

# Somerset SCITT Consortium

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Provider address	Priory Barn Cannington Centre Cannington Bridgwater Somerset TA5 2LS
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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

### 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. The Somerset School Centred Initial Teacher Training and Graduate Teacher provider (SCITT) works with over 58 schools to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualifications to teach in the primary sector. The provider is part of the Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL) and also has partnerships with The Learning Institute, a secondary SCITT based in Cornwall and with the Mid Somerset (GTP) Consortium, an employment based route at Crispin School in Somerset. The one year Primary Initial Teacher Education course is licensed by the University of Worcester.
2. The programmes offer postgraduate routes to QTS (qualified teacher status) and include an employment based route (EBR) into teaching for graduates. The current cohort of trainees specialising in teaching children aged 3 to 7 years is the first to undertake this route.

## A commentary on the provision

3. Although separate reports for the Primary and the EBR follow this section, there is very strong cohesion between the routes. The same management group, central based tutors, moderators and in some cases schools are involved. Many similarities therefore exist between the courses and many of the same strengths are shared. In the section below the most significant strengths common to both routes are identified.
4. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
  - excellent leadership with clarity of purpose, a passion for education and highly effective management skills
  - outstanding recruitment processes which identify trainees with the potential to become outstanding teachers
  - excellent centre-based and in-school training supported by very effective professional tutors, centre-based tutors and moderators
  - high quality academic and pastoral support which enables all trainees to make good or outstanding progress
  - excellent systems to evaluate, assess, track and promote trainees' progress.
5. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:
  - build on and share good practice between schools and between professional tutors.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

6. Somerset SCITT offers initial teacher training provision in the primary phase at post graduate level. Currently there are 44 trainees following the one-year Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) route with 25 of those training to teach pupils in the 5 to 11 age group. This is the first year of the Early Years course and 19 trainees are currently specialising in the 3 to 7 age group.

### Key strengths

7. The key strengths are:
  - an innovative and creative management team who are driving forward improvement
  - rigorous and imaginative recruitment processes which identify trainees with the potential to become outstanding teachers
  - the excellent design and content of the modules and assessments that enable trainees to gain a thorough understanding of theory and understand its impact on practice
  - high quality academic and pastoral support, school and centre based, which enables all trainees to make good and outstanding progress
  - well planned, purposeful training opportunities within a wide range of contexts which support trainees' impressive understanding of diversity and the celebration of each child as an individual
  - excellent systems to evaluate, assess, track and promote trainees' progress.

### Recommendations

8. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
  - build a strong pool of experienced professional tutors with a good understanding of early years education
  - make better use of the high quality professional tutors and Quality Mark schools in order to share good practice and train new partner schools.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

9. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. As a result, trainees' attainment is excellent and trainees make good and often outstanding progress.
10. Over time, trainees consistently attain very well with more than half at the highest level. The evidence strongly indicates that, this year, there will be an increase in the number of outstanding primary trainees and the attainment of the first Early Years cohort is similarly high. Trainees are highly reflective, proactive and professional. They plan sequences of lessons which show they have a good understanding of progression and the importance of engaging pupils and fostering enjoyment of learning. This is supported by a strong understanding of how children learn and the outstanding trainees demonstrate a confident use of assessment for learning. Trainees are creative and prepared to take risks, thus injecting some lessons with a definite 'wow' factor. As a result, trainees have an excellent rapport with the children who also make good progress.
11. Excellent recruitment and selection procedures ensure that successful applicants have the potential to become outstanding teachers. School partners are fully involved: they value the processes very highly and have confidence in the quality and potential of successful candidates. Valuable pre-course activities boost subject knowledge and the formative assignment introduces trainees to recent research into curriculum content and design. Retention is excellent and onward employment is good despite intense competition for jobs locally.
12. The quality and effectiveness of training and assessment are outstanding. Courses are well planned, interesting and engaging, with knowledgeable and enthusiastic tutors who model best practice. The close-knit central team work collaboratively across modules and routes to evaluate the programme, meet trainee needs and ensure courses are fully up-to-date with thorough coverage of the Standards. The provider makes good use of its contacts and local partnerships to enrich the provision, for example by bringing in specialists who contribute to sessions on Traveller Education and modern foreign languages. It is no surprise then that centre based training is very highly evaluated by the trainees.
13. The design of the courses ensures an unflinching focus on the whole child giving trainees a holistic view of how schools are meeting the Every Child Matters agenda. This is well linked to high academic standards. There is excellent cohesion between the elements of the training and the structure of the course enables trainees to build and develop their understanding of theory and initiatives whilst all the time evaluating what that means for them, their teaching and pupils' learning. Assessment systems are excellent. The impact of theory and central training on trainees' teaching is developed very well through assessed school-based activities such as designing and teaching sequences of lessons, the impact of aspects of diversity or activities related to the global

dimension. Assignments build well on these key tasks and the quality is high. All markers, including the external examiner, are involved during specific marking days and this supports consistency and provides support for new markers. Detailed developmental comments and prompt feedback are provided which trainees are able to act on quickly.

