

Southfields Community College Training School

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address

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Inspection dates

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Lead inspector

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist inspectors 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. Southfields Community College Training School offers training for teachers within the London Borough of Wandsworth. The provider offers routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) through employment-based initial teacher education. There are currently places for twenty-two secondary trainees in both priority and non-priority subjects. Nearly all trainees are employed at Southfields Community College, but other schools within the authority are used as 'occasional' schools and these may be different each year. This provider is an accredited training school which was judged to be outstanding by Ofsted in 2007.
4. The local context is a deprived, culturally diverse, urban area with very large pockets of social and economic disadvantage. Priorities for the provider include training in managing challenging behaviour and ensuring that trainees learn effective ways of maximising the achievement of students with a very wide range of prior attainment, ability and aspirations. The recruitment of high quality teachers, particularly those from minority ethnic groups is a priority, both for the provider's school and for other schools in the local authority.

Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
- the commitment and active involvement of the whole school community in ensuring the highest possible quality training which results in trainees consistently fulfilling or exceeding their potential
 - the high quality of leadership and management with a constant focus on excellence
 - the highly effective promotion of equality and diversity, both in the recruitment of trainees and in their training to meet the needs of students from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as those with special educational needs
 - the emphasis on modelling exemplary teaching skills in delivering the core programme which has a positive impact on trainees' practice
 - trainees' management of behaviour
 - the high quality of the personal support for all trainees to ensure their well-being
 - the very well structured programme supported by exceptional communication and strong relationships.

Recommendations

6. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
- consider how to improve the consistency and quality of target setting because it does not always reflect the high quality of the dialogue that is taking place between trainees and their mentors.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

7. The provider's overall effectiveness is outstanding. Trainees' full involvement in the life of their schools contributes strongly to their understanding of the professional duties of teachers and their commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity for students. The leadership team of the provider school, where nearly all the trainees are placed, are totally committed to the professional development of teachers. The school 'grows its own' teachers with a quarter of the staff having been trained through its own graduate teacher programme. Every member of staff is somehow involved in training; through departments, the core programme and every

day support of trainees, so they all have a shared understanding of expectations. Only two trainees are currently placed at partner schools. The provider has ensured the quality of their placements through paired lesson and mentor meeting observations, and efficient communications.

8. The trainees' attainment by the end of the programme is good and most make outstanding progress towards fulfilling their potential as assessed at interview. They have very high expectations of what all learners, no matter their background or previous attainment, can achieve and are particularly skilled at handling students with challenging behaviour. The programme is extremely well structured with regular email communication between the course leader and mentors to provide a weekly check list of both organisational and training priorities. The use of the provider's intranet allows trainees to have easy access to wide range of shared resources.

9. Mentors grade trainees through formal assessment at six points during the course with procedures adapted to the new Ofsted criteria. These assessments are accurate and give trainees a clear indication of their progress. Trainees find it very valuable to carry out 'buddy moderation' of evidence at key points during the course. Final judgments are moderated by external assessors. The pass/fail boundary is secure, with trainers very aware of the need for trainees to have the skills to work in schools in very different contexts.

10. High numbers apply for places on the programme. The provider always recruits some 'high risk' trainees, who may not have conventional qualifications. Recruitment material welcomes these applicants, for example by providing information about methods for confirming the equivalence of overseas qualifications. A higher proportion than the national average of this group is recruited. The partnership website is very thorough; it deals with how the course is organised and the challenge of the multicultural urban school, and it places a particular emphasis on the provider's commitment to inclusion. Previous experience with young people, rather than time spent in schools, is important and at interview trainees must plan and teach a short session. Comprehensive scoring systems ensure consistency and a wide range of stakeholders are involved. Some pre-course tasks are personalised, and all successful applicants complete an assignment that explores their reasons for wanting to teach their subject. The subsequent discussions related to this are a very useful introduction to the course. Presentations by trainees from the previous cohort are particularly valued and ensure that new trainees are aware of the workload involved. Retention rates are higher than the national benchmark and the overwhelming majority of trainees over the last two years have gone on to secure permanent local teaching posts.

11. When interviewed, trainees describe efficient communication and strong relationships, with a high degree of personal care from mentors, school staff and course managers. Problems are responded to and sorted out very quickly. The commitment of the whole school to the development of each trainee is evident from the support they receive not only from mentors and subject buddies but from all the staff they work with, and at all placements trainees are exposed to some exceptional role models. There is a well considered balance between offering trainees support and giving them autonomy, which encourages them to take responsibility for their

own development as teachers and their own record keeping. All trainees keep a reflective diary and are encouraged to evaluate every lesson they teach and every core session they attend. By the end of the course, trainees are very skilled at making effective personalised provision for students with a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, for those with English as an additional language or special educational needs, including those with behavioural difficulties. Trainees spoke with confidence about teaching strategies that would maximise learning for their students.

