

Langdale Early Years SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Northumbria University Coach Lane Campus Benton Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7XA
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Inspection dates	27 April – 1 May 2009
Lead inspector	Sonja Øyen HMI

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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. Langdale Early Years School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) is a partnership between Northumbria University, North Tyneside Young People and Learning Directorate and 22 schools within North Tyneside to provide professional graduate initial teacher training in the early years age range (3-7 years) leading to qualified teacher status. The full time one year programme leads to a professional graduate certificate of education (PGCE) validated by Northumbria University. The SCITT is based at the local authority's professional development centre. At the time of the inspection there were 27 trainees.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:

- the highly effective partnership which ensures that trainees develop into reflective practitioners with a clear philosophy of early years education
- the high quality, personalised training that inspires trainees to do their best

- the outstanding quality of the input from local authority early years advisers and consultants that ensures trainees have up-to-date knowledge of local and national initiatives
- the involvement of all in the partnership in deciding how the outcomes for trainees can be improved
- the stringent process of selecting trainees
- the high quality of leadership and management
- the highly motivating 'can-do' ethos.

Recommendations

5. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:

- ensure that school based tutors give even more attention to the effectiveness of pupils' learning in evaluating the impact of trainees' teaching
- consider how to link success criteria in development plans specifically to outcomes for trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

6. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. Current and former trainees comment on being inspired by working with passionate early years practitioners. They value highly the links with early years advisory staff from the local authority and the opportunities to experience good practice in local schools. As a consequence, trainees gain in self confidence, make at least good progress and successfully seek posts teaching children in the early years, preferably within North Tyneside.

7. Trainees' attainment is good and improving. In 2008, just under 50% of trainees were judged to be outstanding. In each of the last three years, over 75% of trainees have been judged to be good and the indications are that this year the figure may be higher. This is because the partnership is working concertedly to raise every trainee's attainment, most especially those who show the potential to achieve at the highest level.

8. Part of the success in raising the bar is the stringent procedure to select candidates who are well suited to be early years practitioners. Recruitment is strong and a good proportion of males apply, gain a place and complete the course. Although a small number of candidates from ethnic minorities apply, many do not meet the necessary conditions, and the provider is working with the local authority and university to support applicants and to widen awareness of the SCITT within the region. Schools play an integral part in selecting trainees by hosting interviews and

providing opportunities for candidates to work with groups of children. The tightening of interview questions has swung the focus from academic performance to personal and professional attributes. This is mirrored in an increasing proportion of trainees who attain well, often exceeding their own personal expectations, and who complete the course and gain employment. Employing headteachers referred to trainees being 'snapped up' and of their delight in having on the staff newly qualified teachers who were confident and well grounded in effective early years practice. In one case, a new teacher had risen successfully to the challenge of setting up a Foundation Stage unit.

9. The training at the centre and in schools is high quality and inspirational. Trainers model effective practice; they place a high emphasis on learning through activity and talk, and invest time and effort in ensuring that individual trainees succeed. Trainees commented on the 'buzz' when they were together in training sessions, and their ease in appreciating theory as it is linked to practical experience. As a result trainees' pedagogical and subject knowledge develops apace. Many trainees start the programme without recent experience of study but the input from trainers, together with carefully selected readings and research papers, ensures that trainees develop a good awareness of current issues, including those about the curriculum, the teaching of reading, and assessing pupils' progress.

10. The programme is coherent and well structured with content and assignments timed to prepare for and build on trainees' experience in schools. Good practice days, when a school hosts all trainees and shares its practice in a particular subject or strand, such as personal, social and health education, provide trainees with opportunities to gain a whole school perspective, frequently from nursery through to Year 6. All trainees benefit from up-to-date input by local authority personnel on expected practice in working with pupils who have English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

11. Trainees make rapid progress because the partnership uses its funding and other resources very effectively and efficiently to facilitate and personalise the training, and also because the provision across the partnership is of consistently high quality. The two programme managers know the trainees, schools and school based tutors extremely well. To ensure that every trainee is in the best position to progress they tailor provision through flexible but careful placement of trainees in schools and with school based tutors who will meet their needs and build on their strengths. In some cases, the identification of common needs leads to additional sessions at the centre. Headteachers, in their role as professional guidance tutors, play a vital pastoral role which often continues after the programme ends. The tightly knit community of trainees and trainers is mutually supportive and encouraging. Trainees shared many examples of how trainers had dealt sensitively with personal and professional concerns. In this, the provider promotes very well equality of opportunity, the valuing of diversity and safeguarding.

