to teach all subjects in the primary national curriculum effectively. Secondary-phase trainees in this partnership develop a partial and fragmented knowledge of how to teach their subject.

Leaders do not ensure that trainees know about up-to-date educational research. They are not introduced to the key issues that are debated within subject and phase communities.

The partnership does not provide trainees with coherent training to manage pupils' behaviour. Leaders do not ensure that trainees understand how to promote equality and inclusion in their classrooms. They are trained more effectively to safeguard pupils.

Information about this ITE partnership

- Consilium SCITT is providing training for three primary-phase and 25 secondary-phase trainees during 2020-21.
- The partnership provides training in the 5–11 primary age range and the 11–16 age range in the secondary phase.
- There are 15 schools in the partnership.
- All trainees undertake the School Direct route to qualified teacher status (QTS).
- A small number of schools in the partnership have been judged by Ofsted to be good. Ofsted has judged most schools in the partnership, or their predecessor schools if they have recently converted to become an academy, to be inadequate or to require improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), who met with leaders, members of the SCITT board and programme tutors. Inspectors also met with representatives from Consilium Academies, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Cumbria.
- In the primary phase, inspectors completed focused reviews in early reading and the foundation subjects. In the secondary phase, inspectors undertook focused reviews in English, history, biology and computing.
- Inspectors spoke with five newly qualified teachers, three primary-phase trainees and 12 secondary-phase trainees.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys. This included one response from a member of staff and 17 responses from trainees.
- Inspectors made visits to three schools to meet trainees, mentors and headteachers. Inspectors visited some lessons that were taught by trainees. They held discussions with 13 mentors from eight different schools. Inspectors spoke with 10 partners who contribute to the central training programme that is provided to trainees.

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

Leaders have not designed an ambitious and well-sequenced training curriculum. They have given very little thought to what they intend trainees to learn throughout the programme.

Leaders use a range of teachers, school leaders and specialists to deliver aspects of the ITE curriculums. Some individual sessions introduce trainees to useful content. However,

trainers plan their sessions in isolation. School-based mentors are not given the information that they need to reinforce and build upon central training sessions. Trainees acquire disjointed knowledge because the ITE curriculums are fragmented. This is the case for most aspects of the programmes, such as how to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. In the secondary phase, the ITE curriculum is not based on trainees' subjects. Trainees are supported reasonably well to develop their subject knowledge. However, they are poorly prepared to teach their subject. This is largely because there is no coherence in subject training in the secondary phase. Trainers are expected to align their input with generic teaching themes. They do not explore the unique challenges of teaching a particular subject.

Primary-phase trainees are mostly well prepared to teach English and mathematics. The course focuses on developing trainees' ability to teach early reading, including systematic synthetic phonics. In contrast, primary-phase trainees are not well supported to teach other national curriculum subjects, such as music, and art and design. Leaders have given very little thought to how central training in subjects other than English and mathematics should align with trainees' experience in schools.

Leaders have planned for trainees to encounter most aspects of the core content framework (CCF). However, they have not planned what they intend trainees to learn in the different areas of the CCF. This compounds trainees' weak understanding of the different aspects of teaching, such as how to support pupils with SEND.

Leaders do not expect trainees to engage with up-to-date research. Trainees are given very little direction about what research they should read. Trainees are not introduced to the traditions and debates within their subject and phase teaching communities. This limits trainees' ability to relate theory to practice. It stunts their development as reflective practitioners.

On the whole, trainees appreciate the support that they receive from school-based mentors. A number of trainees believe that their school experiences have compensated for weaknesses in the central training programme. However, this is not the case consistently. Training in placement schools does not align with other aspects of the programme. This is because leaders do not give mentors the information that they need to complement central-based training. Mentors tend to rely on their own professional knowledge, and the culture of their own departments and schools, to dictate their work with trainees. This leaves too much to chance.

Leaders' procedures for checking the quality of the partnership's work are lax. Leaders do not assess the risk of placing trainees in schools that have been judged by Ofsted to be inadequate or to require improvement. They do not undertake any meaningful quality assurance of the work of mentors. Leaders are oblivious to the weaknesses in mentoring. For example, they are unaware that the weekly targets that mentors set for their trainees are vague and based on specific teaching approaches that are not supported by current research.

Leaders' systems to check trainees' progress are ineffective. Mentors' ongoing assessment of trainees is unhelpful. In the absence of a planned and shared curriculum, mentors

typically use the teachers' standards to measure trainees' progress. This distracts trainees from learning the precise things that will improve their teaching.

