

Forest Independent Primary Collegiate SCITT

School Lane
Lambourne Road
Chigwell
Essex
IG7 6NN

A primary initial teacher training
Short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The Forest Independent Primary Collegiate SCITT works in partnership with 19 schools to provide a postgraduate certificate in education which prepares trainees to teach pupils in the 5-11 age range. At the time of the inspection there were 20 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 short 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

Management and quality assurance: Grade: 2

The overall quality of training is at least good.
The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- the quality of training in the core subjects
- the strong leadership of the course manager
- the opportunities for trainees to gain a wide breadth of practical experience through undertaking school placements in three mainstream schools, a special school and schools in diverse settings
- the use of expert practitioners from consortium schools to deliver training
- the emphasis placed on encouraging trainees to become reflective practitioners
- the attention paid to tailoring training programmes to meet individual and group needs.

Points for consideration

- reviewing the assessment load on trainees
- defining lines of accountability in the new management structure, particularly in relation to the roles of the course manager and the lead school
- involving all partners more formally in evaluating the effectiveness of management and quality assurance
- ensuring that all trainees are set focused subject-specific targets on school placement
- clarifying the role of subject leaders in supporting trainees on school placement.

The quality of training

1. The course is well structured and meets the Requirements at a good level. The National Curriculum is covered thoroughly. When new national initiatives are introduced, the course is adapted promptly. For example, recent revisions to the Primary National Strategy and to the Foundation Stage are being incorporated into the content of the training programme. There is a good balance between school and centre-based training. The trainees undertake school placements in three mainstream schools and a special school during the year, and this is a very good feature. They gain a wide breadth of practical experience through observing and teaching across the whole primary age range and they have good opportunities to visit Foundation Stage and Key Stage 3 settings. A strong emphasis is placed on inclusion and this is being developed further in training sessions through a focus on the *Every Child Matters* agenda. Good attention is paid to increasing trainees' knowledge and understanding of teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language. The training prepares trainees well for their future careers.

2. Tutors are well qualified; most have either current or recent primary experience. Trainees are very enthusiastic about the training, particularly in mathematics and science. They appreciate the interactive teaching style of the tutors. The English course has been rewritten and this has markedly improved the content and structure. The teaching of phonics is covered well and trainees learn the importance of developing pupils' oral language skills in order to improve their reading and writing skills. In mathematics and science, there is a strong and appropriate emphasis on investigative learning. Session notes indicate that there is a good mix between practice, theory and developing trainees' subject knowledge in the core subjects. Professional studies underpins the training.

3. Trainees maintain a journal where they reflect on their learning and practice. These journals are assessed and play an important and successful part in encouraging trainees to become reflective learners and practitioners. Trainees are highly aware of their strengths and areas for development. Tutors pay very good attention to meeting trainees' individual needs and help them to address weaknesses. For example, in science, the programme was altered in response to the needs of the cohort to include additional sessions on the topic 'Forces' and fewer on 'Life Processes.' Subject auditing in the core subjects is thorough. Support sessions are held for those who would benefit from extra input. The weekly mathematics clinics are designed to increase trainees' confidence and ability in the subject.

4. Assignments and tasks link well with the course content. However, inspectors agree with the trainees and the external examiner that the assessment load on trainees is heavy as they complete tasks and assignments, maintain their behaviour journals and sit mid-term examinations. Not all assignments and tasks are well staged throughout the year and this leads to pressure points at different times. Assignments are marked well. The best marking is in mathematics where it is linked very clearly to the assessment criteria. In schools, trainees are set targets that

relate closely to the Standards but they are not sufficiently subject-specific to enable trainees to measure their progress in teaching individual subjects.

5. Trainees demonstrate a good level of ability to plan, deliver and assess pupils' learning. Their files indicate that they understand the rationale behind assessing pupils' progress and performance. They benefit from being placed in good schools and from participating in school-based in-service training with teachers. A mentoring guide sets out very clearly the Standards to be covered each week on school placement and this is followed consistently. However, opportunities to work with subject leaders in schools are not routinely planned. Consequently, some trainees receive guidance from subject leaders but others do not receive the same level of support.

6. The provision of resources is satisfactory. The partnership is about to move to a new training base and plans are in hand to increase information and communications technology (ICT) resources, and extend the range of reference texts. At present, reading lists to support course content, particularly in English, contain a limited range of recently published texts.

