

Billericay Educational Consortium

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Oakfield Primary School Scott Drive Wickford Essex SS12 9PW
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Inspection dates	15 - 19 March 2010
Lead inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

Type of inspection: Single phase primary

Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by an additional specialist inspector 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

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

3. Billericay Educational Consortium, School Centred Initial Teacher Training (BEC SCITT) works in partnership with 16 schools to provide initial teacher education (ITE) across the primary phase (5 – 11). Twelve base schools and four partner placement schools work together with the SCITT and are located in Billericay, South Woodham Ferrers, Wickford and Basildon. Trainees who successfully complete the one-year course are awarded a professional graduate certificate in education, validated by the Open University, and are recommended for Qualified Teacher Status.
4. The partnership aims to recruit trainees locally and train them to teach in local schools. However, the training also seeks to provide trainees with a range of experiences that meet the needs of schools further a field.

5. The partnership is successful in recruiting each year its full target numbers of 25 trainees. Over the last three years retention rates for trainees have been high. During the week of the inspection trainees had just completed a placement and were based at the centre.

Provision in the primary phase

Key Strengths

6. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programme:
 - the selection of high quality trainees with excellent potential to teach
 - the leadership and management of the training programme
 - the highly cohesive provision which is of best quality
 - the strength of the partnership and the way in which its expertise is used across the provider to enable trainees to achieve outstanding outcomes
 - the very effective quality assurance procedures.

Recommendations

7. In order to improve trainee's attainment and progress the provider should:
 - develop a cohesive approach to the continuing professional development of all course trainers by ensuring that it is clearly linked to the provider's overall plan to further improve outcomes for the trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

8. The overall effectiveness of Billericay Educational Consortium, School Centred Initial Teacher Training in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. Although last year there was a slight dip in the proportion of trainees who attained the highest grade, trends over time indicate that more than half were judged to be outstanding. The provider's detailed progress records, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that the current cohort is on track to achieve similar results this year. Over half of the trainees are graded outstanding with the remainder judged to be good.
9. Trainees attain exceptionally well and no group underachieves. They demonstrate strengths across several aspects of teaching and are becoming competent teachers who are good role models. In order to achieve their teaching objectives, the trainees successfully use a variety of methods with whole class, groups and paired work. A key feature of their personal attributes is the way in which they have developed excellent relationships with their

tutors, mentors and fellow trainees. There is a real active buzz to lectures and debates are in depth and purposeful.

10. The tracking of trainees' progress is outstanding as a result of regular and robust evaluation. The procedures for assessing them are extremely well constructed and understood by those involved. Trainees are observed teaching regularly and receive very detailed feedback about their performance. Areas for improvement are highlighted and targets for development appropriately focus on relevant aspects of teaching which need to be strengthened. Assessment of trainees' written work is carefully carried out and helpful points for improvement given. The moderation arrangements confirming judgements about trainees' performance against the Standards are extremely rigorous. The reflective log which trainees complete during the course exemplifies their ability to reflect on their impact on pupils' learning and their own professional development.
11. Recruitment and selection are strengths of the provision because they accurately identify those candidates with the greatest potential to be outstanding teachers. Well qualified candidates apply for the course. The provider's publicity material successfully attracts candidates from groups which are under-represented in the primary phase, such as men. Excellent documentation and personal communication with centre staff ensure that candidates are well prepared for the rigorous selection procedures. These include a range of activities designed to ensure that the candidates' potential to teach and individual training needs are accurately assessed. Opportunities for candidates to work with groups of children play an important role in the interview process. Academic performance is accurately assessed through literacy and numeracy tests. The presentation of a topic of educational interest to a panel of experienced mentors and members of the management board ensures that their personal and professional attributes are accurately evaluated.
12. Trainees receive excellent support and guidance, both professional and pastoral, from the moment they are accepted onto the course. Pre-course work prepares the trainees well for the course and ensures that tutors have a secure understanding of the trainees' prior knowledge and skills. This enables training to be accurately focused on individual needs. Past and present trainees speak highly of this aspect of the training explaining that they are very much 'a name and not a number'. The tightly knit community of trainees and trainers is mutually supportive and encouraging. Withdrawals from the course are rare but are linked to personal and financial issues rather than unsuitability to the teaching profession. Since the last inspection report all trainees have secured teaching posts at the end of the course. This is because head teachers are pleased to employ newly qualified teachers from BEC because they feel that the trainees are confident and well grounded in primary education.

