

# South Coast SCITT

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Inspection dates	1-4 March 2010
Lead inspector	Alison Storey HMI

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors in accordance with the Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008-11).

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

### Explanation of terms used in this report

Attainment is defined as the standard reached by a trainee at the end of their training.

Progress is judged in terms of how well a trainee has developed professionally from their starting point to the standard reached at the time of the inspection or at a suitable review point.

Achievement is judged in terms of the progress made and the standard reached by a trainee at the time of the inspection or at a recent assessment review point.

## The provider

1. South Coast School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT), formerly Bournemouth and East Dorset SCITT, works with around 20 schools to provide school-centred initial teacher education (ITE) in the 3 to 7 age range for post-graduate trainees. The partnership includes first, infant and primary schools within Bournemouth, Dorset, Hampshire and Poole local authorities, serving a range of rural and urban areas. In summer 2008 it moved out of its original base in Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education. In the first instance this was to church premises adjacent to the lead school, followed by a move into permanent accommodation within the grounds of the school in October 2009.
2. The SCITT provides a route into teaching for those in the local population who wish to train in the area, often former classroom assistants. The partnership has places for 25 trainees; at the time of the inspection there were 23 trainees following the course. Trainees who successfully complete the course are awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) and a post graduate certificate of education (PGCE) by the University of Bedfordshire.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

### Key strengths

3. The key strengths are:

- the location of the centre-based training within the lead school and the positive impact this has on trainees' progress, particularly in the early weeks of the course
- the high quality recruitment and selection procedures which accurately identify those with the potential to be good teachers
- the personalised approach to training and pastoral care ensuring most trainees make good progress
- the breadth of the training programme, ensuring trainees are well versed in current educational practice and initiatives
- effective quality assurance procedures to maintain and build on quality across the partnership
- the drive for continuous improvement from course leaders and headteachers working in partnership, and the involvement of staff at all levels in schools in training.

### Recommendations

4. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:

- consider how to ensure that mentors and trainees maintain a consistent focus on pupils' learning through feedback and dialogue
- consider how to incorporate subject-specific feedback and targets into lesson observations on a regular basis
- consider how to ensure that all mentors and trainees fully understand the new grading systems.

5. In order to strengthen management's assessment of performance and the impact of action planning the partnership should:

- consider how to further develop systems for evaluating the impact of provision on outcomes for trainees, particularly their progress over time

- consider how recruitment and selection procedures could be refined to ensure that potential trainees fully appreciate the demands of the course and teaching as a career.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

6. The move to become an integral part of the lead school has achieved the provider's aim of offering what it sees as true school-centred training. From the very beginning of the course trainees are immersed in all aspects of life in the lead school and encouraged 'to take on the mantle of a teacher'. The close proximity of the learning centre and the main school buildings enables a good blend of theory and practice in the first six weeks of training. As a consequence, trainees get off to a good start and in the main are well equipped with the professional skills, knowledge and understanding to make the most of their first practice.
7. The partnership has high expectations of its trainees. The selection process is rigorous, making good use of a mix of school-based activities, written tasks and interviews. Since the move, the views of pupils have also been taken into account. Each individual's strengths, needs and experience are thoroughly assessed, including their potential to be a good teacher. As a result, over the last three years the very large majority of trainees have attained the standards for qualified teacher status at least at a good level. Most are successful in gaining employment as teachers, often in partnership schools, and frequently against high numbers of applicants. Furthermore, the provider's recent tracking of trainees beyond their first year of teaching indicates that almost all remain in teaching, more often than not within the four partner local authorities. However, despite apparently clear messages about the demands of the course throughout the recruitment and selection process, each year three or four trainees do not complete their training. While they usually cite a combination of reasons, predominantly personal, they also often report that they need more experience before deciding whether to continue with their training.
8. Across the partnership, particularly over the last year, there has been a shift of focus from teaching to learning, whether for trainees, pupils or school- and centre-based staff. The provider makes it clear to trainees that the course is not something that will happen to them, and that they have to take responsibility for their own development and progress. A greater focus on the personalisation of trainees' learning over the last two years has ensured that training is flexible and responsive to individual needs, providing support for those who need it and challenge for those demonstrating the potential to be outstanding from an early point. As a result, most trainees fulfil their potential and the proportion of trainees judged to be attaining the Standards at an outstanding level has risen from a quarter to a half over the last three years.
9. Trainees are confident, reflective practitioners, with a clear sense of how well they are doing. They know what they need to do to improve and are prepared to take responsibility for their own professional development. In turn, they focus on pupils' learning through the use of detailed planning forms. These

prompt them to take account of how much pupils already know and what they might be expected to know at that age, plan what the pupils will learn in each lesson and evaluate how successful this has been and what the next steps need to be. Despite this, mentors and trainees are not yet consistently focusing on learning in lesson evaluations or in their dialogue following observations and weekly reviews. There is still a tendency to focus on teaching, rather than unpicking the impact it has had on what pupils know and understand, and what they need to learn next.

