

# Suffolk and Norfolk Primary SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Inspection dates	10 - 14 May 2010
Lead inspector	Allan Torr 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). The primary SCITT enables trainees to attain a professional graduate certificate of education (PGCE) which leads to qualified teacher status (QTS). This certificate is validated by the University Campus Suffolk (UCS) in partnership with the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex.
4. Senior leaders buy in expertise predominantly from Suffolk local authority to contribute to the training. They also buy in others to provide training in specialist areas such as information and communication technology (ICT).
5. Trainees specialise in either the 3 to 7 or the 5 to 11 age phase. At the time of the inspection, 52 trainees were following the one-year PGCE route, 16 in the

Early Years phase and 37 in the primary age phase. Centre-based training takes place in Lowestoft and in Ipswich. The majority of trainees receive most of their training in the Ipswich training base and a group of trainees receives their training in the Lowestoft training base. The centre-based training is duplicated in both locations.

6. There are approximately 117 schools in the partnership in Suffolk and Norfolk local authorities. Many of the schools are in the process of a school organisation review from a three tier system to two tiers, primary and secondary. Trainees are therefore placed in a nursery, first, infant, junior or primary school. The partnership extends over a very wide geographical area and the placements range from small rural to large urban schools. Trainees are assessed in three placements. Placements one and three are usually in the same school and the same class so that trainees are able to see how a group of pupils progresses over a full school year.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Key strengths

7. The key strengths are:
  - the highly effective pastoral and academic support for trainees that enables the overwhelming majority of trainees to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) and make good progress
  - the exceptionally rigorous quality assurance systems and strategic use of data that ensure the quality of the training is maintained and continually improved
  - the very effective mesh between school and centre-based training that enables the trainees to make informed and critical evaluations of their teaching
  - the highly effective system of selecting trainees who are capable of making very good teachers
  - the rapid progress trainees make from well before the start of the course
  - the high quality subject-specific evaluations of trainees' teaching and the very effective tracking of trainees' progress
  - the highly effective use and deployment of resources.

### Recommendations

8. In order to increase the proportion of trainees attaining the Standards at an outstanding level, the partnership should consider:
  - enabling a greater proportion of the trainees following the EYFS specialism to plan effectively for child-initiated play
  - enabling trainees to plan activities that stretch and challenge more able pupils.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

9. The system of selecting trainees for the course is thorough and highly effective in ensuring they have the capability to teach and to make very good teachers. Candidates are required, for example at interview, to tell a story to a group of children and then evaluate how they performed. They are interviewed as individuals and they attend a task day in which they complete subject knowledge tests and present to the other candidates. As a result, candidates have a range of ways in which they can show their potential to teach. At the time of the inspection the proportion of males recruited to the course was above average and the proportion for the next year is higher at almost 20%. Although the proportion of trainees from a minority ethnic background is below average, the proportion of applicants is increasing well.
10. Trainees make rapid progress from well before the course starts. They attend an induction day in the spring and scrutinise their returned subject knowledge audits and the results of the different parts of their interview. This then forms the first draft of their training plans so that they are able to start work on increasing and improving their subject knowledge and on developing a broader understanding of learning, before the course starts in September.
11. The vast majority of trainees has attained at a good or outstanding level over the last three years. The overwhelming majority make good progress, which in part is because of the highly effective pastoral and academic support they receive. This support helps a greater proportion of trainees to stay on the course to attain QTS. Senior leaders have an excellent understanding of each of the schools in the partnership and the strengths of the different mentors in schools. They personalise the trainees' placements to match their needs, prior experience and knowledge to the right school and mentor to give them the challenge and the support they need. The academic support and challenge are of high quality. Trainees' targets for development from each lesson are thoroughly followed up in subsequent lessons and weekly mentor meetings. These targets are sharp, challenging and enable the trainees to make good progress towards the Standards. Although costly to the SCITT, the allocation of resources to schools to enable the mentor to have a half a day release each week to spend quality time with each trainee is very effective. Mentors and trainees value this meeting because it enables them to spend protected time together to ensure they make the best possible progress. During the inspection, employing headteachers commented that trainees fit seamlessly into the school, help the school to move forward and are very well prepared for life in school.
12. Senior leaders, in addition to the weekly mentor meetings, have allocated resources to other aspects of the training. This is highly effective. Each trainee, for example, is provided with a laptop and a digital camera. In addition to excellent centre-based training in how to teach ICT, trainees enter school fully prepared to use different forms of ICT to teach and to assess children. As a result, trainees' lessons have a very good focus on pupils using ICT to learn. The SCITT works very well in partnership with the University Campus Suffolk and the University of East Anglia to provide access for trainees to their library services.

