

Surrey South Farnham SCITT

South Farnham School, Menin Way, Farnham, Surrey GU9 8DY

Inspection dates

3 to 6 July 2023

Inspection judgements

Primary age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education and training

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

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

Trainees flourish in this partnership because of leaders' work to build an exceptional 'team around the trainee'. Everyone in the partnership works in harmony to contribute to trainees' excellent experience. The cohort leads play a central role in linking the provider and schools within each geographical hub. Course leaders, mentors and support tutors provide expert and skilful guidance for trainees.

The curriculum is ambitious and carefully sequenced. Consequently, trainees develop excellent knowledge of pedagogies and subjects. Trainees confidently use research to inform their teaching and are taught to be highly reflective. This helps them to refine their practice and prepares them extremely well to teach across the primary phase.

Leaders help to build trainees' knowledge over time through different subjects and school contexts. Trainees develop a strong understanding of how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language. Trainees learn early in the course how to promote high standards of behaviour, and they develop a robust understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Relationships between trainees and staff are very positive. Leaders encourage trainees to share their views and act on this feedback swiftly. As a result, trainees know that their voices are heard and valued. If trainees struggle, they are nurtured and provided with bespoke guidance. One trainee reflected how leaders are 'very supportive but maintain high expectations'.

Information about this ITE provider

- Surrey South Farnham SCITT is a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider.
- Trainees who complete the course successfully gain qualified teacher status (QTS). They are trained to teach pupils aged 5 to 11 years. At the time of the inspection, there were 133 trainees.
- Most trainees complete the non-salaried School Direct route. All trainees have the option to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Education with the University of Roehampton. Some trainees follow a level 6 apprenticeship route with QTS. The SCITT also offer the assessment only route to teach pupils aged 5 to 11 or 11 to 16 years. At the time of the inspection, there were three candidates on this route.
- The SCITT serves a large geographical area. There are five hubs in Cobham, Farnham, Havant, Reigate and Staines. Each hub has its own cohort lead who has oversight of the trainees in that hub.
- The SCITT director started in her role in September 2020, and the deputy director started in his position in September 2022.
- The SCITT is based in South Farnham School, which is part of the South Farnham Educational Trust.
- The provider works with approximately 115 schools in nine local authorities. Most partner schools have been judged good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by three of His Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of leaders, including the SCITT director and deputy director, the accounting officer, who is also the chief executive officer of the trust, and several members of the strategic board.
- Inspectors spoke with 37 trainee teachers, 15 early career teachers (ECTs), 21 headteachers and 26 mentors, either in person or remotely. Inspectors also met with a group of support tutors and cohort leads.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of information relating to the leadership and management of the partnership. This documentation included leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning documents, training materials, and records of trainees' mentor meetings and target-setting.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's trainee and staff online surveys.
- The inspection was carried out through in-person meetings, remote meetings and on-site visits to partner schools.
- During the inspection, inspectors visited seven schools.
- Inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading, science, languages, history, music, geography and computing.

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

Leaders' strong moral purpose drives their ambition to provide the highest-quality teachers for pupils. Leaders have designed a comprehensive curriculum that seamlessly links trainees' learning at the provider and in schools. Leaders ensure that the course integrates professional and subject-specific knowledge which extends beyond the core content framework requirements. Expert trainers use the precisely structured and research-informed curriculum to teach trainees essential knowledge. Leaders' overarching ambition is fully realised and trainees are exceptionally well equipped to start their teaching careers.

Trainees are helped to develop a detailed understanding of how pupils learn. Trainees successfully apply this learning across different subjects and types of school placements. Leaders firmly promote inclusive practice throughout the course so that trainees gradually build their understanding as they gain more experience. Trainees competently adapt their teaching and securely identify and address barriers that pupils with SEND may face. As one staff member reflected, 'Children are truly at the heart of the programme.'

The teaching of early reading is exemplary. Passionate trainers prioritise high-quality training which gives trainees a strong introduction to how to teach pupils to read using systematic synthetic phonics. Trainees successfully promote language and communication from the early years onwards and encourage reading for pleasure. They draw on the research-informed training to apply and build their learning through carefully structured tasks.

The quality of mentoring is excellent. Leaders' training for mentors is first rate, which gives them a deep understanding of how to support trainees to build on the centre-based learning. They provide precise guidance to support mentors' work, which ensures consistency across trainees' experiences in diverse placements. Leaders continually provide detailed feedback to mentors, which strengthens their support for trainees. Mentors help trainees to successfully apply their learning from research into practice and maintain a sharp focus on next steps. This helps trainees to continually refine their skills so that they successfully transition into ECTs knowing their strengths and what aspects they need to develop further.

Partnership working is exceptional. Schools are genuinely proud to work with the provider and welcome the clarity of the course design. Leaders' ambition to have a positive impact in the education community beyond trainees is realised in practice as headteachers make use of course materials to train their staff. The excellent communication between everyone supports a coherent trainee experience. The team of expert staff supporting each trainee continually checks how well trainees are learning the curriculum. Staff ensure that trainees develop expertise in both the essential subject and pedagogical aspects. Leaders provide personalised and highly effective support for any trainees who struggle.

Leaders are unrelenting in their pursuit of excellence through continual reflection and improvement. They constantly quality assure and finesse the provision, including by drawing on feedback from trainees, schools and staff. The strategic board and headteacher partnership board contribute strongly to this valuable work. This means that

trainees are equipped as well as possible for the start of their careers. As one mentor reflected, 'They equip their trainees to thrive, not simply survive in their ECT years and beyond.'

Does the ITE provider's primary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?

- The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

Do apprenticeships in the ITE provider's primary phase satisfy the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision?

- The provider meets the principles and requirements of apprenticeship provision.

The robust apprenticeship provision was established in response to demand from local schools. Apprentices follow the same high-quality training programme as all other trainees. Apprentices appreciate valuable off-the-job training and complete highly structured school-based activities such as observing expert teachers before applying their learning in context.

Apprentices are exceptionally well supported by mentors to learn the required knowledge, skills and behaviours. Leaders use a robust initial assessment and rigorous ongoing checks to ensure that apprentices are learning the intended subject-specific and pedagogical curriculum. As a result, apprentices are very well prepared for the demands of their teaching careers.

ITE provider details

Unique reference number	70241
Inspection number	10278322

This inspection was carried out 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 provider	School-centred initial teacher training
Phases provided	Primary phase
Date of previous inspection	10 to 13 March 2014

Inspection team

Laurie Anderson, Lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Abigail Wilkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Derry	His Majesty's Inspector
Kate Fripp	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School	102594	Primary
Highfield South Farnham School	141667	Primary
Holy Trinity C of E Aided Junior School	125288	Primary
The Raleigh School	137014	Primary
South Farnham School	136888	Primary
St Andrew's and St Mark's C of E Junior School	102588	Primary
William Cobbett Primary School	125077	Primary

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