

Bourton Meadow Initial Teacher Training Centre

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Bourton Meadow Primary School Burleigh Piece Linden Village Buckingham MK18 7HX
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Inspection dates	22 – 26 June 2009
Lead inspector	Chris Nye HMI

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's 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. The Inspector 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. Bourton Meadow Initial Teacher Training Centre works in partnership with nine primary schools to provide initial teacher education across the 5 – 11 age range. Partnership schools are located in Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire and include those that serve both rural and urban communities. There are close links with the main local authority (Buckinghamshire) and Oxford Brookes University. The provider offers, through the graduate teacher programme, an employment-based route and trainees who successfully complete the one-year course are awarded qualified teacher status (QTS). At the time of the inspection there were 14 trainees.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
 - the quality of leadership and management which ensures, through rigorous quality assurance systems, that the training is of the highest quality
 - the quality and commitment of all trainers and their diligence in ensuring that trainees make excellent progress and achieve good or outstanding outcomes
 - the excellent focus on identifying and meeting the personalised training needs of each trainee which results in good or outstanding progress over the course of the training programme
 - the rigour and effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process which accurately identifies trainees most likely to make excellent teachers from a very large number of highly qualified applicants
 - the structure and content of the course which ensures a very practical training
 - the excellent communications and relationships across the partnership which enable the provider to make the best use of expertise within the partnership
 - the high levels of awareness of local and national priorities and the proactive way in which the provider responds to these and plans for change.

Recommendation

5. In order to further improve trainees' progress and attainment the provider should:
 - ensure partnership schools are made fully aware of the timing and content of school-based tasks at the start of the training programme.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

6. 'An incredible journey – very hard, but satisfying' and 'a fantastic way to train' were comments which exemplified the extremely positive views of the partnership's trainees, both past and present. The inspection confirmed these views. The overall effectiveness of the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. Since the partnership has been in existence, hardly any trainees have withdrawn from the course and all who have completed the training have gained teaching posts, many in local schools, and are currently still teaching. Trainees'

attainment has improved year on year and, at the time of the inspection, half have achieved the highest grade and all are accurately judged as being good or better. The very detailed tracking records demonstrate that trainees make good and the majority make outstanding progress relative to their starting points.

7. Recruitment and selection are a strength of the provision because rigorous and effective procedures successfully ensure that only those with the highest potential to become good or better teachers are selected from a very large number of applicants. The provider carefully monitors applicants from minority groups and actively encourages applications from men and from minority ethnic communities. As a result, the proportion of trainees from these groups has been higher than average either nationally or for employment-based routes. The provider's rigorous selection procedures include observing applicants teach, give a presentation, take part in a team building activity, sit English and mathematics tests and undertake a formal interview. Interviewers include partnership headteachers and teachers; the views of pupils, whom the candidates have taught, are also sought. Selection criteria are made very clear to both candidates and interviewers. This extremely thorough process is very well recorded through written comments and a well designed scoring system which enables detailed and accurate feedback to be given to unsuccessful candidates, and suitable induction targets to be identified for those who are selected for training. Well planned pre-course activities and induction days in July ensure that trainees are very well prepared for the start of the course in September.

8. Training at both the centre and in placement schools is outstanding because it is exceptionally well planned, resourced and structured so that it is highly responsive to trainees' individual and whole group needs. All elements of the training combine very well and set tasks help to ensure a secure cohesion between school- and centre-based training. The provider recognises that, because placement schools are not always fully aware of the timing and content of the school-based tasks at the start of the training, this can lead to delays in some of them being carried out in school. Nevertheless, the structure of the course ensures that trainees are able to make close links between theory and practice. For example, a training session in guided reading was followed up with closely monitored school-based activities and these were reviewed in subsequent central training sessions, resulting in excellent levels of understanding by trainees. Central training has clear links to the QTS Standards and includes a well designed balance between subject knowledge and pedagogic training. Trainees particularly appreciate the very practical nature of the training. At its heart lies the *Every Child Matters* agenda and sessions cover a wide range of suitable topics. Trainers, both from within the partnership and externally, are very well qualified and model excellent up-to-date practice. On the very rare occasions that training does not meet the rigorously monitored high standards of the provider, swift and effective action is taken.

9. School-based teacher tutors and mentors are very well prepared for their roles. Their commitment to providing high quality training is illustrated by their willingness to have their own teaching monitored by the provider's managers. Regular and frequent observations of the trainees' teaching provide highly evaluative and detailed feedback that assesses both pedagogic skills and subject knowledge and understanding. Very well focused targets are identified as a result of each

observation, and these are routinely re-visited in subsequent lessons observations. Training managers and teacher tutors work closely: managers visit each school weekly. Training is therefore highly personalised and ensures that the individual weaknesses of trainees are identified early and are swiftly and effectively resolved.

10. Trainees make good or outstanding progress towards the Standards, demonstrating very high levels of professional attributes, skills, knowledge and understanding in their teaching and their contribution to the life and work of their placement schools. The lessons observed during the inspection were at least good and often outstanding. Trainees plan and deliver lessons very well to ensure high levels of pupil motivation. They ensure work is very well matched to the needs of all pupils, for example by routinely referring to pupils' individual targets and how their learning is helping them to meet these. Information and communication technology is used extremely well to support both teaching and learning. As a result, lessons have excellent pace because pupils are keen to do well and so make at least good progress. In one literacy lesson, the trainee successfully enthused pupils by asking them to 'act out' adverbs, thus cementing their understanding of what adverbs are and how to use them, as well as enhancing their eagerness to achieve quality writing. In another lesson, the use of a role play activity created high levels of enthusiasm for descriptive writing.