14. In-school training is also of very high quality and underpinned by excellent systems of training and moderation. School-based professional tutors, assistant moderators and lead moderators ensure that training is layered and comprehensive. During the inspection, high quality discussions were observed between tutors, moderators and trainees where well focused targets and strategies for achieving them were discussed in detail. Judgements are consistent and very closely linked to the Standards. Weekly reviews and lesson observations incorporate trainees' deepening self-evaluation as the starting point for discussions and are followed up with good quality feedback. Individual training plans form very useful working documents which are regularly referred to and updated and provide good evidence of progress. As well as the three longer placements, trainees also benefit from several sharply focused short placements. These involve working alongside children and teachers. For example, a week's intensive work on assessment and mathematics supported the trainees' understanding and enabled pupils to make good progress.
15. Support, intervention and challenge are outstanding with an excellent focus on ensuring that individual needs are met. Tutors work closely with small groups of trainees and intensively with individuals to ensure that difficulties are overcome. Tracking systems are excellent. With this provider there is nowhere to hide! Good use is made of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to track and analyse weekly and ongoing progress. Trainees who are making less than expected progress are identified very quickly and the provider acts promptly and effectively. This is particularly evident in the good progress of those trainees who have benefited from the intervention of the individual support tutor and those who have received additional support from their personal tutors.
16. Resources are well linked to strategic priorities and responsive to needs. They are used very effectively to widen trainee experience. The provider makes good use of its links with the University of Worcester and Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL) to extend its access to materials, specialist input and professional development. Local authority links and SCIL colleagues make an important contribution to the quality and range of provision and also deepen the provider's knowledge of the schools. Library resources and teaching rooms have greatly improved since the last inspection. The VLE is used very well by trainees and the centre to access course documentation and additional resources.
17. As well as providing good quality learning environments and very effective school based training, school partners also make a strong contribution through their involvement in the management board, module design, interviews and centre-based sessions. Groups of schools and tutors work together to plan trainee placements which best meet the needs of trainees and schools.

18. High levels of consistency are achieved through excellent communication and the quality and clarity of expectations and guidance. Support for professional tutors is strong with regular training and ongoing development through the moderator visits. Schools in the partnership show consistently good, and often excellent, commitment to training. This is particularly evident in the schools that have already achieved the exacting requirements of the provider's Quality Mark. The provider is keen to capitalise on these strengths to support and develop the expertise of new schools and professional tutors. Training for the group of schools and settings which are supporting the Early Years trainees has been effective, but it is still a 'young' course and there is further scope to strengthen the pool of trained professional tutors with Early Years experience.
19. Very good use is made of partnerships to ensure trainees encounter and benefit from a wide range of contexts and variety of approaches. They experience teaching in different contexts, including inner city and special schools. As a result, trainees have an excellent understanding of the varying strands of diversity and potential barriers to learning. The opportunities to experience, study and plan activities around the global dimension have developed a good understanding of the impact of social, cultural and economic diversity. This continues into employment and a group of ex-trainees are members of the Somerset Poverty Reduction Action Team.
20. The provider is successful in recruiting relatively high numbers of men and although the number of trainees from Black and minority ethnic communities remains low, the provider has recruited over target this year. In addition it has successfully recruited a number of trainees from various non-British communities therefore reflecting the local area and enhancing diversity.

