

Suffolk and Norfolk Primary SCITT

Adelphi House
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Ipswich
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A primary initial teacher training
full inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

Suffolk and Norfolk Primary SCITT (school-centred initial teacher training) works in partnership with 75 schools in Norfolk and Suffolk. It provides a one-year primary initial teacher training course which leads to a professional graduate certificate in education. At the time of the inspection there were 44 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 full 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

Standards achieved by trainees: Grade 2

Quality of training: Grade 2

Management and quality assurance: Grade 2

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

Key strengths

- the trainees' skills as reflective practitioners and their commitment to furthering their professional development
- the trainees' planning for teaching and learning
- the trainees' skills in using information and communication technology to support teaching and learning
- the trainees' knowledge and understanding of a range of assessment strategies and of assessing pupils' work against National Curriculum level descriptions
- the leadership and direction provided by programme leaders
- the effective coordination of training in two locations.

Points for consideration

- improving trainees' skills in teaching writing
- ensuring that all trainees are equipped with the skills to manage challenging behaviour
- ensuring that the internal moderation of trainees' teaching is robust
- providing more training for centre-based tutors.

Standards achieved by trainees

1. The majority of trainees meet the Standards at a good level. They set high expectations of their own professional conduct and practice, and establish positive relationships with pupils and colleagues. They also set demanding expectations of what pupils should achieve in a lesson. The trainees are keen, enthusiastic and respond well to advice. Their lesson evaluations are reflective. They can discuss openly and honestly the strengths and areas for development of a lesson they have taught. They are highly committed to furthering their professional development.
2. Overall, the trainees' core subject knowledge is good although it is stronger in mathematics and science, where more good lessons were observed during the inspection, than in English. Most trainees are confident using subject specific vocabulary and planning problem solving activities in mathematics and science. In English, not all are so confident teaching writing. In the lessons observed, a few trainees displayed uncertainty about how to encourage pupils to improve the quality of their writing and missed opportunities to model the features of good writing. The trainees' knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology (ICT), however, is excellent. Their ICT portfolios are impressive and include extensive evidence of useful web sites and of how they have used ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.
3. Tasks and assignments are completed well. Trainees read widely to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the teaching and learning process, and of the primary curriculum. Early years trainees have a very thorough knowledge of the stepping stones and the early learning goals. However, primary trainees' awareness of the curricular demands of the Foundation Stage is not so well developed.
4. The trainees have at least a satisfactory understanding of how diversity issues influence learning. Despite some trainees not having much direct experience of teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language, they can explain how they would use visual stimuli to support the teaching of these pupils. The trainees know their pupils well and are keenly aware of the additional learning needs of pupils within their classes. They have a good working knowledge of the individual education plans of these pupils but their knowledge of statutory procedures under the Special Education Needs Code of Practice is less secure. Most deploy teaching assistants effectively to support pupils in group work. However, they do not always make best use of their presence during the first part of lessons to monitor pupils' learning. The trainees have a secure understanding of the *Every Child Matters* agenda and encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle through taking physical exercise and eating healthily.
5. The trainees' planning is thorough. Learning objectives are clear and most plan tasks which are well matched to pupils' different learning needs. Resources are also very well organised and selected to support the content of the lesson. In particular, the trainees are very competent at using the interactive whiteboard to support teaching and learning. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace and trainees are skilled at encouraging pupils to become independent learners. They are effective

at promoting collaborative learning through techniques such as talking partners. However, occasionally, a small minority of trainees find it difficult to manage challenging behaviour. When this happens, not all pupils make sufficient progress in the lesson.

6. The trainees target their questioning well to assess pupils' understanding. They use praise frequently to reward pupils' responses. Their knowledge and understanding of levelling pupils' work and of a range of assessment strategies are especially good. There is plenty of evidence in their files of assessing pupils' work accurately against National Curriculum level descriptions.

The quality of training

7. The training programme is well structured to ensure a good balance between centre-based and school-based training. Course documentation is detailed and linked carefully to the new Standards. Assignments are well designed to link theory with practice. Partnership schools provide effective training environments. Well positioned placements in at least two schools, together with the recent introduction of an additional two week placement, ensure that trainees have good experience of teaching and observing across the full age range for which they are being trained.

8. Centre-based training is good overall with some outstanding tuition observed in professional studies and in the primary specialism module. It is delivered by experienced trainers with excellent personal subject knowledge. In professional studies, trainees are given a particularly good grounding in planning and assessment, child protection and diversity. Overall, a good emphasis is placed on developing trainees' teaching skills across the curriculum. This is especially the case in mathematics and science where the focus is very much on practical work and its implementation in the classroom. In English, however, trainees receive insufficient input on modelling good primary practice to develop pupils' writing skills. Training in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning is a growing strength and this is confirmed by the trainees' excellent ICT portfolios. Trainees following the early years route are well prepared to teach in the Foundation Stage but those following the primary route are given limited insight into Foundation Stage practice.

