

SCITTELS

Colegrave Primary School
Henniker Road
London
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A primary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The School Centred Initial Teacher Training for East London Schools (SCITTELS) works in partnership with 30 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) for the 3 to 7 and the 5 to 11 age ranges. At the time of the inspection there were 36 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 next inspection of this provider will take place in accordance with the Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework.

Key strengths

- the strong links that are made in training between theory and practice, particularly with regard to inclusion and the management of behaviour
- the recruitment and selection of high calibre, confident trainees who are committed to teaching in ethnically diverse areas
- the effective management of the consortium which leads to good levels of communication and involvement of partners
- the strong collegiate partnership across the consortium and high level of commitment to the trainees' progress
- the well focused and individualised support for the trainees throughout the consortium
- the good quality of training for school-based and professional tutors which ensures the trainees' needs are met through well planned individual training programmes.

Points for consideration

- ensuring the trainees have easy access to up-to-date reading lists and library facilities
- developing further the use of benchmarking against other providers and using the data to strengthen improvement planning
- making more immediate use of the information gained from the initial auditing of trainees' subject knowledge to address areas in need of development.

The quality of training

1. The training has maintained its strengths and continues to improve. The main strengths are the emphasis given to inclusion and to the management of behaviour; the clear focus on the Standards; and the practical nature of the training, enabling very strong links to be made between theory and practice.
2. At the heart of the course there is a strong commitment to inclusion. Trainees are prepared very well for teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language. They are given a good understanding of special educational needs and come into contact with pupils across a broad spectrum. They have positive attitudes to ethnic diversity and acquire a good understanding of cultural differences. The commitment to inclusion runs through everything that they do, and is particularly effective in preparing them to teach in schools in the area.
3. Effective training in behaviour management and classroom organisation is given at an early stage in the course. As a result, trainees are already aware of a range of strategies when they first go into schools. They are strongly encouraged to follow the behaviour policies of the schools that they are in, and school-based tutors comment that trainees are generally confident and positive in their approach to promoting good behaviour.
4. The modular organisation of the course is effective. In the core subject module, English, mathematics and science are all well covered so that trainees acquire a good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage. They respond with interest and enthusiasm to the well-planned sessions that are taught by tutors with considerable expertise and up-to-date experience. The teaching style is interactive, with tutors modelling good primary practice and giving trainees opportunities to develop understanding and confidence through practical activities. The core subjects are largely taught in blocks fairly early in the year, which helps trainees to develop subject specific teaching skills before their first block practice. Trainees are also enthusiastic about the training that they receive in all the foundation subjects, but again the training is blocked, with the result that there is no opportunity to revisit subjects at a later stage.
5. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well integrated into the training, helping trainees to use it confidently in their teaching and for their own personal research. However, the trainees do not have good enough library facilities and the reading lists that they are given are not sufficiently up-to-date.
6. The opportunity provided by the introduction of the new Standards has been well used to clarify the way in which the elements of the training relate to the Standards and to ensure that centre-based trainers, professional tutors and school-based tutors have a common understanding of them. Trainees are familiar with them from the outset of the course. They are developing ways of recording evidence against them and identifying gaps and making sure that they are filled. They take responsibility for increasing their subject knowledge and value the support they are

given by tutors, particularly in the additional tutorial sessions at the end of the training day. Their skills in English and mathematics are audited at the time that they apply, and they draw up an action plan as a result, although this is not followed up sufficiently rapidly.

7. There is well focused and individualised support for trainees. Centre-based training takes place in the lead school, where many of the tutors are teachers. Sessions often involve the trainees in working with pupils and therefore enabling them to put theory into practice almost immediately. There are strong links between centre-based and school-based training, and trainees are given tasks and assignments to do in schools that are closely related to the centre-based training. Although some trainees are specialising in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and others in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, they all have some training that goes across the 3 – 11 age range. In particular, they follow an early years module that gives them practical experience in a nursery.