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

21. The provider's capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to take the actions required to secure improvements where necessary is outstanding. The last inspection praised the important contribution of the very strong senior management team and it has continued to ensure the highest quality even whilst doubling the numbers of trainees and courses. Leaders at all levels combine imagination and a passion for education with finely honed management skills. They know how to spot potential and demonstrate an outstanding ability to transform that potential into high attaining trainees who enrich the profession and enhance teaching quality, particularly in the local area.
22. The management board and senior leadership team work across all routes, which ensures consistency and cohesion across the provision. Management structures and systems are exceptionally well designed to ensure that the levels of decision making are clear and work effectively in practice. Documentation, such as policy statements, job descriptions, placement guidance and partnership agreements, are detailed and practical. There are very clear



expectations underpinned by highly effective quality assurance systems to make sure that what should happen does happen. Tutors are engaged in a variety of activities to enhance their own understanding, skills and experience. Much of this work is outside of the SCITT which keeps them up-to-date and allows them to gain useful information about good practice elsewhere. All partners, including the trainees, contribute to and, as a result, are fully committed to the shared vision. Additional rigour is provided by wider partnerships, for example by the external examiner appointed by the University of Worcester. The Quality Mark initiative encourages school colleagues to engage in self-evaluation and raises expectations about what is good practice in school-based initial teacher education.

23. The impact of training and trainee progress is rigorously and continually tracked and evaluated through external examiner reviews, trainee and professional tutor feedback, analysis of data, key tasks and assignments and also by tutors visiting lessons to see how the training is impacting on trainees' teaching. As result, centre-based training is continually amended and improved. Information is also used very well to analyse cohort trends in terms of trainees' confidence and their teaching ability against the Standards and Ofsted characteristics. This evaluation focuses well on outcomes, not just in terms of trainees' progress, but also on the progress pupils make as a result of their teaching. Evaluative information from all partners, including external reviews, is gathered and analysed. As a result the provider has an excellent understanding of its own strengths and areas for improvement.
24. The provider's management of change is excellent. A good example of this can be seen in the success of the Early Years course where clarity of vision, careful forward planning, flexibility and responsiveness have ensured successful outcomes for trainees in the first year. This success is underpinned by the provider's well-planned approach to succession planning. For example, in preparing the ground for the new route, all tutors have been trained in Early Years practice. Tutors work collectively across subjects and roles, sharing and building their enthusiasm and skills. In this way the provider has strength in depth and is not reliant on the contributions of one or two people.
25. The approach to innovation and change is thorough, imaginative and draws well on the knowledge and expertise of partners. There is a strong focus on practical and investigative approaches to mathematics and science. Trainees are very well informed and able to teach effectively using the most recent ideas about early reading and phonics. The Early Years course is exemplary in the account it takes of national and international studies in education. The provider is outward looking and alert to opportunities to improve provision. Enthusiasm for the latest research and ideas are tapped into, for example the recent work on problem solving in science using puppets, so that it has the greatest impact on trainee and partner development.
26. There is a palpable commitment to continuous improvement by all. Outcomes and progress are reviewed regularly and systematically analysed to identify key priorities for improvement. This is followed up by careful and thorough planning which is particularly evident in the work carried out before embarking

on the Early Years route. Due to this careful planning, the course has gone very well with very good outcomes for trainees. There is a sharp focus on improving trainee outcomes and plans have clearly measurable success criteria. Improvement planning is not constraining however; it provides a framework for improvement which allows for opportunities and enthusiasm to be capitalised on so long as changes fit in with the overall vision and direction.

27. The impact of improvement planning is reviewed regularly and thoroughly to amend and improve actions throughout the year. Very good use is made of trainee confidence reviews and weekly information from school placements to analyse information about trainees' progress against the Standards. An example of where positive impact can be seen as a result of actions taken in previous years, including the links developed with special schools, is in trainees' rising confidence in teaching pupils with special educational needs. This has also resulted in trainees' employability being boosted as several have since been appointed to posts in special education. In the current year, detailed activity to raise trainees' confidence and ability to use assessment also appears to be resulting in marked and measurable improvements.
28. The positive impact of improvement planning can be seen in the excellent attainment and very good progress made by trainees which has been sustained over several years.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Context

29. Somerset SCITT joined the South West Graduate Teacher Programme Consortium in 2002 and became an employment based initial teacher training provider in 2006.
30. The provider has an allocation of 10 places for trainees specialising in the primary age range and these have been fully taken up every year. All trainees who complete the course achieve qualified teacher status (QTS). In addition, trainees opt to work at level 7 and be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) or level 6 and be awarded a Professional Graduate Certificate of Education.

### Key strengths

31. The key strengths are:
  - excellent leadership with clarity of purpose and vision which has driven improvement over time resulting in a rising trend of attainment
  - outstanding selection of trainees who achieve exceptionally well and become highly reflective, potentially outstanding teachers
  - high quality training supported by very effective professional tutors, centre based tutors and moderators
  - excellent individual guidance and support, both academic and pastoral, which enables all trainees to make good or outstanding progress
  - well planned and comprehensive second school placements underpinned by excellent attention to ensuring effective transitions
  - excellent systems to evaluate, assess, track and promote trainees' progress.