12. The centre offers spacious accommodation and the advantage of access for trainees to the local authority's team of early years specialists, the resources they use in schools and the courses they run. The 22 schools in the partnership are also very good training venues: they are invited to join because of the good quality of their early years practice. Clear, timely documentation and training updates ensure

that trainers in schools know exactly what is expected of them. As a result, trainees receive highly skilful training by host class teachers and school based tutors who share a common commitment to preparing the next generation of early years practitioners. The introduction of a buddy system has enabled teachers new to the role of school based tutor to benefit from the advice of experienced others, and to be reassured that they are assessing accurately the quality of trainees' teaching. Trainers' detailed feedback to trainees gives them a good picture of their strengths and areas to develop. It does not always help trainees well enough to see the full impact of their teaching on the pupils' learning and how they can lift the quality.

13. Regular assessment and review ensures that trainees know exactly how well they are doing and their targets for improvement. Trainees' evaluations of their teaching show an increasing degree of insight and portfolios show a conscientious approach to providing quality evidence for each of the professional standards.

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

14. The provider has outstanding capacity to improve further; there is a strong track record of improvement over the last two years which has boosted the outcomes for trainees. This is because the information from evaluations across the partnership is used very effectively to inform development planning and the programme managers are quick to take action to ensure trainees' needs are met.

15. The accuracy of the self evaluation reflects the provider's well informed overview of its strengths and areas for development. Evaluations of last year's programme and the outcomes for trainees have informed the current development plan. Underlying the planned actions is the awareness that there is headroom for improvement in trainees' attainment, and with schools joining the partnership, the need to sustain high quality training and to heighten the effectiveness of school based tutoring. The partnership committee has taken the sensible decision to adopt a staged approach to achieving higher outcomes for trainees. Following on from the success last year in boosting trainees' attainment from satisfactory to good, all in the partnership know that a key success criterion this year is to have a higher proportion of trainees who are judged to be outstanding. The plan is steering action but has few success criteria explicitly linked to outcomes for trainees. Nevertheless, there are clear indications that action is resulting in improving outcomes; the rate of trainees' progress is increasing, trainees' confidence is soaring and a good number have shown they are ready to take on a higher teaching commitment than expected given the stage of their training.

16. There is high quality leadership and management at all levels. The partnership committee, chaired by a headteacher, takes seriously its role to challenge and to make informed decisions. Sub-committees drive the programme of improvement drawing on expertise from the partnership schools. The two programme managers work closely with all in the partnership but are not unwilling to take hard decisions if needed regarding the quality of training. They know who to

call on when a particular need arises and are quick to engage specialist expertise to ensure trainees are aware of local and national initiatives. The input from a National Strategy consultant has ensured that trainees are well informed about the teaching of phonics, and the consultant's observation of trainees' teaching has confirmed that desired teaching and learning strategies are being implemented successfully.

17. Trainees and trainers know their voice counts; changes are made in response to their comments. The regular evaluation of modules and placements leads to immediate changes in programme structure and to some procedures. Trainers prompted the decision to give trainees in their first placement experience in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 which has enabled trainees to make informed preferences for further placements. The introduction this year of questions to gain trainees' views about their levels of confidence and knowledge at different times in the programme has given a clear indication of the positive impact of training in planning and assessment, and indicated where there may be slight concerns for some trainees.

18. The change sub-committee has carefully steered the moves for the SCITT to be self-standing from September 2009 and worked with the university to be ready to take on new responsibilities. The implications of the impending change in status have been well anticipated and prepared for by the partnership committee while still focussing on gaining the best for the current trainees. As a step in sustaining high quality provision, it has also taken the opportunity to redefine the partnership agreement including the status and expectations of consortium and associate schools. This places the SCITT in a strong position to move forward.

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?	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

	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.

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