

# Ashton on Mersey School SCITT

Ashton on Mersey SCITT, Langley Road, Sale M33 5AY

## Inspection dates

5 to 8 February 2024

## Inspection judgements

Primary and secondary age-phase combined

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education and training	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

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

Trainees are proud to be part of the Ashton on Mersey School SCITT. They appreciate the wide-ranging bespoke support that leaders provide throughout their training. Trainees described the strong relationships that they have with the school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider. This enables SCITT leaders to tailor the ITE curriculum to the specific needs of individual trainees.

Trainees in both the primary and secondary age-phases benefit from high-quality experiences across their chosen ITE programmes. This includes carefully crafted training, steeped in pertinent educational research, provided by knowledgeable and experienced subject specialists. For the most part, trainees feel well supported by skilled mentors.

Trainees are well prepared to teach their chosen subject and age-phase. In the primary age-phase, trainees develop an appropriate understanding of the role of systematic synthetic phonics in supporting pupils to learn to read fluently. Secondary age-phase trainees learn about effective, subject-specific pedagogy in different school contexts.

Leaders ensure that the ITE curriculum supports trainees to become resilient and reflective practitioners. Trainees are well prepared for their future careers, with realistic expectations of the role of a teacher. Contrasting school-based placements enable trainees to develop and hone their behaviour management skills, while learning how to safeguard pupils. Trainees value opportunities to become involved in whole-school life, for example through participating in extra-curricular activities.

Trainees recognise that the SCITT prioritises support for their workload and well-being. Leaders have prudently organised the ITE curriculum to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on trainees.

## **Information about this ITE provider**

- The Ashton on Mersey School SCITT partnership was established in 2014. It provides both primary and secondary teacher training programmes.
- The SCITT is based at Ashton on Mersey School. The SCITT is part of The Dean Trust.
- In the 2023/24 academic year, there were 38 trainees enrolled onto the partnership's ITE programmes. There were 12 primary- and 26 secondary-age phase trainees. Additionally, up to the point of the inspection, there were nine trainees who followed the assessment only route, which included four primary- and five secondary-age phase trainees.
- Trainees who follow the primary programmes are trained to teach the five to 11 age-phase. Trainees on the secondary programmes are trained to teach the 11 to 16 age-phase.
- All trainees gain qualified teacher status (QTS). Since September 2023, the SCITT has been working in partnership with Leeds Trinity University for trainees who wish to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).
- In 2023/24, primary trainees chose from a general PGCE in primary education, or they could choose to follow the primary mathematics specialist PGCE route or the primary physical education specialist PGCE route.
- In 2023/24, secondary trainees chose from the following PGCE subject specialisms: chemistry; computer science; design and technology; English; English with SEND; geography; mathematics; modern foreign languages; physics or physical education.
- The partnership includes nine primary schools, one junior school and seven secondary schools. These settings span four local authorities.
- There is one school in the partnership that is rated as requires improvement by Ofsted. All other schools in the partnership are graded either good or outstanding by Ofsted.

## **Information about this inspection**

- This inspection was carried out by two of His Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the director of the SCITT, the SCITT lead and the programme manager. The lead inspector met with representatives of the strategic steering board, including the chair of the strategic steering board. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer of The Dean Trust.
- An inspector met with a representative of Leeds Trinity University to discuss the PGCE element of the training programme.

- Inspectors carried out focused reviews in early reading, mathematics, chemistry, English, design and technology, and primary foundation subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with 24 trainees individually or in small groups to discuss their experiences of the training programmes. They also spoke with 24 mentors.
- Inspectors met with six early career teachers who had previously completed their teacher training with the provider. Inspectors also met with four assessment only candidates.
- Inspectors visited five schools as part of the inspection. On school visits, inspectors spoke with professional mentors, subject mentors, trainees and headteachers. They also visited lessons that the trainees were teaching and observed the feedback given to trainees by mentors.
- Inspectors sampled a wide range of documentation relating to the ITE training programmes. These documents included: subject and phase curriculum plans; trainees' assignments and their records of target-setting and mentoring; and information relating to the Department for Education's (DfE's) ITE criteria and supporting advice.
- Inspectors also reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to the leadership and management of the partnership. This included leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning documents.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for trainees and staff.

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

Leaders' strong moral purpose, together with a deep-rooted understanding of the context of the local area, underpins the ITE curriculum provided by Ashton on Mersey SCITT. The SCITT prepares trainees sufficiently well to fulfil local employment needs. This ensures that there are high rates of employment for trainees following successful completion of their chosen ITE programmes.

