

# Suffolk & Norfolk Secondary SCITT

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Inspection dates	10-14 May 2010
Lead inspector	Peter Gale 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

## 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. This school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provider operates under the name of Suffolk and Norfolk Initial Teacher Training, which brings together the primary SCITT, secondary SCITT and the primary and secondary graduate training programme (GTP). There is a cohesion group currently working to bring together the separate providers and share best practice. The secondary SCITT enables trainees to attain a professional graduate certificate of education (PGCE) which also leads to qualified teacher status (QTS); the certificate is validated by the University Campus Suffolk (UCS)
4. The Suffolk and Norfolk Secondary SCITT currently works in partnership with up to 52 schools to provide secondary initial teacher education (ITE) courses in the 11-16 age range. It presently offers training in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages (MFL), music, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and physical education. At the time of the inspection there were 37 trainees

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:

- high quality trainees who develop excellent relationships in, and make a significant contribution to, the partnership in which they are placed
- the way course leadership has responded successfully to all of the points for improvement in the last inspection and developed a clear and effective operational structure for the SCITT
- rigorous recruitment and selection procedures that effectively identify trainees who have the potential to be good teachers
- the high quality central and subject training that effectively supports trainees' development and outcomes
- the work of the lead school tutors in supporting and developing subject specific training for the benefit of trainees
- the high quality care and support for trainees by cluster supporters and most mentors and professional tutors.

### Recommendations

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

- effectively share the outstanding mentoring practice that exists in the partnership so that all trainees receive consistently detailed targets which inform their understanding of how to make progress
- explore ways in which the training programme can be enhanced to provide greater opportunities for trainees to develop their understanding of cultural diversity and linguistic differences
- consider ways in which subject specific external evaluation can be established to develop and inform subject specific action planning.

### Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

7. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes is good. Trainees attain well with over 85% of trainees consistently being judged as good or better at the end of their training in the last two years. Although it is too soon to judge the final outcome for the current cohort, at the second assessment point in their training, they had made faster progress from similar starting points when compared with the previous two cohorts.
8. Recruitment is a very rigorous process with a strong local employment rationale. This results in the selection of trainees with the potential to be good

or outstanding teachers. Recruitment to target has been difficult in the past few years; particularly in modern foreign languages. Minority ethnic recruitment also remains a challenge being in line, but not significantly above, the low local demographic. A two stage interview process gathers a great deal of data that are used effectively to personalise the training. Trainees are given specific pre-course tasks to boost their progress when they begin their training. A residential pre-course induction week prepares trainees very well for the rigours of their training and is partially responsible for improving retention rates. Trainees are carefully selected for their ability to communicate effectively which they do with staff and pupils. Trainees develop good relationships in their training schools where they are well regarded and integrated into departments; headteachers are pleased to appoint them at the end of their training.

9. Formal subject needs analysis is undertaken after starting the course, usually in close coordination with school mentors. This gives trainees an awareness of their subject strengths and areas for development. Lead school days which develop subject pedagogy are universally described as excellent by trainees who particularly like the practical nature of these occasions. As a result trainees' subject knowledge for teaching is strong in most subject areas particularly in delivering lesson content. Trainees' knowledge can be weaker in those subjects with a broad knowledge base; particularly in regard to going beyond the taught curriculum to challenge the more able or in the anticipation of possible misconceptions.
10. High levels of commitment to the partnership exist across the placement schools. Professional tutors are clear that the SCITT continues to improve and are pleased with communication between the SCITT leadership and themselves. School mentors are generally well chosen. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and carry them out effectively. Procedures for working with the trainees on a weekly basis and over an extended period of time are very well documented in high-quality handbooks.
11. School-based training by mentors is good. Most mentors focus extremely well on developing trainees' practice to boost pupil learning through observation and feedback. Feedback to trainees following lesson observations is usually sharp and precise. Trainees are strongly reflective practitioners. They think carefully about their teaching and a particularly good feature is the way they carefully consider the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. All trainees look for and act well on advice and guidance provided by mentors and other trainers whom they hold in high regard. Feedback and reflection feed well into clear development targets that can be tracked through school progress files. Although targets for development are set conscientiously by all staff working with trainees, a few are less adept in coaching trainees for improvement. Attendance by mentors at training is variable. The programme leader tries to mitigate this by arranging individually tailored visits especially for new mentors. Ongoing tutor visits by lead school tutors support trainees' progress effectively and provide them with good quality feedback complementing and building upon feedback from mentors. They also provide training and promotion of consistency through joint observations of trainees' teaching. Professional tutors

communicate and work well with the SCITT leadership to deliver high quality placements for most trainees. Placements are generally well chosen to provide contrasting experiences across the age and ability range for trainees. A small number of trainees interviewed during the inspection had had inconsistent training across their two placements but this had not impacted significantly on their overall progress.

