

## 2 Schools Consortium

### Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Provider address

Oakthorpe Primary School  
Tile Kiln Lane  
Palmer's Green  
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Inspection dates  
Lead inspector

8-11 June 2009  
David Townsend HMI

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## Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a specialist inspector in accordance with the *Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008-11)*.
2. The inspection draws upon evidence from all aspects of the provision to make judgements against all parts of the inspection evaluation schedule in the framework. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the training in supporting high quality outcomes for trainees and the capacity of the partnership to bring about further improvements. A summary of the grades awarded is included at the end of this report.

### Key to inspection grades

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

## The provider

3. 2 Schools Consortium offers the Graduate Teacher Programme (Primary), an employment-based route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). It is based at two schools: Oakthorpe Primary in Enfield and Henry Maynard Infants in Waltham Forest. The provider has forged close links with the respective local authorities, the personnel of which assist in delivering aspects of the training.
4. The partnership was formed in 2002 and comprises 15 schools. It was established to address the local need for teachers in culturally diverse, urban schools in the north and north east of London, where it is based. There are 15 funded places.
5. The number of self-funded places offered on the training programme is rising. There are currently 4 trainees accessing the provision in this way who are based at one of the 13 link schools. Trainees with funded places are based at one or other of the two training schools. All trainees experience a second placement at another partnership school during their time on the course.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Key strengths

6. The key strengths are:
  - the excellent leadership and shared vision for the programme
  - the dedicated commitment to promoting equal opportunities and celebrating diversity which leaves trainees very well placed to teach effectively, especially in inner city schools
  - the innovative use of high quality resources to support training and trainees' progress
  - the high levels of commitment and expertise demonstrated by the trainers
  - the high levels of communication which ensure that provision across the partnership is outstanding
  - the partnership's anticipation of, and response to, national initiatives.

### Recommendations

7. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
  - improve the quality and consistency of feedback to trainees, especially in their subject knowledge for teaching, to ensure a clear link to the Standards and the promotion of attainment at the highest level
  - sharpen processes for evaluating the impact of actions taken on trainees' progress and use this information to inform improvement planning.

### Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

8. Inspectors agree with the 2 Schools Consortium's own self-evaluation that the overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good. A clear trend of improving outcomes is beginning to emerge and many aspects of the partnership's work are outstanding. However, some inconsistencies in the quality of evaluation and feedback to trainees still remain. This limits the ability of all trainees to make outstanding progress from their relative starting points.

9. The overall attainment of trainees is good. This judgement matches the provider's self-evaluation. Data and inspection evidence confirm that most trainees make good progress from their varied starting points to attain good outcomes. There has been a trend of steady improvement over the last three years, especially in the

proportion of trainees who are judged to be meeting the Professional Standards for QTS to at least good levels. Although outcomes have improved this year, the provider does not yet have a track record of consistently high achievement over time.

10. Well-established recruitment and selection procedures are in place to ensure that candidates selected for the training demonstrate a capability and aptitude for teaching. This is shown in the high percentage of trainees who complete the programme, reach good levels of attainment and go on to be successful teachers, particularly in local schools. The proportion of trainees with a minority ethnic heritage is well above the national average. This continues to increase as the provider has taken proactive action to support potential candidates from under-represented groups in how to prepare their applications. The proportion of males on the programme is also increasing because of the provider's actions. The consortium is an accredited provider of the Student Associate Scheme, which gives prospective applicants an opportunity to gain work experience in a school.

11. There are comprehensive and effective procedures in place to select trainees from the wide pool of applicants. Partnership school staff are fully involved in these processes and a range of activities are put in place to establish each applicant's suitability for the programme. There is a particular accent on ensuring they will suit and respond well to the employment-based training route on offer. However, some aspects of the selection procedure do not yet lead to the highest quality assessment of each trainee's potential to teach.

12. The quality of training and assessment is good. The programme is very well designed to meet the QTS Standards. Very high expectations are set for trainees. The distinctive character of the training model, through which trainees become part of the teaching team at their lead school, is greatly valued by trainees, mentors and headteachers alike. Trainees very much appreciate the collegiate nature of the experience and the readiness with which experienced colleagues provide practical ideas and advice.

13. There is very effective use made of expert, current practitioners to model best practice in terms of teaching strategies and to develop trainees' professional knowledge and understanding. This has also ensured that trainees are well prepared to address the implications of recent research findings, such as the Rose Report on teaching phonics, in their own practice. There is very good coherence between the centrally delivered elements of the training and the post-session activities that are identified in the individual training plans. These ensure trainees can apply new learning to their own practice in a very timely fashion. For example, trainees have a good understanding of how to use multi-sensory activities when teaching phonics for reading and spelling and when introducing pupils to complex mathematical concepts. Trainees also plan carefully to ensure that pupils regularly apply the phonics and number calculation skills they have been taught to their learning across the curriculum.

14. Evaluations of trainees' progress are good overall. However, the feedback given to trainees is not yet consistently of the highest quality. Occasionally, it does not make explicit how their achievements over time meet the Standards and the

targets for improvement are sometimes too imprecise. As a result, some trainees do not always understand fully what they need to do next in order to achieve at the highest level.

15. Trainees' personal subject knowledge is well audited in the early stages of the programme. Trainers are fully informed of each individual trainee's strengths and weaknesses. Effective additional support is then made available for those trainees who require it. However, the quality of subject-specific advice through general lesson observations is more variable in quality and limits the scope for trainees to maximise their progress in this area.

