

Poole SCITT

Ad Astra Infant School, Sherborn Crescent, Poole BH17 8AP

Inspection dates

16 to 19 May 2022

Inspection judgements

Primary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education and training

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

Trainees at Poole School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) are well prepared for the next stage of their careers. They are well supported, both at the centre and on placement, towards becoming confident and competent teachers. Headteachers are keen to recruit trainees. Many trainees go on to have fulfilling careers, including aspiring to leadership positions, in local schools.

Trainees are well prepared for teaching. They gain a deep understanding of what is needed for the job. This includes knowing how to manage pupils' behaviour and how to plan effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those who speak English as an additional language. The rigorous approach to safeguarding ensures that trainees quickly learn their duties for keeping pupils safe.

Trainees are equipped well to teach the primary age range. This includes having a secure understanding of early reading and phonics. However, minor weaknesses in the curriculum's design mean that trainees are not as knowledgeable about some aspects of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) as they could be.

There are clear lines of responsibility to ensure that teachers, mentors and tutors across the partnership understand what each is required to do. Consequently, trainees benefit from a high-quality and tailored experience that helps them to learn well, including those on the special education route.

Information about this ITE provider

- There are 27 trainees on the course. Of these, 8 are on the School Direct (fee-paying) route.
- The course covers the primary age range, that is, pupils from age five to 11 years.
- The SCITT uses up to 35 local schools and partnerships, including special schools for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- Trainee routes include a Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) with Qualified Teacher Status awarded through the SCITT for mainstream education, as well as a specialist route for trainees to follow an interest in special education.
- Poole SCITT works in conjunction with Kingston University for the award of the PGCE.
- The SCITT joined The Educational Alliance of Canford Heath (TEACH) multi-academy trust in April 2015.
- The SCITT's centre is located on the site of Ad Astra Infant School, Poole.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector.
- Inspectors met with a range of senior staff. These include the professional coordinator, members of the SCITT management board, professional tutors (PTs), the chief executive officer of TEACH multi-academy trust and specialist course and subject leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with 14 trainees on placement, including four on the School Direct special education route. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative group of 11 former trainees via video conferencing, including six early career teachers (ECTs).
- The focused review subjects that were considered as part of this inspection included early reading and phonics, mathematics and design and technology.
- The lead inspector met with the SCITT lead for personal, social and health education and religious education.
- The lead inspector met with the professional coordinator and administration manager to evaluate core compliance and safeguarding procedures, including for recruitment.
- The inspectors visited 13 placement settings and spoke with headteachers, mentors and class teachers.
- The lead inspector reviewed all surveys, including 15 responses from trainees.

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

Course and partnership leaders have high expectations of trainees. Their aspirations and values are reflected in all aspects of the course, including when trainees are on placement. Trainees, including those with additional needs, are supported effectively through a

personalised approach to the programme. Centre staff know the trainees well. As a result, trainees receive high-quality support and care, including for their personal and emotional well-being, to enable them to succeed. Workload is considered carefully.

Trainees flourish in this SCITT. They have great confidence in, and build strong relationships with, the centre staff. The SCITT's leaders promote a strong family feel where trainees are valued and respected. Headteachers and former trainees agree that the course prepares trainees well for the future. Typical views of headteachers include, 'The future of education is safe in Poole SCITT's hands.' Trainees and school-based staff have great admiration for the professional coordinator, whose passion and enthusiasm are an inspiration to many.

Leaders ensure that there are effective systems in place for assessing trainees and checking their progress. As a result, trainees receive appropriate and timely support, including through pre-, mid- and post-placement meetings. For example, PTs and mentors work together to determine meaningful targets to help trainees make progress in the curriculum. Trainees provide weekly reviews for their PTs, who use this information well to maintain useful dialogue and communication.

The SCITT management board has clear oversight of the course. It holds the programme leader to account through different committees. Each committee has clear terms of reference and is effective in evaluating the work of the SCITT. Nevertheless, despite previously identifying the right steps to improve the curriculum, leaders have not yet ensured that all actions have been fully implemented, although plans are in place to rectify this.

The curriculum is ambitious and particularly effective in promoting the core content framework. As a result, trainees are well prepared for their next steps. The course provides relevant information for trainees to learn about the importance of early reading and phonics. Placements are well timed for trainees to practise and implement their knowledge. The structure of the curriculum, through a spiral approach, means that trainees get many opportunities to learn about or deepen their knowledge of key themes, including SEND, behaviour management and pupil assessment.

The curriculum emphasises the importance of professional characteristics, so that trainees reflect the high standards expected of teachers. However, a few remaining weaknesses in the chosen content and design of the curriculum mean that some trainees do not have the same strong knowledge in the full range of foundation subjects. Some trainees lack knowledge of the EYFS statutory framework, for example in knowing what the different areas of learning are and their importance for early child development.

Leaders ensure that the course aligns well with placement-based learning. This includes a focus on SEND, with relevant experiences in local special schools. Trainees benefit from effective mentoring arrangements. Mentors are consistently well trained and knowledgeable. They work effectively with centre staff to ensure that trainees get timely support and challenge.

What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the primary phase?

(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)

- Despite the strengths of the curriculum, some foundation subjects are not designed with the same strong intent as others. Consequently, trainees do not consistently gain key subject knowledge to be as well prepared for the next stage of their careers as possible. Leaders must ensure that the initial teacher education (ITE) curriculum builds trainees' confidence and competence more consistently in the foundation subjects, in readiness for the ECT years.
- The ITE curriculum does not ensure that all trainees gain sufficient depth of understanding of the EYFS. This prevents some from learning as much as possible about children's early development. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum focuses more precisely on EYFS content through coherent, well-planned sequences, to help trainees gain an even stronger understanding of this area.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70058
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This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) in accordance with the 'Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook'.

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

Type of ITE provider	School-centred initial teacher training
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	9 to 11 June 2014 and 29 September to 1 October 2014

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)
Ad Astra Infant School	141755	Primary
Canford Heath Infant School	141762	Primary
Canford Heath Junior School	141763	Primary
Haymoor Junior School	141787	Primary
Heatherlands Primary School	145212	Primary
Linwood School	113961	Special
Montacute School	137286	Special
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Poole	140767	Primary
St Luke's Church of England Primary School	142103	Primary
St Mark's Church of England Primary School	142445	Primary
Livingstone Road Junior School	144602	Primary
Longfleet Church of England Primary School	142973	Primary
Oakdale Junior School	142975	Primary

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