12. Initial audits are used to construct an individual training plan for each trainee. These are very personalised, often annotated and used as developmental documents. Regular updates at each assessment point mean that the plan is adapted according to the rate of progress of each trainee, so individual needs are met very effectively. Overall the quality of mentoring is high, although there are some minor inconsistencies. Every lesson is observed and trainees are given constructive informal feedback for every one. The focus is consistently linked to the core programme, and progress can be tracked through the setting and meeting of weekly targets. The quality of the dialogue with mentors ensures that trainees make outstanding progress but this is not always reflected in the quality of trainees' written targets. These sometimes focus on task completion rather than modelling the good practice that trainees will need when they set targets for their own students. Mentors are effectively trained and have exceptional commitment to the job. Written guidance for them is of high quality and regularly updated; there can be no doubt about expectations.

13. Extensive subject knowledge development takes place in most subjects, with both internal and external training provided to ensure comprehensive coverage. Timetables are organised to ensure that trainees have experience of teaching unfamiliar topics. Subject knowledge is further developed through three of the four assignments and some of the diary tasks which are subject-focused through a specific generic theme. All trainees are involved in collaborative development of schemes of work for topics they are not teaching.

14. The core programme is comprehensive, up-to-date and constantly adapted in response to local and national initiatives. Expertise to deliver the programme is provided from both within and outside the school and consistently models good practice. One trainee said, 'I almost spend more time watching how the trainer is teaching than I do on the content of the session. There are always ideas to take away and use in my own classroom'. There is an early and very effective focus on behaviour management both through mentoring and the core programme, which is successful because the training is very practical and based on sound principles.

15. All trainees have good experience of the two age-ranges for which they are being trained and those either side. All complete primary visits with a specific subject focus, for example to look at literacy and phonics teaching. The second school placement provides a contrasting experience and is organised by trainees with the length and focus negotiated individually. Targets are agreed before trainees leave the employing school and the flow of information between mentors ensures that lessons learned are incorporated into subsequent development planning.

16. Comprehensive and exceptionally high quality resources for trainees are available on the partnership website, for administration, subject knowledge development and pedagogy. Successful funding bids have allowed the lead school to develop sophisticated video and recording facilities which are used flexibly and strategically to develop skills. Trainees are required to use these facilities several times during the course in order to study their own teaching. They describe this as 'an uncomfortable but invaluable' tool in developing their skills, because it allows them to evaluate their practice and creates professional dialogue with colleagues.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 1

17. The provider demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve. High quality outcomes have been sustained over the two years that the provider has assessed trainees' progress and attainments. The provider is well aware of any inconsistency in the provision and takes action to tackle it.

18. The quality of leadership of the programme is a real strength. These leaders strive constantly to modify and improve the effectiveness of the provision to ensure the maximum progress for individual trainees. They search for and use the expertise of advanced skills teachers and other excellent practitioners for both mentoring and delivering the core programme in order to expose trainees to the most skilled practice from within and outside the school.

19. A steering committee oversees the development of the partnership. Membership includes representatives of the partnership schools, the linked higher education institution, mentors and trainees. It meets regularly to discuss ways to improve the quality of the provision, to analyse stakeholders' evaluations and monitoring records and to develop and monitor implementation of an action plan. The committee has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and ensures that all recommendations are implemented. If anything, the provider's constant emphasis on excellence means that they are modest and underestimate their achievements. Guidelines for mentors outline the mechanism for raising concerns about trainees.

20. As nearly all the trainees are in the provider's school and because relationships within the partnership are open and informal, many changes are implemented or individual needs responded to without the need for a formal evaluation or action planning process. For example, in response to leaders' concerns about the consistency of mentoring, formal observation of mentoring sessions has been introduced. Suggestions for the increased use of video facilities for trainees and providing protected sessions for mentor meetings have been implemented very quickly. Clearer guidance has been provided to help mentors ensure excellent subject knowledge. Trainees' opinions are obtained more formally through evaluation for every core session and for the provision as a whole twice a year, with mentors and partner schools consulted annually. Regular analysis is carried out of trainees' outcomes against national benchmarks, but data are not yet available to show the three year trend. The tracking of progress in place for 2008/9 has now

incorporated the new Ofsted criteria into the final two of the six assessments. All collected data and the external assessors' reports are used to inform future planning. Action planning is robust and thorough, covering all aspects of provision. The plan is developed annually and adapted during the course of the year in response to evaluation data and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Every action is designed to improve either recruitment or the progress and attainment of trainees. Actions are time limited, have specific success criteria and are focused on appropriate priorities. An example of direct action taken as a result of evaluation from trainees and mentors is the timing and length of the second school placement. Both of these aspects are now flexible in response to individual trainees' needs.

21. As a training school with an emphasis on excellence in teaching and learning the provider welcomes new initiatives, and therefore each trainee has the same experiences as the qualified teachers in their department. Trainees are therefore very up-to-date with both local and national priorities and are well prepared to be employed at other schools. They are familiar with subject-specific changes to syllabuses and the core programme is full of relevant content, for example, the development of functional skills especially the use of phonics and the development of diplomas and the 14-19 curriculum. Although they are currently less aware of the current changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum, all trainees will be involved in developing the new schemes of work within departments for implementation in the autumn term.

Summary of inspection grades¹

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?		1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1
	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?		1
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1
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?		1

¹ 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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