

Primary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on

Leicester and Leicestershire
SCITT

Dovelands Primary School
Hinckley Road
Leicester
LE3 0TJ

A full inspection
2005/06

Managing Inspector:
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Introduction

The Leicester and Leicestershire SCITT works in partnership with 13 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a course leading to Qualified Teacher Status. At the time of the inspection there were 23 trainees.

Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a full inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Main inspection judgements

Standards achieved by the trainees: Grade 2

Quality of training: Grade 2

Management and quality assurance: Grade 2

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- the high quality of the centre-based and school-based training
- the auditing and development of trainees' subject knowledge
- the leadership and management of the partnership
- the involvement of trainees in the evaluation of training
- communication between all partners
- the trainees' professional attitudes to their work.

Points for consideration

- ensuring all trainees have a good balance of teaching experiences across the full age range for which they are being trained
- ensuring that all mentors are fully confident in assessing accurately how well trainees meet the Standards
- ensuring that all trainees plan lessons which are well matched to individual pupils' learning needs.

Standards achieved by trainees

1. Trainees show great commitment to raising pupils' achievement. They know their pupils well and are aware of individual needs. They provide appropriate levels of challenge for most pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language. One trainee demonstrated this commitment by using Swahili words for 'floating' and 'sinking' in a science lesson with a large group of Year 1. Trainees attend staff meetings and training events. They become fully integrated into the life of the school; for example one trainee led a dance group for the leavers' performance.
2. The trainees are reflective teachers, willing and able to accept ways forward to modify their techniques in becoming effective teachers. Their weekly evaluations are detailed and of good quality. They seek and act promptly on advice given by school-based tutors. They are committed to honest self-evaluation and this leads to improvements and good progress towards reaching the Standards.
3. They possess good subject knowledge and use this effectively in their lessons. They are particularly skilled in the teaching of phonics. Here they are able to devise interesting and engaging methods to develop skills in their pupils. Misconceptions and mispronunciations are readily identified during class discussions and used as teaching points for the whole class. Trainees make appropriate use of resources, including information, communications technology (ICT), to support their lessons. Interactive white boards are used effectively and with confidence by all trainees.
4. Trainees develop some understanding of the Key Stage 3 curriculum from the visit they all make to a secondary school. This provides them with a useful perspective on pupils' expected progress. However, while they are very confident in teaching the age ranges in which they have undertaken sustained teaching experience, they are less secure in their knowledge and understanding of the programmes of study outside this range.
5. Trainees' planning is detailed in terms of the activities, key target vocabulary and key questions to ask the pupils. However, learning objectives are often not precise enough to allow thorough assessment of pupils' learning. Tasks are not always well matched to the pupils' individual needs and a few trainees are unclear about using individual education plans.
6. Trainees use a wide range of teaching and learning strategies confidently and effectively. They captivate their pupils with engaging and exciting openings to their lessons. For example, one trainee created the ambience of the seaside by having images of the sea rolling on the interactive white board as discussion took place.
7. Trainees work well with learning support assistants in their classes. Activities and materials are well matched to the needs of pupils. Working closely with support

assistants, trainees ensure that, where simultaneous translation takes place, for pupils with English as an additional language, the assistants have been well briefed before the lesson. They ensure all pupils are fully involved in their learning and clearly understand what is expected of them. Lower attaining pupils are well supported through targeted questions and use of appropriate writing frames.

8. Instructions given to pupils are clear and lead to a good pace in most lessons although opening sessions can overrun. In these cases some pupils, and especially those who are most able, become restless and anxious to begin work. Plenary sessions are used effectively to celebrate and assess the learning of groups.

9. Trainees demonstrate a good knowledge of formative assessment. Where placement schools use group and individual targets displayed on desk tops, trainees work effectively to ensure that pupils are aware of them. One trainee had developed a record keeping system. This simple, yet highly effective, document had been praised by the school. It enabled the trainee, at a glance, to check on the progress of her pupils.

10. Trainees regularly mark pupils' work. However, their comments are often too superficial to offer advice on how pupils might improve their work. Oral feedback is more precise and clearly guides pupils to extend their thinking and learning. Trainees keep well annotated examples of pupils' work and use this information to write reports for parents.

11. Trainees' behaviour management skills are a key strength. They build successfully on their centre-based training so that classrooms have an orderly and purposeful atmosphere. Effective strategies for classroom control include the use of positive reinforcement and praise. Transition times are conducted and managed very well by the trainees, without noise or disruption to other classes. They create rich learning environments designed to stimulate pupils' curiosity and motivation.

The quality of training

12. The content and structure of the subject courses are designed to enable trainees to meet the Standards. Training sessions are supported well by relevant tasks. There are three substantial assignments which extend the trainees' understanding of theory and concepts in English, mathematics and science. A good balance is achieved between centre-based and school-based training. The three major teaching experiences are well sequenced. Three-quarters of trainees have good opportunities to teach across the whole age range for which they are being trained; a quarter have sustained teaching experience within too restricted an age band. There is scope for making better use of existing placements to enable all trainees to gain some experience of teaching across the full primary age range.

13. The overall quality of centre-based training is very good. Training in ICT is exceptionally good. Training sessions are linked closely to the Standards and good attention is paid to increasing trainees' knowledge and understanding of the National

Curriculum programmes of study and the Primary National Strategy. Special educational needs and English as an additional language receive very good coverage.

14. Training sessions are well planned and delivered with utter commitment and enthusiasm. As a result, trainees are very well motivated and engaged with the training. Trainers have excellent subject knowledge which enables them to focus on developing the trainees' personal subject knowledge as well as improving their teaching skills. This approach is a key strength of the training which is reinforced in the regular subject audits and in the subject improvement clinics. Trainers are highly competent at using ICT to support their teaching. They are very effective role models and skilful at linking teaching theory with practice. The trainees are encouraged to support and learn from each other. For example, the outcomes of subject audits are used to inform the composition of mixed ability groups; those trainees with secure subject knowledge help those whose understanding is weaker. This is an effective strategy.