### Recommendations

32. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
  - build on and share good practice by using experienced professional tutors to help support and train those new to the role.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

33. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for its trainees is outstanding. Trainees' attainment is very high and there has been consistent improvement over the past four years.
34. Trainees establish excellent relationships with pupils and their conduct models exemplary values and attitudes. They communicate very effectively and create excellent levels of trust with staff in their placement schools. This facilitates strong cooperation and collaboration and underpins the effectiveness of the coaching and mentoring provided by school professional tutors. Trainees, in discussion with their tutors, identify their training needs accurately well in advance of the start of the course and continually throughout their training. The extent of the trainees' skills in critically appraising their practice and identifying what they need to do to improve is impressive.
35. Trainees understand the significance of procedures to ensure the health and well-being of pupils and translate these into effective practice. They are especially perceptive at identifying what each pupil needs to enable them to learn, for example using a wide range of very effective strategies to engage the pupils in their learning, including paired and group talk. All trainees use skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to support their teaching. In lessons observed, trainees used video clips which were particularly relevant to the pupils in their classes in terms of their interests and abilities; this was excellent planning to match pupils' needs. Trainees have a firm grasp of the Primary National Strategy and current initiatives, for example their understanding of how to adapt their teaching in light of reviews into mathematics and early reading is very secure.
36. Trainees demonstrate a secure understanding of a wide range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies. They are aware of the assessment and monitoring requirements and methods in their age range and subjects. Although trainees' ability to use assessment data to plan for improvements in pupils' progress is not fully developed, examples of outstanding practice were observed. Particular strengths include their skills in posing pertinent and differentiated questions to individual pupils to assess their knowledge and understanding. The trainees' experiences of teaching pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are wide, and trainees plan well for these pupils. The trainees have a secure understanding of how to tailor their lessons to meet the needs of pupils from a range of diverse backgrounds, and their understanding of inclusion and diversity is well developed. They understand the importance of celebrating differences as crucial to harmonious relationships. All trainees demonstrate excellent planning and teaching skills. They plan individual lessons and sequences of lessons very well, building on prior learning effectively to ensure the good progress of all pupils.
37. Recruitment, retention and onward employment are excellent. Selection arrangements are rigorous and result in the recruitment of self motivated and committed trainees of a suitable calibre to succeed on this employment based

route. Trainees employed as support staff in schools resign those posts and therefore have the opportunity to make a completely fresh start in a new school setting as trainee teachers. The number of candidates recruited from minority ethnic groups is low, although the proportion of men recruited has steadily increased and equals that of women. The highly effective selection procedures and pre-course tasks enable individual strengths and needs to be accurately identified. For example, the trainees complete a pre-course assignment which indicates their ability to reach a higher Master's level. Thorough initial needs analysis leads to the identification of a range of effective training activities to steer individual trainees' development. As a result, the overwhelming majority of trainees make at least good progress from the beginning of the course.

38. The central training programme is well devised and includes a range of professional studies and subject topics that provide a good foundation on which school-based training can build. Trainees judge the large majority of central training sessions to be inspiring. The support provided by professional tutors in schools is excellent. They ensure trainees experience a wide range of relevant training activities which enable them to attain the QTS Standards and make a significant contribution to trainees' good and better progress. Trainees' subject knowledge is effectively enhanced through a number of key tasks linked to relevant training and Standards. The provider's tutor moderators provide high quality support and guidance during their regular visits. They spend considerable time substantiating judgements in dialogue with school-based professional tutors and class teacher mentors. The provider could usefully build on this by inviting experienced professional tutors to help support and train those new to the role.
39. The trainees' second school placement is a key strength. The schools are well chosen to enable the trainees to have complementary placements and additional experiences, such as working in challenging socio-economic areas and teaching pupils who have limited English. The schools are very closely in contact with each other as trainees transfer from one to the next. This means the trainees have the very best chance of continuing to make progress. Trainees usually spend a full term and, as a result, have a very thorough experience in the second school.
40. Exemplary systems are used to provide accurate assessments of trainees' progress in meeting the Standards. The use of professional interviews and dialogue between all parties, at several points in the programme, to track and report on trainees' progress, is an excellent feature and is conducted rigorously. Trainees are provided with systematic and valuable feedback on their progress and are set smart, fine tuned development targets which the majority meet or exceed. Progress and achievement are monitored carefully and the outcomes used very well to inform future training. All elements of the course combine well and there is flexibility to match provision to individual needs. Professional tutors very effectively amend the training plan to meet emerging gaps and trainee needs. Trainees praise the attention paid to their welfare and the quality of the support they receive. The provision promotes equality of opportunity and diversity well.