9. The quality of school-based training is good. Trainees' placements are tracked carefully and the information is used effectively both to allocate trainees to suitable training placements and to ensure that they have a broad range of experience. Mentors provide good support and guidance in relating centre-based training to classroom practice. Subject leaders in some schools also provide good support but since this is not a routine requirement of the training programme, not all trainees have the same opportunities. Expectations regarding trainees' teaching load and their ownership of the class are set out clearly in partnership documentation. However, in a small minority of schools where pupils exhibited challenging

behaviour, the trainees had too restricted opportunities to maintain discipline without the class teacher being present.

10. Good attention is paid to tailoring the training to meet the trainees' individual needs starting with an initial needs analysis. The outcomes of this initial audit are used well to inform individual training plans at the start of the year. These are reviewed regularly. The trainees' subject knowledge is also audited thoroughly. Subject tutors offer good support in centre-based training sessions to those trainees who need additional help. They arrange individual tutorials for trainees who are required to resubmit their assignments and to trainees who would benefit from further guidance during school placements. Tutors make good use of the virtual learning environment to respond to trainees' questions.

11. The assessment of trainees' teaching is satisfactory overall and mainly accurate. However, inspectors judged that a small minority of lessons were not as good as previous lesson observations in trainees' files indicated. Assignments are marked carefully against well defined criteria. Strengths and weaknesses are identified clearly and trainees are given helpful advice on how to improve their work.

Management and quality assurance

12. The partnership is very well led and managed. The leadership team has taken decisive action to address issues identified during the last inspection and has been successful in improving provision. They are committed to sustaining this improvement.

13. A unique feature is the delivery of training in two centres, Lowestoft and Ipswich, in order to cater for the wide geographical spread of trainees and schools. While this presents challenges for gaining consistency in the quality of training in two locations, leaders and managers have taken strategic decisions to minimise the problems. For example, the appointment of two advanced skills teachers and three lead mentors is a good initiative. They are engaged in a wide range of activities to support the centre-based training programme and offer helpful guidance to mentors and trainees in schools. All contribute to mentor training across the partnership and attendance at mentor training sessions is very good. Consequently, there is a good level of consistency of mentor support. A key strength is the effective coordination of training across the region.

14. The mentor training programme is well planned and differentiated to meet the needs of new and experienced mentors. A strong focus is placed upon enhancing mentors' lesson observation and feedback skills. Trainers prepare their training materials carefully and make very good use of exemplary lesson observation forms to model good practice. Report writing sessions are also very successful. The positive impact of all this training is evident in the thorough reports that mentors complete at the end of each placement and the attention they pay to giving trainees focused feedback on their subject knowledge. Mentors have a good understanding

of their roles and responsibilities and trainees are well supported by them. The most recent mentor training conference on developing mentors' coaching skills was very well planned to extend their skills further.

15. The role of professional tutor is not so well defined but programme leaders have already identified this as an area for further development. There is scope for professional tutors to take a more active role in assuring the quality of school-based-training within their own schools.

16. The monitoring of centre-based training is well established and all trainers are observed by a wide range of partnership staff, including headteachers. However, their assessments are sometimes over generous. Although centre-based training observed during the inspection was often good and sometimes outstanding, there is a slight mismatch between inspectors' and programme leaders' judgements. Centre-based trainers do not have the same training opportunities as mentors. Many are local authority advisers who have good access to training for their advisory roles but their professional development needs as school centred initial teacher trainers are not so well met.

17. The partnership draws upon a wide range of schools in Norfolk and Suffolk. Programme leaders have a good knowledge of the schools and of their latest inspection grades. They make good use of local intelligence to recruit new schools to the partnership and apply robust procedures for selecting and de-selecting schools. Communication between partnership schools and the central training base is also good.

18. The procedures to moderate the assessment of trainees' teaching are well conceived. Joint lesson observations and the pairing of mentors with colleagues in other schools are good features. However, as inspectors noted slightly overgenerous assessment of some trainees' lessons, this indicates that internal moderation procedures are not as robust as they could be. External examiners reports are detailed and provide helpful feedback on standards and training. The moderation of trainees' written work is good. An appropriate sample is double marked.

19. Quality assurance procedures have been strengthened considerably during the last year. There is extensive formal evaluation of training by trainees, mentors, tutors and external consultants. Questionnaires have been re-designed to aid better analysis of the outcomes. Leaders and managers have a secure understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are very self-critical and responsive to external evaluation.

20. Short-term planning is effective. The 2007/08 improvement plan is well structured and focused upon addressing the issues in the last inspection report. Good progress has been made with each of the points for action. At the time of the training visit, long-term planning was an area for development. Since then, the main committees have been proactive in constructing a three year plan which incorporates clear priorities, well defined success criteria and realistic timescales. A good start has also been made on collecting and analysing value added data on trainees' progress

and analysing trend data on trainees' standards for the last three years. This provides a firm basis for linking trainees' skills in the classroom with the quality of training.

21. The partnership has no problems attracting applications from well qualified candidates and especially from males. All those who completed the course last year have jobs and headteachers who have employed SCITT trainees speak highly of their professional practice. The vast majority of those who are qualifying this year have been appointed to teaching posts starting in September. The training prepares them well for their future teaching career.