15. Trainees are well prepared to teach phonics. A strong emphasis is placed on equipping them with a secure knowledge and understanding of how oral language underpins the development and teaching of early literacy skills. In mathematics, trainees are prepared well to address pupils' misconceptions and to use the correct mathematical terminology. Science training is focused firmly upon developing trainees' scientific knowledge and developing their enquiry skills so that they are competent at planning lessons which encourage pupils to predict, ask questions and investigate in order to solve problems. Training in the foundation subjects is of the same high quality. In whole group sessions, trainers are very effective at modelling good practice and at familiarising trainees with a wealth of resources to support their teaching.

16. There is good coherence between the professional studies, centre-based subject training and school-based training. For example, the inclusion of behaviour management at the start of the course stands the trainees in good stead when they go into schools. Likewise, the early information provided about child protection and legal responsibilities ensures trainees understand fully these issues. There are substantial training sessions on all essential elements of primary school teaching including assessment, special educational needs and the Foundation Stage. The trainees have sufficient planned opportunities to observe teaching and learning in Key Stage 3.

17. The commitment and drive of school-based trainers match those of the centre-based trainers. School-based trainers pay meticulous attention to building on trainees' strengths to address any weaknesses. They receive the trainees' previous school experience reports and their self evaluations. These are used effectively to plan the next steps in their training. Course managers and school-based mentors are knowledgeable and experienced practitioners. Trainees have very good opportunities to observe good practice in their placement schools. Subject leaders and mentors give them focused and well targeted feedback on their lessons, which is referenced to the Standards. A few mentors assess trainees too generously. In

these instances, mentors are not sufficiently clear about the criteria for discriminating between lessons that are outstanding, good and satisfactory.

Management and quality assurance

18. Admission procedures are very good. A well-defined selection process sets out clearly the minimum entrance requirements and the timescale for applications. The partnership has exceeded its targets for recruiting male trainees and those from minority ethnic groups into primary teaching. The interview process is rigorous and is supported by clear criteria and guidelines. Consistency of assessment is achieved by the presence of the consortium manager at all interviews. Meticulous records are maintained. Good use is made of the professional expertise of headteachers who assist with interviewing candidates. Successful candidates are given useful feedback on their performance in the mathematics and English skills tests, which they undertake at interview. Unsuccessful applicants are given helpful written feedback on their performance. The handbook is succinct and very informative. The web-based version is well structured and easy to navigate.

19. The partnership's mission statement sets out unequivocally its opposition to all manifestations of racism and asserts its commitment to race equality. There are comprehensive policies on equal opportunity and racial equality. This high degree of awareness about inclusion and the need to treat everyone as an individual permeates all of the partnership's work. There are good systems for monitoring equal opportunities and racist incidents through the annual process of self evaluation.

20. Applications from candidates with disabilities are welcomed. There are good procedures to ensure that applicants with impaired mobility are interviewed in an appropriate venue. Similarly, the partnership endeavours to meet the personal needs of trainees very well, such as those with dependent relatives and those who wish to attend their religious festivals.

21. The partnership is very well led and managed. The course manager is supported effectively by highly committed colleagues from partner schools. Committees have clear remits and there are well defined lines of accountability. Attendance at committee meetings is good. Minutes are accurate and detailed.

22. The quality assurance and management committees play crucial and decisive roles in steering the partnership's work. The course committee and staff training forum make a strong contribution to course development. The finance committee has a very secure oversight of the budget. Trainees are well represented on the staff-trainee forum. Their representatives are very effective at fielding concerns and issues from peers. The forum reacts promptly and sensitively to matters raised and considers carefully where improvements or alterations would be of benefit. For example, the number of school-based tasks during school experience was considered following trainees' representations, and appropriate adjustments were made.

23. Communication is very good. The intranet site has been updated recently and is being used to disseminate course materials and information. The partnership agreement sets out clearly the roles and responsibilities of trainers and trainees, and the criteria by which schools are accepted and retained into membership are robust. Partnership agreements are well understood. All those involved in the delivery of school-based training receive preparation for their roles. They undertake their responsibilities with clarity of purpose and very high levels of commitment. However, some trainers need more training in assessing trainees accurately against the Standards.

24. Resources for ICT are good. All trainees are provided with laptops. Training in the use of newer technology, such as interactive white boards, has a high priority. The partnership has made good use of funds to develop training bases at several schools. This enables the trainees to gain very good experience of learning from expert practitioners in a wide range of school contexts. Resources at the training centre are not so good or so easily accessible.

25. Systems are in place to moderate judgements about the trainees' progress towards meeting the Standards. Regular joint observations of trainees' teaching are undertaken to promote consistency and accuracy of assessment. Assignments are marked well against clear criteria and a sample is moderated. The external examiner is highly experienced in the field of initial teacher training and conducts at least three visits during the course of the year. The external examiner's report is detailed and helpful.

26. There are secure arrangements for assuring the quality of training by tutors, school-based trainers and trainees. All centre-based and school-based training is evaluated and the information is used to plan any further support or development work. The trainees also maintain a learning log, which enables tutors to ascertain the impact of training on the trainees' learning.

27. The provider has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the new provider inspection report. In the second year of operation, the partnership has drawn up a draft strategic plan under development which sets out clear time lines and responsibilities for monitoring the progress of the plan. Success criteria are not always sufficiently precise or measurable but objectives and supporting actions are informed and rooted firmly in the outcomes of self evaluation.