41. Very effective and efficient use is made by the partnership of the resources it has available; the use of all human resources is outstanding. A Quality Mark is awarded to schools who demonstrate the capacity to provide excellent training. This is an innovative and well thought out initiative which schools benefit from achieving, as it helps them audit their own strengths and areas to develop. Resource allocation is responsive to need, for example training for professional tutors is held regularly and funding provided to release them from school to attend. When changes occur at short notice individualised training is provided for new professional tutors. A high level of specialist staffing is provided to support the training from, for example, local authority trainers, such as the Traveller Education staff. Communication to schools from the central programme team is highly effective and school trainers are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They receive extensive written guidance and excellent support from the centre based tutors.

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

42. The leadership and management of the consortium have an outstanding capacity to secure further improvement and to sustain the highest quality outcomes for trainees. This is due to the managers' continued strengthening and fine tuning of a well-organised programme to the benefit of every trainee.
43. The range of evaluation systems which are in place cover all aspects of provision and a substantial amount of evaluative data is gathered. This is used very effectively to inform the partnership management team and board about trainees' progress and attainment, and the quality and impact of the provision. Evaluation is based on a detailed analysis of outcomes over time and takes account of the views of trainees, professional tutors, consortium tutors and assessors. These are used very effectively to identify the strengths of the provision and areas for further improvement. The professional interviews between the school and consortium tutors and trainees provide an excellent opportunity for monitoring and quality assuring school-based training, and these take place at very regular intervals during each term. If a concern is raised, then the number of these interviews increases and additional support put in place from the 'individual support tutor' until the trainee is back on track. The effectiveness of resource allocation and its impact on trainees' progress and attainment are also reviewed regularly and findings acted on promptly. Schools partners are fully involved in the consortium's management and the analysis and outcomes of evaluations are shared explicitly with them so they can be part of shaping the training.
44. The effectiveness of the consortium's evaluation and development of the partnership's performance is shown by the ongoing, sustained record of improvement in trainees' attainment. Training and assessment procedures have developed very well and robust measures have been put in place to assure the consistency and quality of provision across the partnership, which is outstanding.

45. The consortium shows clear, effective, capacity to anticipate and drive change in order to bring about improvements in provision and ensure trainees continue to receive high quality training. The managers have a strong grasp of the demands of national and local initiatives and priorities in schools and initial teacher education; these are responded to in a timely and effective manner. One successful example is the response to the Rose review in developing trainees' knowledge and understanding of primary literacy. Another strength is the Quality Mark awarded to partnership schools as part of the drive to ensure training of the highest quality in all partner schools. This is both innovative and highly effective in securing consistently top quality school-based training.
46. A particular strength of the partnership is the consortium's ability to identify and secure suitable partner schools with the potential to train experienced and capable professional tutors. School data, local authority advice and trainees' evaluations are used well to inform these decisions and to plan the necessary professional development of staff involved in delivering training. The wealth of evaluative data gained by the consortium is used effectively to produce comprehensive and well-considered strategic and action plans. These identify suitably priorities to improve the quality of provision and outcomes.
47. Improvement planning and related actions are evaluated well against success criteria that suitably focus on their impact on the quality of training and trainees' progress and achievements. The partnership's record of developments and improvements has ensured that the overwhelming majority of the trainees fulfil their potential as indicated by their very high levels of completion and employment over recent years. The consortium's key priorities for improvement show it is not complacent. It is continually aware of the need to extend trainees' experience of working in a culturally diverse society, and has a number of very effective training opportunities built into their course, such as a two-day link visit to a school in London with a diverse population. All managers are focused on improvement and have demonstrated that they have been able to strengthen an already very good course so that trainees on the employment based route have made excellent progress to a point where the significant majority attain a grade 1 and have the potential to be outstanding teachers.

## 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	Employment-based routes
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		1	1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	1	1
Factors contributing to trainees attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1	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	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1	1
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1	1

### CAPACITY TO IMPROVE FURTHER AND/OR SUSTAIN HIGH QUALITY

	Primary	Employment-based routes
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	1
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	1	1
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?	1	1
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?	1	1

<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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