Management and quality assurance

7. Selection procedures are rigorous. The partnership is successful in recruiting well qualified trainees who complete the course. The retention rate is high. A concerted effort is made to attract applications from minority ethnic groups and from males; with the exception of this year, the partnership has met its targets for recruiting from under-represented groups over the past few years. Partnership school staff are well represented on interviewing panels. There is a high level of consistency in the interviewing process because interviewers ask the same questions and are diligent in recording the candidates' responses. The criteria for selection are fit for purpose and well understood. Candidates sit tests at interview, which are well designed to assess their level of standard English and their understanding of mathematical concepts. Subject tutors are informed of the trainees' performance and give focused support to trainees who reveal weaknesses in a particular test. For example, the present trainees scored more for English than mathematics and so the mathematics tutor arranged extra support sessions.

8. The course manager provides strong leadership and clear strategic direction. She assumes a pivotal role in the management of the partnership and is well supported by the management committee. However, it is not fully clear where the lines of accountability lie and at present the role of the lead school is not well understood. During the last eighteen months, the partnership has experienced a challenging time as it has sought to move the training base and find another lead school. From April the trainees will have access to improved training facilities at another school. The deliberations have been skilfully handled and the situation has led to a review of the management structure. The outcome of these changes is a

stronger partnership of schools. Headteachers are united in their determination to see the training scheme flourish.

9. The partnership is effective at identifying staff with specific expertise to contribute to the centre-based training programme. A significant number of centre-based training sessions are delivered by current practitioners. For example, a practising teacher is responsible for the music training. The partnership is also well aware of where there is good practice in schools which can enrich and complement the centre-based training programme, and which can meet the group and individual needs of trainees. All trainees participate in a well planned visit to a Foundation Stage unit in order to increase their awareness of the curricular demands of the Foundation Stage. ICT training takes place in four partnership schools. The opportunity for core and foundation subject tutors, professional tutors and mentors to meet together regularly to plan and review provision is a key factor contributing to the high level of coherence between centre-based and school-based training.

10. Trainees are placed in good schools. There are well defined criteria for the selection and deselection of schools; the partnership draws upon schools in a diverse range of settings. Trainees' placements are tracked carefully. There is a clear rationale to allocating trainees to placements which includes enabling trainees to gain experience of teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language and teaching pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

11. Trainees are well supported by mentors and class teachers. Mentors are well trained. Induction procedures are very good as new tutors gain experience by observing experienced tutors. Attendance at mentor meetings is good and now that mentor meetings are held in different schools, more subject leaders attend. This is an example of a successful strategy to increase participation. However, expectations of subject leaders' involvement in school-based training are not clearly set out and this leads to inconsistency in the support trainees receive.

12. The professional development of subject tutors assumes a high profile. Peer observation of centre-based training is becoming well established and tutors receive honest and open feedback on their performance. Subject tutors are enabled to attend national conferences and meetings in order to keep abreast of current developments and practice in initial teacher training.

13. Internal and external moderation procedures are secure. Joint lesson observations, conducted by headteachers and mentors, help to ensure consistency of assessment. The most recent external examiner's report is more detailed than previous ones and includes helpful development points. Written work is moderated carefully. There is extensive double marking of scripts.

14. The partnership has made a good start on benchmarking performance against other providers. All partners are highly committed to improving the quality of provision. Although there is a tendency to rely more on informal evaluation than formal evaluation, this strategy works because the partnership is small and the course manager provides strong leadership. The schools and the course manager

have worked together for a long time and they know each other well. Any issues raised by trainees, tutors, mentors or by external evaluators are considered carefully before decisions are made about revisions to the course. The review of the action plan for 2005/06 is comprehensive and links the quality of training with the impact on trainees' academic performance and professional skills. This is good practice. Similarly, the current self evaluation document incorporates an in-depth evaluation of training, but the evaluation of management and quality assurance is too brief. There is scope for involving all partners in evaluating the effectiveness of management and quality assurance more formally in order to ensure that the new management arrangements continue to facilitate and sustain improvement. Links between self evaluation and action planning are good. The present action plan identifies pertinent priorities; some are expressed well but others are imprecise.