11. The provider has developed excellent systems accurately to monitor, track and assess trainees' progress towards meeting the QTS Standards, including the final assessment. Trainees gather detailed evidence of their progress towards each Standard, and teacher tutors and training managers are rigorous in monitoring progress and reaching accurate judgements, including the final assessment grade, against very clear criteria. The introduction, two years ago, of a system of assessing progress against clearly defined sub-grades has further enhanced the provider's accuracy in judging trainees' detailed progress and attainment.

12. This small partnership benefits from excellent communications and very high levels of commitment and involvement from all those contributing to the training. Partnership schools are successful and provide excellent venues for training. There is a very clear and consistent approach to the training across the partnership and this is enhanced by the way in which senior managers successfully ensure that there is a shared sense of understanding and common purpose. They achieve this through regular and well-managed meetings with trainers, excellent written guidance and a commitment to the professional development of trainers. As a result, the expertise that exists within the partnership is well-used to enhance the training. For example, all trainees benefit from one partnership school's work on outdoor learning and as a leading literacy school. The small size of the partnership also means that resources are very efficiently shared; trainees report that resources are excellent both in their placement schools and in central training. Inspection evidence confirms this view. The provider is very responsive to need and recently developed e-learning systems are further enhancing the training by encouraging trainees to share good practice.

13. The high quality training actively promotes equality of opportunity and values diversity. Trainees achieve their potential with completion rates better than national benchmarks. They are very well prepared to teach in a culturally diverse society. For

example, in central training the use of sensitively planned scenarios to challenge stereotypes and explore aspects of intended and unintended racism means that trainees are very knowledgeable in these areas. Although there have been no recorded incidents of racism or harassment, trainees say that they would feel secure in reporting them.

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

14. The provider has an outstanding capacity to sustain and further improve the already high outcomes for trainees. This is because the provision is exceptionally well led and managed and the systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision are detailed and rigorous. For example, trainers and senior managers, who know each of the trainees very well, meet each week to evaluate the impact of the provision and training on each trainee. In addition, trainers and trainees undertake detailed evaluations of all aspects of the training and these are analysed in detail and suitable changes made where necessary. For example, as a result of teacher tutor comments, the lesson observation forms were re-designed to make them more 'user-friendly', but without compromising their effectiveness.

15. The introduction of 'real-time' on-line evaluations has enabled the provider to be even swifter in its response to need. For example, in the last few weeks of the course, trainees indicated that they would appreciate a final revision session on the Rose review to prepare them even more fully for their first teaching post; suitable in-depth training was planned and delivered within a week of the evaluation. Extensive evaluation of every aspect of the training indicates that current and past cohorts of trainees are very positive about all aspects of the training. They particularly appreciate the flexibility of the training which allows it to be so responsive to their individual needs. Ex-trainees were fulsome in their praise of how the course had prepared them for their first year in the profession.

16. Regular joint observations and the weekly monitoring visits to all trainees in their placement schools by training managers ensure that there is consistency of judgement across the partnership with regard to trainees' progress and achievement. Senior managers provide further moderation to ensure the accuracy of the training managers' judgements. External assessors, who have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, provide confirmation of the accuracy of judgements and their reports provide useful suggestions for improvement which are always responded to positively. The considerable amount of data collected from evaluations and both internal and external moderation is used very effectively to inform the provider of its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the self-evaluation and the development planning processes clearly and accurately identify suitable targets for improvement.

17. At all levels, leadership has an excellent awareness of local and national issues and priorities and works diligently towards meeting these and responding positively to change. There have been timely and well-planned responses to the Rose and

Williams reviews on early literacy and mathematics, and there is also a strong emphasis on the development of the creative curriculum which meets pupils' needs. The provider has worked closely with the local authorities to resolve local teacher shortages and share good practice in areas such as early reading. Because of the efficiency and commitment of the leadership, any barriers to improvement are swiftly identified and the issues resolved. For example, when training by an external agency on linking pupil assessment with teaching and learning was judged to be inadequate, the agency was not used for this training again and additional high quality training sessions were swiftly put in place so that no trainee was disadvantaged.

18. Very secure systems are in place to ensure that the quality of the provision continues to develop and improve. The management and strategy committees are very well informed about the performance of the partnership and make a highly effective contribution towards the quality and development of the provision. The strategy committee, which includes partnership headteachers, trainers and governors, provides constructive challenge to managers and has a very clear and realistic view about how the provider needs to develop in the future.

19. Improvement planning has a clear focus on key long and short term priorities that have been identified through a very wide range of evaluation and monitoring activities. All members of the partnership have had the opportunity to contribute to development plans and are fully aware of the part that they are expected to play in securing improvements. The focus of such plans is firmly based on raising standards, driving forward change and improving outcomes for trainees. For example, the provider has set itself a target of 65% of trainees achieving an outstanding grade at the end of next year, which provides realistic and suitable challenge. Actions to achieve identified priorities are carefully timed, with clearly defined objectives and success criteria that are measurable against outcomes for trainees. However, the plans do not make it clear how actions are to be resourced in terms of time and money.

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

		Primary
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	1
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

		Primary
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.