Leaders provide a well-thought-out and ambitious ITE curriculum that successfully builds on the DfE's core content framework. Leaders have particularly prioritised ensuring that trainees are fully prepared to support disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, trainees are knowledgeable about how to use adaptive teaching, and the research that underpins this area of pedagogy, to support pupils, including those with SEND, to learn well.

Trainees benefit from a wide range of suitable and diverse experiences to ensure that they develop well-informed knowledge about their chosen age phases. This prepares trainees well to meet the requirements of QTS. Added to this, the SCITT ensures that trainees understand what pupils have learned in the phases before and after the age ranges in which they are training to teach.

The SCITT has created strong links with a range of partners, both within and beyond the trust, to ensure that training sessions are delivered and facilitated by subject and phase-

specific experts. These effective partnerships have enabled trainees in the primary age-phase to develop an appropriate understanding of how to teach early reading. Trainees in the secondary age-phase, alongside rich opportunities to enhance their subject knowledge, gain a deep insight in how to develop pupils' literacy skills.

While the individual aspects of the ITE programmes provide strong experiences for trainees, at times, strands of the ITE curriculum are not as successfully integrated as they could be. For example, while centre-based, subject-specific input for trainees is effective, this does not build on learning from the core, generic pedagogy sessions as well as it could. Some subject facilitators are not clear what trainees have learned previously. This is because the SCITT has not ensured that systems for checking the quality and integration of the ITE curriculum are suitably rigorous.

School placements are carefully chosen to ensure that trainees gain contrasting experiences that are well matched to their needs and interests. In the main, mentors support trainees well. SCITT leaders have ensured that assessment systems do not create additional workload for trainees or mentors. However, a few mentors do not understand the progression that trainees are expected to make through the school-based strand of the ITE curriculum. At times, this hinders mentors from assessing how well trainees are learning the ITE curriculum and precisely which areas they need to develop further.

The SCITT's expectations of the role of the mentor in setting effective targets for trainees are not as clear as they could be. This means that the quality of target setting across the partnership is uneven. Some targets set by mentors lack the subject specificity and precision necessary to help trainees to successfully address gaps in their knowledge and teaching practice.

The SCITT has ensured that the strategic board represents independence from the trust so that it can challenge leaders effectively, particularly in relation to recruitment and selection across the partnership. However, work to check wider aspects of the provision, including the quality of the ITE curriculum, is at an earlier stage.

## **What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the primary/secondary phase?**

### **(Information for the provider and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, do not ensure that systems for checking the quality and integration of the ITE curriculum are sufficiently robust. The result is that some aspects of the ITE curriculum are not as well integrated as they might be. Occasionally, this can lead to trainees not building on their knowledge, skills and understanding as effectively as they could. Leaders should ensure that systems to check how well the ITE curriculum is integrated are appropriately rigorous.
- Targets set by mentors are not consistently of a high standard. On some occasions, targets are too generic and do not fully support the improvement of trainees' subject-specific practice. The SCITT should ensure that expectations of mentors are clear and

that, across the partnership, mentors are equally well equipped to set high-quality, effective targets for trainees.

- Some aspects of trainees' school-based experiences are not linked to the centre-based training as effectively as they could be. This means that mentors lack awareness of how the curriculum progresses across the year. Leaders should ensure that mentors understand the content of the centre-based ITE curriculum fully. This is to enable mentors to accurately assess trainees' progress through the ITE curriculum.

### **Does the ITE provider's primary/secondary phase comply with the ITE compliance criteria?**

The provider meets the DfE statutory compliance criteria.

## ITE provider details

**Unique reference number** 70301

**Inspection number** 10277277

This inspection was carried out in accordance with the [initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook](#), which sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2020.

**Type of ITE provider** SCITT

**Phases provided** Primary and secondary combined

**Date of previous inspection** 20 June and 7 November 2016

## Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, Lead Inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Barraclough

His Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Burke-Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

Janette Walker

Ofsted Inspector

## Annex: Placement schools

Inspectors visited the following schools as part of this inspection:

<b>Name</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>ITE phase</b>
Ashton on Mersey School	138123	Secondary
Broad oak School	106363	Secondary
Navigation Primary School	106283	Primary
Tyntesfield Primary School	145485	Primary
Wellfield Junior School	106304	Primary

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