Management and quality assurance

8. The selection procedures are successful in identifying suitable trainees who perform well in written work and practical teaching and go on to obtain teaching posts, mainly in local schools. Withdrawal rates have declined since the last inspection and are now low. The selection process is well planned and includes a range of tasks on the day of the interview. Partnership schools take turns in hosting the interviews; this is very good practice since it provides opportunities to observe candidates interacting with pupils. All stages of the process are informed by clear criteria which are applied fairly and consistently by school-based and centre-based staff. Appropriate procedures are in place to carry out the necessary checks on candidates.

9. The website and other sources of information about the course are detailed and promote positive images to encourage applications from under-represented groups. Proportions of male trainees and those from minority ethnic groups are high and this is a strong feature of recruitment. It reflects the partnership's commitment to recruiting such trainees who will go on to teach in the ethnically diverse local area.

10. The relatively small size of the partnership helps to foster good partnership arrangements which lead to effective programmes. School-based staff, the local authority advisers and the centre-based staff are highly committed to the partnership and this is a strong feature. Partnership school staff contribute regularly to centre-based training. Schools are well represented on management and executive groups which are involved in making decisions about all aspects of provision. The day-to-day management provided by the curriculum manager is effective and demonstrates awareness of the individual needs of trainees and school-based staff. The partnership agreement is a clear, accessible document and is well understood by partnership school staff and governors.

11. The roles and responsibilities of all staff and trainees are set out in the documentation. School- and centre-based staff are very clear about their roles in the training. Communications are very good. Day-to-day information is sent to schools by email and the course calendar sets out clearly what trainees are expected to do each week. School-based staff have a secure understanding of the content of centre-based courses. Tasks and assignments enhance trainees' ability to consolidate their knowledge of specific subjects and aspects in the school. The personal tutors, based at the centre, are readily accessible to all partnership staff and trainees, who feel very well supported throughout the training.

12. The arrangements to ensure that trainers have the necessary knowledge and skills are good. Initial training and ongoing briefing of school-based and professional tutors are a strength and highly regarded by all tutors. For example, school-based tutors are briefed thoroughly before each block school experience. The provider also organises additional bespoke training for individual schools and tutors as necessary. Arrangements for the training of centre-based staff are good; new staff are inducted and supported well by the curriculum manager.

13. The monitoring of equal opportunities and the promotion of good race relations is very thorough and this is one of the reasons that the recruitment of trainees from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds is so successful. The monitoring of the quality of training is also rigorous. The curriculum and quality assurance managers monitor directly every aspect of provision. Termly and annual reviews of the course modules are compiled based on a broad range of evidence.

14. Good procedures are well-embedded to ensure the effective monitoring of the assessment process. Written assignments are marked rigorously according to clear criteria. Some assignments are second marked and the external examiner looks closely at a sample. The written feedback given to trainees is detailed for the weaker assignments. However, the guidance given to those trainees who have submitted a good assignment tends to be brief and does not guide them on how to improve even further. The monitoring of the assessment of practical teaching is very good. A wide range of staff observe trainees teaching. Observations are often undertaken jointly and there is much discussion between staff about individual trainees. The feedback given to them is very thorough. The termly review in which personal tutors discuss with each trainee their progress in subject knowledge, written work and practical teaching is an important element. External examiners' reports are of good quality and the provider responds promptly to all recommendations.

15. The range of evidence used to evaluate the quality of provision is broad. Trainees evaluate their training regularly and provide detailed comments which identify specific aspects that might be improved. Partnership staff also evaluate provision, for example in the management and executive groups, or at the termly professional tutors' meetings. Managers make realistic evaluations of provision. The self-evaluation for this inspection was accurate and set out in an informative way.

16. For the course as a whole, action planning is sound. Appropriate and effective action has been taken on the points raised in the last inspection. However, plans tend to focus on generic aspects and subject specific action points are rare. The provider benchmarks itself against other local providers but the information gained is not used well enough to improve the provision further.