

Cornwall SCITT

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A secondary initial teacher training
inspection report
2007/08

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Introduction

Cornwall School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) works in partnership with 14 secondary schools, one special school and one tertiary college to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education, validated by the Open University, in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), modern languages and music. At the time of the inspection there were 54 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 revised report combines evidence from a short inspection of the provision and of the management and quality assurance arrangements in 2007/08, with the judgements from the scrutiny of further evidence submitted to Ofsted in the autumn of 2008.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

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

Main inspection judgements

Quality of training: Grade 1

Management and quality assurance: Grade 1

The next inspection of this provider will take place in accordance with the ITE Inspection Framework.

Key strengths

- the very effective and responsive leadership and management at course and subject level
- the high quality of the improvement planning based on realistic self-evaluation and a wide range of evaluative data
- the strong coherence of the training programme
- the high level of commitment from all trainers and schools to the trainees and the very good individualised support trainees are given
- the rigorous monitoring of the provision
- the meticulous attention paid to trainees' progress against the Standards
- the structure and coherence of the training programme.

Points for consideration

- ensuring that trainees' written targets more consistently reflect the high quality mentor discussion they experience
- making more explicit the links between the assignments and the Standards, encouraging, in all trainees, greater reflection on the links to their practice.

The quality of training

1. The quality of the training is outstanding. The structure of the course provides very good opportunities for trainees to reflect on classroom experiences and gives very effective preparation for their block practice. Experiences in additional settings during the first term - in the tertiary college, in a special and a primary school - develop trainees' in-depth understanding of the context of secondary education.
2. The carefully planned central educational studies programmes, supported by high quality documentation, include very good coverage of key areas such as lesson planning, assessment and behaviour management. These key areas are then followed up in subject studies to help trainees reflect on these issues in the context of their subject. Trainers include a broad range of strategies to engage trainees' interest and are highly responsive to their needs. The subject leaders and deputy subject leaders are highly experienced practitioners and very responsive to any changes in the curriculum or recent developments in education. For example, there is very good coverage of the implications of the 14-19 curriculum and of subject specific developments such as the changes to the Key Stage 4 science curriculum. Good use is made of external speakers to enhance the quality of the central training.
3. Schools are highly committed to the SCITT and provide very good training venues which help to ensure the strong coherence of the training programme. School-based professional studies and subject training follow up well on central training and the quality of mentoring is high. Trainees develop a very good grounding in planning and teaching methods and have a clear understanding of what constitutes effective practice.
4. The assignments are carefully designed to encourage trainees to reflect upon and develop their own practice. However, these are not explicitly linked to the Standards and a few some trainees struggle to appreciate the relevance of their research to their school-based practice.
5. A real strength of the provision is the extent to which training takes account of individual needs. Trainees come from a variety of backgrounds and all trainers get to know trainees very well at an early stage. Pastoral support for individuals is a key strength, with concerns or personal difficulties being responded to very promptly. Individual needs are identified at interview and personalised pre-course tasks are set to develop both subject knowledge and early teaching experience. These are very effective in ensuring that trainees are well prepared for the beginning of the course. The partnership has made increasingly good use of subject knowledge enhancement or booster courses. Subject knowledge is further developed throughout the course and is a particular focus during central subject sessions. The improvement in trainees' subject knowledge has been acknowledged by those who assess them.
6. The programme leaders, subject leaders and their deputies know schools and mentors well and very carefully match the two placements to trainees' needs

and mentors' areas of expertise. Trainees at risk of failing are identified promptly and offered additional support prior to being set targets for improvement.

7. Feedback from lesson observations is regular, thorough, highly relevant and closely focused on the Standards. Mentor sessions likewise offer very high quality advice and guidance and focused action to improve. However, the record of written targets does not consistently reflect the high quality of the discussions and therefore does not always give weaker trainees clear guidance on how to improve or clear timeframes in which to do this.

8. Trainees' progress throughout the course is very well monitored by all trainers who have a very detailed and accurate understanding of the stage of development of an individual trainee. The teaching practice report, transition documents and summative reviews offer a detailed analysis of the trainees' progress at key points in the course. The termly transition meetings for mentors also allow priorities for the subsequent placement to be closely tailored to trainees' individual needs. Arrangements for the final assessment of trainees against the Standards are thorough and understood by all.

Management and quality assurance

9. The course is well marketed and is responsive to the needs of the secondary schools within the 'SCITT community'. Recruitment targets are generally met and withdrawal rates have decreased since the time of the last inspection. High employment rates within the county and the high level of satisfaction with SCITT trained teachers shown by headteachers and the local authority indicate the effectiveness of both recruitment and training.

10. The interview process is very rigorous and assesses an appropriately wide range of skills. Partner schools are well involved, the relevant subject leader probes subject knowledge and the attendance of the programme manager or her deputy at every interview ensures consistency of approach and the secure moderation of judgements about each candidate's suitability for the course. Records are well maintained; schools are kept well informed and are consulted when necessary on professional matters relating to trainees' fitness to practise.

11. The leadership of the partnership is characterised by a clear strategic view of how the course should improve but also by an ambition to extend its areas of expertise. There is a clear partnership agreement which is reviewed as the course changes. Management structures are highly appropriate and the recent changes to the executive board are a positive development. It is now leaner and, whilst it still ensures that all partnership headteachers are kept well informed, it has the ability to act more quickly than in the past. The executive board is very clear about its strategic role, particularly with regard to finances. Resources are well managed and partners are clear how they are allocated. The move to the higher education building

at the college has had a very positive impact both in terms of learning environment and access to resources, particularly academic journals.

12. The programme manager and her deputy know the schools, subject leaders and trainees very well and this informs their work both at strategic and operational level. Their presence at each of the management groups ensures a high level of consistency of approach. Professional tutors are fully involved in all areas of the management of the course and their knowledge of the workings of the SCITT is very good. Good relationships and high quality systems facilitate excellent communication and individualised support for trainees. The weekly bulletins are used very well to keep information current and to celebrate success.

13. Management at subject level is equally strong. Subject leaders and their deputies work very well together and show a high level of commitment. Great care is taken by senior managers to select strong practitioners for these posts. New subject leaders are well inducted and they are continually well supported by the programme managers.

14. Training for mentors is good, particularly for new mentors. All mentor training sessions contain a good balance of administration and professional development. Transition meetings are used particularly well to develop mentors' skills in assessment and subject knowledge development. Follow up support by subject leaders, programme leaders and the seconded mentor is also very effectively targeted.

15. Monitoring of provision in schools is organised in a systematic yet flexible way. The increased time given for monitoring since the last inspection has enabled this to take place in much greater depth and with more regularity. Intervention following visits is quick and effective and the highest priority is given to the quality of trainees' training experience. The provider continues to monitor equality of opportunity policies well in all aspects of its work.

16. Internal moderation is very secure. There are a large number of joint observations which ensure moderation of judgements on trainees' classroom practice. The internal exam boards ensure standardisation of final assessments and all assignments are double marked. Verification by external examiners corroborates the strength of this process.

17. There is a continuous drive for improvement and improvement planning is a strength. The plans themselves are well structured; actions to be taken are precise as are the methods by which progress will be monitored. Although success criteria are well defined, they are not consistently related to measurable outcomes. The quality of self-evaluation is high and reflects very well the honest and open leadership and management of the course. Trainees' views are regularly sought and their voice is strong. A wide range of trainer and trainee evaluations and other data are brought together well in the action planning process.