Some schools are actively involved in the strategic leadership of the SCITT. They contribute to the recruitment of trainees. They also have staff who are members of the SCITT board. Partners do not routinely contribute to the ongoing quality assurance of the programme. Several school-based leaders, trainers and mentors told inspectors about deficiencies in the training curriculums. They told us that they have not had the opportunity to share their views with leaders from the SCITT.

At the time of the inspection, leaders with operational responsibility for the SCITT were unaware of the endemic weaknesses in the primary- and secondary-phase programmes. However, the Consilium Academies executive team had begun to identify some of the SCITT's most fundamental failings. The Consilium Academies executive team presented a clear understanding of how to construct a curriculum for trainees. However, these plans had not been implemented.

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

(Information for the partnership and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not planned an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. Trainees do not gain the knowledge that they need to become effective teachers of their subject and age phase. They only gain fragmentary insights into how to adapt their teaching for pupils with SEND and EAL. They do not understand how to promote equality and inclusion within their classrooms. Leaders must develop an ambitious and coherent curriculum that outlines the precise knowledge that leaders intend trainees to learn. The curriculum must prepare trainees for the realities of teaching pupils, including pupils with SEND and EAL.
- Trainees do not benefit from training that is based on the subject(s) that they are training to teach. Central subject training does not systematically build trainees' preparedness to teach their subject(s) or age phases. There is no alignment between central training and the work of subject and class mentors. This is true for secondary-phase trainees and for the foundation subjects in the primary phase. This leaves trainees poorly prepared to teach their subject(s). Leaders must ensure that the training is fundamentally built around trainees' subject(s) and age phases. They must ensure that there is purposeful alignment between the work of subject and class mentors, and other aspects of the training.
- Leaders do not support subject and class mentors effectively. Mentors are not given enough information about how to align their work with trainees with other elements of the course. As a result, mentoring does not reinforce and build upon central training. Leaders must make sure that mentors are well trained. They need to ensure that mentors receive the support and information that they need to align their guidance with other elements of the training. Leaders need to ensure that trainees receive mentoring that is of a consistently high quality.

- Leaders do not have effective systems for assessing trainees formatively. The quality of weekly targets set by mentors is typically poor. As a result, ongoing assessment rarely helps trainees to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. At times, targets promote specific practices that are unsupported by research. Many mentors over-rely on the teachers' standards to inform their assessment of trainees. Leaders must develop effective systems for assessing trainees' knowledge and skills. They need to ensure that feedback directs trainees to develop their knowledge and practice in areas that will make them effective subject teachers.
- SCITT leaders do not have effective systems for quality assuring the effectiveness of the training programme. They were oblivious to the widespread failings across the partnership. They were unaware that the partnership is not compliant with aspects of the CCF and Department for Education (DfE) statutory compliance criteria. This has prevented them from taking the actions needed to improve the programme. Leaders need to develop their quality assurance and management systems to give them a clear understanding of the SCITT's performance. This will help them to take the actions that are urgently needed to improve the programme.
- Communication is unclear across the partnership. Leaders are not proactive in the support that they offer trainees and mentors. Leaders sometimes place unnecessary burdens on trainees' workload. At times, this causes anxiety and distress. Leaders must improve the clarity of communication across the partnership. They must be more proactive in supporting the well-being and workload of trainees and other partners.

Does the ITE partnership combined primary and secondary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

The partnership does not meet the DfE statutory compliance criteria:

- criterion C2.1(a), which requires ITT partnerships to ensure that the content, structure, delivery and assessment of programmes are designed to: enable trainee teachers to meet all the standards for QTS across the age range of training, in this case 5–11 and 11–16
- criterion C2.2, which requires ITT partnerships to ensure that they prepare all trainee teachers to teach within one of the following age phases: ages 3–11 (primary); ages 7–14 (middle); ages 11–19 (secondary)
- criterion 3.1, which requires ITT partnerships to ensure that their management structure ensures the effective operation of the training programme
- criterion 3.4, which requires ITT partnerships to ensure that they monitor, evaluate and moderate all aspects of provision rigorously and demonstrate how these contribute to securing improvements in the quality of training and the assessment of trainees.

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number 70280

Inspection number 10180798

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

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

Type of ITE partnership School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT)

Phases provided Primary
Secondary

Date of previous inspection 3–6 October 2016

Inspection team

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Annex: Partnership schools

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

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)	Date joined partnership	Current Ofsted grade
Ellesmere Park High School	144200	Secondary	Unknown	Good
Essa Academy	135770	Secondary	Unknown	Requires improvement
Summerville Primary School	105889	Primary	Unknown	Good

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