13. The quality of the training and of the partnership is outstanding. The course is very well structured to enable trainees to increase their skills and understanding over the year. There is a very effective mesh between school and centre-based training that enables trainees to make good progress and communication across the partnership is very strong. Throughout the year trainees make informed and critical evaluations of their teaching. Each lesson they teach, for example, is evaluated in terms of the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Each week they evaluate their progress against their targets and the impact their teaching has had on pupils. There is scope to extend trainees' ability to plan activities that stretch and challenge more able pupils. When mentors observe one of the trainees' lessons, they complete high quality subject-specific evaluations. This means a trainee knows exactly what they need to do to improve in each subject. Newly qualified teachers and trainees confirm the quality of centre-based training is very good, particularly in ICT, professional studies and in English. There is scope to improve the training for those trainees following the Early Years Foundation Stage specialism in order that a greater proportion understands how to plan effectively for child-initiated play. School-based tasks and assignments are very well designed to enable trainees to meet the Standards at a high level and to help them with their teaching in the future. One very useful assignment, for example, requires trainees to plan a week of lessons with adaptations to meet the needs of a pupil who arrives into the class at short notice being able to speak little or no English. Consequently, newly qualified teachers in the national survey rated their preparedness to teach pupils who have English as an additional language above average compared to other teacher training providers. The SCITT is already working to improve the quality of feedback to trainees on their assignments to deepen their critical thinking and so that they make rapid progress in their academic work.
14. Senior leaders invest a significant amount of time and resources into training for mentors. Training is differentiated for those new to mentoring and for those who are experienced. Mentors and professional tutors in school were highly complimentary about the quality of the training sessions and a few judged them to be the best training they have had since starting teaching. There is very little difference between the attainment or achievement of different groups of trainees. This is as a result of the very good and consistent mentoring they receive. Trainees are treated equally but the training and placements are designed to meet their individual needs. The equality and diversity policies of the SCITT are very good and as a result there are no incidents of harassment, no incidents of inequality of provision and all trainees are able to succeed.

The capacity for further improvement  
and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

15. At the last inspection the leadership of the primary SCITT was cited as a strength. This is still the case and the quality of leadership and management has improved further. This can be identified by the continuous improvement in trainees' outcomes over the last three years. The proportion of trainees attaining the Standards at a good and outstanding level is increasing year on year. The proportion of males being trained on the course and the proportion of applicants from under-represented groups is increasing. The proportion of trainees completing the course and attaining QTS has increased significantly since the last inspection and is now high.
16. One of the main reasons for the continuous improvement in trainees' outcomes is senior leaders' exceptionally rigorous quality assurance systems and strategic use of data. Each week, mentors in school send through information to senior leaders about the quality of trainees' teaching. This is tracked on graphs and charts for each individual trainee. Senior leaders then analyse the data to identify any patterns. Where a trainee is not making enough progress in their teaching or performing less well, additional support visits are put into place to tackle specific areas of relative weakness. As a result, the overwhelming majority of trainees make good progress. Senior leaders also evaluate the quality of mentoring each week and provide precise feedback to the mentors. They visit schools to provide extra training where, for example, lesson observations are not sharp or useful enough in helping the trainee to make progress. Tracking systems also enable senior leaders to identify which QTS Standards are being met outstandingly well by trainees and which Standards are not. This is done termly. As a result, centre-based trainers are able to focus on clusters of Standards or individual Standards for different groups of trainees and the overwhelming majority makes good progress.
17. There is a comprehensive system of evaluating the courses using a range of evidence from the tracking and assessment of trainees and evaluations completed by tutors, mentors, trainees, employing headteachers, the local authorities and external examiners. Over half the headteachers, for example, who employed a SCITT trainee, are asked to evaluate after eight months how well the SCITT prepared the trainee to teach in their first year. This evaluation is linked directly to the Standards. This enables the SCITT to track the quality of trainees' outcomes well into their first year of teaching and to amend the course to strengthen areas of relative weakness. NQTs in the annual survey for the Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) rated the training and their own outcomes higher than the national and sector average in a large number of categories.
18. Senior and module leaders have adapted the course very well to respond to national and local initiatives and priorities. Many of the tutors are at the forefront of national and local initiatives because they are consultants for the local authority. This results in, for example, trainees having a good understanding of the Rose review into early reading and of how to use this when they teach lessons in school. Senior leaders are highly effective when anticipating and responding to change. This is because the course modules are highly flexible which means tutors can adapt what they do with trainees to

tackle any areas of weakness in how they are meeting the Standards or to respond to national developments. Trainees for example, have gained a good understanding of changes that might be coming in the future to the curriculum. As a part of their training, they had a very good visit to schools in Suffolk which are judged to have an innovative or outstanding curriculum.

19. The SCITT senior leaders have a very clear strategic overview of initial teacher training and the needs of schools in Suffolk and Norfolk. They are driving changes in the course to meet the needs of schools and to raise the quality of trainees entering the profession. For example, mentors have been trained in how to evaluate trainees' teaching against the different layers of subject knowledge. As a result, mentors have become skilled and have developed their own practice in understanding subject knowledge for teaching and have used the research with their school staff.
20. Points for improvement identified at the last inspection have been fully resolved. There are now very robust systems in place, for example, to ensure the accuracy of assessments. In addition to weekly observations by mentors there are also observations from mentors at other schools, joint observations with tutors and joint observations with professional tutors. Mentors watch videos at their training sessions to moderate their judgements and all mentors match the trainee to extensive grade criteria for each of the QTS Standards.
21. The course improvement plan is an excellent document. Senior leaders identified which trainees' outcomes need to be improved and these form the five priorities for improvement over a three year period. The plan emanates out of the detailed evaluation of trainees' outcomes. It has clear and measurable success criteria and precise monitoring arrangements which are different from the arrangements to evaluate the success of the plan.



## 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?		1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1

### Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Primary
To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?		1
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		1

<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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