12. Assessment procedures are comprehensive and accurate in judging trainees' final attainment. Regular assessment takes place and enables the trainees and provider to track progress. Lesson observation feedback and grading feeds into end of term reports that give a summative judgement of the trainees' attainment. However, there is inconsistency in mentors' understanding of grading lesson observations; particularly in relation to when to move to grading trainees in relation to qualified teachers rather than taking trainees' novice status into account. This can lead to some over-estimation and confusion in trainees' minds. The transition to second placements is well-handled with mentors occasionally undertaking joint observation or more usually communicating by telephone or e-mail; this supports progress effectively.
13. Coherence of the course is good. Professional tutors in schools set up training opportunities that complement and augment centre-based professional studies. School-based professional studies are well regarded by trainees who find the context of such sessions useful in improving their practice. Training opportunities are provided in school that fit in well with requirements of the course assignments set by the provider. While universally seeing their benefit, a small number of trainees felt they were not marked and returned in good time to inform subsequent assignments. As a result of good training and experience of working with the full ability range of pupils in contrasting schools, most trainees demonstrate effective classroom and behaviour management skills. Planning is developing well with good use of high quality course documentation. Trainees plan three-part lessons and use ICT to support their teaching regularly. Good practice in assessment and differentiation is emerging. Trainees show awareness of techniques and are starting to use and in some cases hone them. Use of carefully targeted questioning and self-assessment and peer-assessment played a full part in the better lessons observed. Trainees are well informed of current developments in their subjects due to the particular strength in lead school days and in some cases due to the fine subject-related work of mentors.
14. The use of resources in the partnership is good. Each trainee is provided with a laptop, a voice recorder and a digital camera. Most trainees state that they have all the resources necessary to meet their needs in their school placements. However, a few trainees had encountered difficulties in accessing school-based ICT resources to support their teaching; mainly due to school policies. The SCITT works very well in partnership with University Campus Suffolk to provide access for trainees to their library and other student services. SCITT staff are very responsive to reported need due to the close working relationship between tutors and trainees. Human resources are very well used by the partnership to support trainees, with extra tutor visits arranged on the basis of trainee or placement need. Outside speakers benefit trainees significantly in bringing their

expertise to central training sessions. Resource allocation is under constant review and is well understood by schools

15. The close knit nature of the SCITT means that care and inclusion are at the centre of all it does. The high quality of personal care demonstrated by supporting tutors and school mentors is reflected in the fact that almost all trainees report being exceptionally well looked after and retention is now high. Trainees report no incidents of harassment and know who to turn to if there were any such incidents. Trainees have good quality central training in aspects of diversity and teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language. However, there are limited opportunities for trainees to practise their skills and develop their understanding of cultural diversity and linguistic differences.

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

Grade: 2

16. The partnership's capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees, and to take the actions required to secure improvements where necessary, is good. The partnership is clearly focused on raising the attainment of trainees by improving the quality of provision they receive. The provider had several actions for improvement as a result of their previous inspection report. All of these have been addressed and some are now key strengths. Self-evaluation is now completely embedded in the cycle of improvement.
17. Good secondary leadership has established comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems to inform the vision for improvement. Professional tutors and headteachers are surveyed regularly. Trainees' views are gathered via informal discussion, school visits, end of course questionnaires and representation on programme committees. Current trainees interviewed during the inspection were very positive about their voice being heard. The views of school mentors are captured through mentor training and regular school visits by SCITT staff. However, the SCITT is aware that school mentors do not have sufficient opportunities to come together in subject groups to share best practice and inform course development.
18. Quality assurance is facilitated by school visits from lead school tutors and cluster supporters. Quality of training is reviewed and moderated by regular joint observations between mentor and lead school tutor. These moderation visits also review trainees' well-designed school progress files to establish the rate of progress and the quality of training. A comprehensive feedback form is completed and shared with SCITT leadership, mentor, professional tutor and trainee. Cluster supporters visit to check quality of placement and support of trainee in a pastoral sense. Due to this work SCITT leaders know course strengths and areas for development well and they are accurate in their self-evaluation. External examiners reports are useful in providing validation of standards and comparison with other routes to QTS. However, they are generic and the SCITT is aware there is scope for external examiners to provide an independent perspective on subjects; possibly on a rolling programme.

19. In recent years there has been a significant rise in the proportion of trainees with good or better attainment. The provider has correctly identified boosting the proportion of outstanding trainees as an area for development with the professional skills standards being a particular focus. Lead School tutors complete a subject self-evaluation document (SED) each year which feeds into whole course reviews. For the current year these focus on raising the attainment of trainees; particularly from good to outstanding. Subject SEDs draw on evaluation of school visits by tutors and also evaluation of training by trainees. Currently these are not informed by careful analysis of subject-related attainment of the standards and are not consistently detailed.
20. The SCITT and its partnership schools show good capacity in responding to and preparing for change. Partnership expertise, including local authority advisers, is well-used to enhance core central and subject training. Trainees enjoy input from leading consultants and senior school leaders who deepen their understanding of why and how changes occur in education. Lead school tutors are well aware of national subject developments and drive course development and updates to reflect these. There has been a big push on training for the curriculum for students aged 14 to 19, with Strand 2 diploma training being rolled out. Those trainees that have experienced the diploma training have had their training significantly enhanced. National priorities in initial teacher education are well covered in central training. Where training quality falls below expected standards the SCITT responds to adapt the programme. Training also keeps trainees well-informed about initiatives beyond the age range they are training to teach, such as the Rose review. Succession planning is firmly in hand. The current SCITT leader has come through a series of roles in the SCITT and a current lead school tutor is being prepared for an extra quality assurance role to support her in the new academic year.
21. The partnership is ambitious in its development, responsive to feedback and clearly moving forward. For example, there has been a recognition that although the virtual learning environment is well-used, it is not delivering exactly what the partnership requires and a new system is in development. Central improvement plans are of high quality and clearly focused on key priorities. Success criteria are clear and so is the process for monitoring them. However, although lead school tutors are integrated into the planning process there are no subject specific plans to target higher attainment. A number of actions have been taken to improve provision recently. Improvements are evident in a number of areas of provision and, as a result, trainees' outcomes have the potential to be better this year; the SCITT is expecting a significant boost in the percentage of trainees graded outstanding. However, several systems are still embedding and need time to be evaluated and refined, and to realise their full potential.



## 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

		Secondary
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?	2
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

		Secondary
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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