10. Centre- and school-based training combine well to ensure that training is relevant to the age range of the course and local needs, and responsive to current educational thinking and national initiatives. Pre-course work, particularly the subject knowledge audit, helpfully prepares trainees for the course. Subject knowledge audits are revisited throughout the year, although the opportunity to link them closely with regular subject-specific feedback and targets following lesson observations is missed. A balance of high-quality training sessions and school experience ensures trainees are knowledgeable about best practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the teaching of phonics and early reading and the use of formative assessment. They use teaching assistants effectively in their classrooms and employ good strategies for managing behaviour. The recent addition of a week's placement in a children's centre gives trainees experience of teaching nursery age children and an understanding of how agencies can work in partnership to meet the needs of young children and their families. Trainees apply their experience in a special school to identify strategies they can use with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in mainstream classes. Centre-based training helps trainees appreciate the particular needs of Traveller children, an issue pertinent to the local area. Although their experience of teaching minority ethnic pupils and those who are learning English as an additional language is limited, trainees can explain how they would apply what they learnt from their experience in a partnership school to their own practice. The introduction of a research project this year, coupled with the recommended reading for trainees' reflective journals, ensures an academic balance to the practical, school-based nature of the course and contributes to the development of trainees as reflective practitioners.
11. The partnership's development and use of resources since the last inspection are outstanding. The investment of considerable time and money in establishing the learning centre within the lead school has paid dividends. Hosting recruitment at the centre has had a positive impact on the recruitment process, both in terms of the range of activities possible at interview and consistency in applying the selection criteria. Putting centre-based training at the heart of the lead school is improving trainees' attainment and increasing the number of potential trainees identifying the SCITT as their first choice of provider. Funding the time for mentors to work together to observe trainees provides useful opportunities to ensure the consistency of assessments. The provider has embraced the use of new technologies to support learning, for example the introduction this year of e-portfolios which enable mentors and tutors to keep a close check on trainees' progress and provide prompt feedback focused on their individual needs.

12. The quality of training across the partnership is good. Ensuring that all schools involved are effective training placements is given a high priority. Responsibility for training is shared. Schools with particular expertise contribute to the programme for all trainees while, at an individual school level, mentors draw on the expertise and experience of other staff. Trainees feel well supported because close attention is paid to both individual progress and pastoral care. The training programme provides a good framework for ensuring that all the Standards are addressed over the course of the year, that trainees' progress is tracked and that targets for improvement are set on a regular basis. Tailored action plans and individual support are underpinned by tutors who know the trainees well and are committed to doing their best to help them reach their potential. Tutors keep regular checks on how well trainees are doing and are quick to respond to problems and offer support for, and advice on, both academic and pastoral issues. The introduction of group tutorials this year is a useful means of providing additional support and guidance. However, there are some reported inconsistencies in the frequency of meetings between mentors and trainees and in their understanding of the new grading systems. There are no reported incidents of harassment, but clear procedures are in place to deal with them should the circumstances arise.

## The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 2

13. The director and her deputy work effectively together, and in collaboration with headteachers, to provide good leadership. All schools are members of the governing body and there is a clear expectation that headteachers or their representatives will regularly attend meetings. As a result, there is a sense of ownership and drive for improvement at all levels from school-based training to strategic planning. Headteachers say that it is their aim that trainees will become the kind of good teachers they would choose to employ in their own schools.
14. A real strength is the commitment to reflective practice that mirrors the expectations the partnership has of its trainees. The establishment of a quality committee, with representatives from different groups of stakeholders, ensures termly strategic review and evaluation of the quality of provision. The willingness to engage in open and transparent discussion ensures any emerging issues are identified and tackled promptly. More recently, the committee has taken on the responsibility for using a wide range of evidence, including schools' self-evaluation of their training, external inspection reports on schools and the views of trainees, mentors and tutors to undertake an annual quality assurance of schools, and provide a robust system for the selection and de-selection of schools. Informal systems exist to gather the views of stakeholders beyond the partnership and to evaluate trainees' progress through their careers.

15. At an operational level, the director and her deputy monitor the quality of the provision on an ongoing basis through evaluations of centre-based training and school visits. The partnership attaches high importance to the evaluation of provision by trainees. There are good examples of managers reacting positively to meet trainees' identified needs for additional training, and clear instances where the following year's training has been adapted in the light of current trainees' evaluations, resulting in improved evaluation ratings. However, there is a tendency for the evaluation of training to focus on the short term and trainees' satisfaction rather than on the impact it will have on trainees' teaching over time. Tutors' visits to schools, regular checking of trainees' e-portfolios and termly individual tutorials ensure that tutors have an accurate picture of each trainee's attainment, their strengths and what trainees need to do to improve. Mentors are generally accurate in their assessments of trainees' teaching. Joint observations, including those undertaken with mentors from other schools, and good use of external quality assurance ensure the accuracy of assessments of trainees throughout the course and at the end point. Procedures are kept under constant review. The systems for tracking trainees' progress are being refined, and the provider intends to use the recent introduction of termly grading of trainees against the Standards as a tool for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of provision.
16. Action planning is closely linked to self-evaluation and the provider pays close attention to developments in early years and primary teaching and initial teacher education to ensure that it responds to current and future, local and national initiatives. As a consequence, the partnership has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement, although judgements in its self evaluation document tend to be too generous. In part this is because some of the actions the provider has taken are relatively recent and there is not yet a demonstrable impact on outcomes for trainees. It is also because managers' interrogation of data and feedback is not always as incisive as it could be, for example in considering the performance of the different groups it caters for, or in investigating the reasons for withdrawals. Nevertheless, action planning is focused on appropriate issues and increasingly on the impact actions will have on outcomes for trainees.
17. One of the main issues facing the provider is responding to national initiatives within the context of the specific nature of early years provision and the demographics of the local area. While it meets local needs, for example by providing a route into teaching for classroom assistants, the recruitment of under-represented groups, such as men and minority ethnic trainees remains a challenge and numbers are low. It also has to rely heavily on one school within the partnership to provide all trainees with experience of teaching pupils from minority ethnic groups or those who are learning English as an additional language.
18. The partnership has a good track record of developing provision in response to its own self-evaluation and in the context of national initiatives. Changes since the last inspection have had a demonstrable and positive impact on the quality of provision and trainees' attainment and progress. Together with the increased

focus on outcomes for trainees in its action planning, this demonstrates good capacity to continue to improve.

## 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

		Primary
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?	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	2

### 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?		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?		2
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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