16. The breadth and quality of resources made available to trainees in the schools across the partnership are outstanding and have a very positive impact on trainees' progress. Resources for English, mathematics, science, and especially inter-cultural learning and information and communication technology are of high quality. Trainees, including those who are self-funded, have full access to the computer laptop loan system and to additional computer hardware including video and digital cameras. The Managed Learning Environment is used well to promote communication across the partnership. Schools at which trainees have their second placement receive their own set of course textbooks. Considerable investment is put into the residential visit which all trainees attend so that they have access to specialist professional inputs on child protection issues, behaviour management and the *Every Child Matters* agenda.

17. The shared understanding and common sense of purpose across the partnership is outstanding. All staff within the schools involved are fully committed to the partnership. Lines of communication with the provider are very good. The training managers regularly visit the schools and there is much on-going professional dialogue. Dedicated awareness-raising sessions are offered for those schools at which self-funded trainees are placed. New mentors follow their own customised training programme and experienced mentors support them as they assume their roles. Trainees' placements are personalised to meet their individual needs. Schools and trainees very much value the opportunity to be associated with the consortium as it is often at the forefront in implementing new initiatives in education.

18. The training promotes equality of opportunity and inclusion very effectively and ensures that diversity is very well celebrated. Partnership schools provide a wide range of culturally diverse experiences and trainees are fully involved in these. They have very good opportunities to teach pupils of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds and to celebrate diversity in the classroom. Specialists have improved the training on how to support pupils with additional learning needs and this has led to trainees giving excellent presentations to each other on specific needs, such as autism. Trainees promote inclusion well in their own classroom practice. They value the rigour of this dimension of the training programme, recognising that the opportunity they get to experience schools working in diverse, inner city contexts prepares them very well for their future careers.

## The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

19. Leadership and management at all levels demonstrate good capacity for further improvement. The training managers are very effective and highly regarded. There is a continuing trend of improvement, both in terms of the outcomes for trainees and the high proportion of minority ethnic trainees who successfully complete the course. However, systems for evaluating the impact of action taken to improve trainees' progress, although well-established, are not yet sufficiently fine tuned to ensure the very best outcomes for all trainees.

20. Inspectors agree with the provider's own assessment of its good procedures for self-evaluation. This involves all stakeholders, especially trainees and mentors, in giving on-going feedback. Leaders make good use of internal and, increasingly, external scrutiny to inform improvement planning. Through these approaches, a sharp and accurate view of provision is formed. The provider makes good use of subject specialists and its close links with the local authorities to bring in further expertise to contribute to the training. Subject leaders in schools have begun to identify strengths and areas to develop based on trainees' teaching. However, this is not yet fully embedded within the course.

21. Schools are evaluated rigorously. There are robust systems in place for school selection and de-selection and for assuring the quality of their involvement in the partnership. Mentoring is of good quality overall and is often very good. Occasionally, some trainees have had less in-depth support from their assigned mentor but the provider has quickly taken effective steps to address these issues. Joint observations, in particular those between mentors and training managers, are used effectively to help secure the accuracy of judgements. Changes made to the training programme are effectively evaluated although, to date, there have been fewer in-depth reviews of some aspects of the wider effectiveness of the programme, such as the quality of selection procedures or the impact of feedback given to trainees on their progress.

22. Leadership at all levels is highly effective in anticipating change and responding to local and national initiatives. The training managers are a driving force for improvement. In response to the Rose Report into early reading and the Williams Review of mathematics teaching, the provider has amended its training programme and introduced new, focused sessions in its annual residential training event. It has ensured that specialist trainers follow up these sessions by checking how well trainees put their learning into practice in the classroom. Trainees, as a result, are fully aware of the recommendations and their implications for all schools and have a good understanding of how to teach phonics using letters and sounds and how to develop pupils' mental calculation strategies in numeracy. The provider uses very good trainers who model ideas well for trainees. They are very well qualified and contribute to numerous national and local committees.

23. The quality of improvement planning is good overall, rather than outstanding as the provider cited in its self-evaluation document. Leadership at all levels demonstrates a record of continuing improvement over the last two years which has resulted in good quality outcomes for trainees and their high degree of satisfaction with the quality of the training. The provider has fully addressed previously identified weaknesses. It has strengthened external moderation systems and ensured that training plans are now much more robust. Its improvement plans cite clear targets, actions to be taken and monitoring arrangements. However, they do not focus sufficiently on outcomes for trainees. The plans contain too many disparate actions that are not prioritised in terms of their potential impact. Although some key initiatives have raised the quality of provision over the last eighteen months, they have not all been fully embedded yet across the partnership and their full impact is yet to be seen in outcomes over time for trainees. Strategic planning over the next three to five years is not yet in place, so the partnership's longer term plans are unclear at this stage.



## Summary of inspection grades<sup>1</sup>

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

### Overall effectiveness

|                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                      | Employment-based routes |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees? |                                                                                                                                                      | 2                       |
| Trainees' attainment                                                           | How well do trainees attain?                                                                                                                         | 2                       |
| Factors contributing to trainees' attainment                                   | To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?                                                                | 2                       |
|                                                                                | To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points? | 2                       |
|                                                                                | To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?                                                                             | 1                       |
| The quality of the provision                                                   | To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?                                                                 | 1                       |
| Promoting equalities and diversity                                             | To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?             | 1                       |

### Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

|                                                                                                                                                         |  | Employment-based routes |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes? |  | 2                       |
| How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?                                       |  | 2                       |
| How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?                            |  | 1                       |
| How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?                                                                                 |  | 2                       |

<sup>1</sup> The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted July 2008; Reference no: 080128.

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