13. The centre-based training is well resourced with practical materials, books and up-to-date information and communication technology equipment. The programme handbook is a comprehensive course guide with clear documentation that is understood by trainers, mentors and trainees. Communication across the partnership is excellent. Experienced and knowledgeable personnel successfully communicate what it takes to be a high quality teacher working in local schools. Trainees take full advantage of extra sessions to improve subject knowledge and develop their confidence in teaching. School mentors are carefully chosen to coach trainees in practical aspects of training which successfully builds upon their developing theoretical knowledge and understanding. As a result of the high standard of training both at the centre and in partnership schools and the excellent cohesion between the two, the quality of the provision across the partnership is very high.
14. The course is extremely well planned to ensure that the programme is of a consistently high quality across all its different components. Trainees benefit from working in two partnership schools which provide excellent training venues. They particularly benefit from working alongside expert practitioners. The head teachers are committed to the training programme because they appreciate the benefits it can bring such as the recruitment of high quality teachers and enhanced opportunities for staff development. While working in the schools trainees have very good access to resources and are provided with opportunities to work in both Key Stages 1 and 2.
15. Trainees are very well prepared to implement national initiatives such as those resulting from the Rose Review of the teaching of early reading. Excellent use is made of the 'leading partner in literacy' school to illustrate the significance of the Rose review. Trainees have a good knowledge and understanding of phonics and actively promote the use of letters and sounds work in their teaching. The recent establishment of a leading numeracy school is supporting the trainees' understanding of using and applying mathematics across the curriculum. The clear focus of assignments and school-based tasks enables trainees to further their knowledge and understanding of important educational issues such as community cohesion. The course includes several sessions on supporting pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The training also ensures that trainees are very well prepared for promoting cultural diversity and develops their awareness of the professional duties of teachers. The provider promotes equal opportunities and diversity extremely well throughout its provision and all trainees receive their entitlement to high-quality training. There is no difference in the attainment or the progress of different groups of trainees. There are no recorded instances of harassment, bullying or intimidation. Trainees are confident about their responsibilities to report and follow-up instances of harassment and discrimination that may arise when they are teaching in school.

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

16. The provider demonstrates outstanding capacity to sustain and further improve the already high quality outcomes for trainees. This is because trends over time show that there is an impressive record of improvement with high quality outcomes being consistently maintained. Detailed monitoring and evaluation have led to succinct and effective plans to resolve issues and improve outcomes for trainees. For example, the consortium recognised the importance of selecting applicants who have already had experience in schools but who need to display a willingness to be flexible within new and differing settings.
17. The provider accurately and comprehensively reviews its own practice. The detailed data collected by BEC demonstrates that there are no significant differences between different groups of trainees. The programme manager, lead head teacher and governing board provide excellent leadership. An exceptional balance of support and challenge is provided by the partnership schools. Strategic planning is clear, of very high quality and is tightly focused on priorities that have been identified as the result of rigorous evaluation and monitoring. They also match well with local and national initiatives such as the introduction of modern foreign languages into the primary curriculum. The action plans are well considered with a rationale, clear targets and appropriate steps to be taken. The personnel involved, the timescales required and resources to be made available are all clearly indicated. Success criteria which relate directly to trainees' teaching and assessment are clear and measurable against outcomes for trainees. Centre based tutors are given good opportunities to support their own professional development. However, these do not match the priorities highlighted in the improvement plan and there are no success criteria for evaluating the potential impact on the outcomes for the trainees.
18. Self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous and supports planning for improvement. It draws on a wide range of internal and external evaluations which are used to continually improve outcomes. Much emphasis is placed on trainees' and past trainees' evaluations, including those from partnership schools, trainers and both past and current trainees. Evaluations are very positive, with a high percentage judging training, assessment, and pastoral support as outstanding. There is a strong commitment to improving on what is already excellent work. This small provider has openness to discussion and self-criticism as an intrinsic feature of its work. The management team knows in detail the strengths of each part of the provision and use this information to plan a very good set of experiences for individual trainees. They also rapidly get to know when weaknesses arise and deal with them swiftly. Intervention or extra support is speedily put in place when there is an area of concern.

19. Leadership at all levels anticipates change extremely well, and the positive attitude modelled by leaders is reflected in the attitudes of trainees seen during the inspection. The programme manager and her administration team are extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of the partnership because they work very closely with the trainees, trainers and schools. The management committees drive the programme of improvement very effectively. They draw on expertise from the partnership schools not only in respect of the training, but also with regard to anticipating and driving change in relation to local and national initiatives. The provider is highly effective in acquiring excellent trainers who deliver the course with warmth and enthusiasm. Extremely well trained school mentors report that the trainees are well prepared for teaching literacy and numeracy and are fully aware of the recommendations of the new creative primary curriculum. A visit to a Hindu Temple and a school in a contrasting locality support the national initiative for developing community cohesion. Well planned sessions encourage the trainees to confidently engage in an educational debate about promoting cultural diversity and preparing children to live and work in a multi-cultural society.
20. Quality assurance is an outstanding feature with the programme manager, trainers and mentors playing an effective role. Their findings are used very well to make further course improvements. Excellent quality assurance procedures ensure that there are very high levels of consistency across the partnership. This means that the provider is able to ensure equality of experience for trainees whilst at the same time ensuring that their individual needs are met. Moderation of grades at the end of each placement is thorough. Tutors cross-moderate with mentors in schools and they take great care to compare how well each trainee meets the Standards. It is in an excellent position to improve further and maintain the high standards achieved because it knows itself well and has high quality structures and personnel in place.

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.

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