

# The Pilgrim Partnership SCITT

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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| Provider address | The Priory Centre<br>63 Newnham Avenue<br>Bedford<br>MK41 9QJ |
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| Lead inspector          | Philip Mann 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. The Pilgrim Partnership is an independent, autonomous, consortium of Bedfordshire Nursery and Lower Schools offering school centred initial teacher training (SCITT). This is a one year postgraduate course leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2; including a Postgraduate Certificate in Early Years Leadership validated by Anglia Ruskin University. The Partnership was accredited in December 2000 and the first cohort of trainees began studying in September 2001 and qualified in July 2002. There are currently 46 trainees.
4. The partnership also offers a one year postgraduate employment-based route with (QTS) for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. This provision was inspected at the same time and is the subject of a separate report.

5. Both courses were designed to provide a specific early years focus in response to the then local authority's educational development plan to support the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage in local schools. Both training routes share much of the course content taught at the centre and the same management structures.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Key strengths

6. The key strengths are:
  - the effective recruitment and selection procedures used to identify trainees with the potential to make good or better teachers
  - the high levels of commitment and quality of partnership schools that enable trainees to make good progress
  - the trainees' very good knowledge and understanding of the early years' curriculum which helps them to be reflective practitioners who are able to apply knowledge and skills effectively in the classroom
  - the cohesion and strength of centre-based and school-based training which enables trainees to link the theory and practice of teaching effectively
  - the excellent and innovative use of resources which enhances trainees' opportunities to further their academic and professional development
  - the management's excellent ability to anticipate change and modify provision to meet both local and national needs.

### Recommendations

7. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:
  - simplify and improve the systems for observing trainees in the classroom
  - increase the quality assurance role of professional tutors
  - improve trainees' opportunities to work with expert practitioners to ensure they are well prepared to teach in a diverse society and have a wider understanding of community cohesion.
8. In order to improve the way it plans and takes action for improvement, the partnership should:
  - use the excellent data it collects more effectively to plan actions that are specifically linked to trainee outcomes
  - set targets that are measurable with clearer time scales.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

9. The provider is effective in its aim to prepare trainees for teaching in local schools. The very practical nature of the course is combined effectively with a specific emphasis on early years practice. This ensures that the very large majority of trainees attain the Standards for QTS well and are ready to apply their skills within the context of local lower schools.
10. Procedures for the recruitment and selection of trainees with the potential to teach are good. All targets for recruitment are met. Data shows that an increasing number of candidates are recruited from under-represented groups. The proportion of men in primary is high and the number from minority ethnic groups is in line with sector levels. Key partnership stakeholders are fully involved in the well-designed and highly objective interview procedures. All trainees commented positively on the rigorous selection procedures. Carefully devised interview questions fully test the candidates' potential for teaching. The outcome of the interview process is diligently followed up with pre-course tasks, including detailed self-assessment against the Standards and online skills tests in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), and completed prior to start of the course. As a result, trainees make good progress from the outset.
11. The vast majority of trainees respond very well to the high expectations set for them to make good or better progress during the course. Trainees are professional in their approach, demonstrating a keenness to teach. They quickly build excellent relationships with pupils in their placement schools, displaying a growing confidence in the application of strategies to maintain good behaviour in lessons. Their knowledge of subjects in the National Curriculum is good and especially strong for teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Trainees plan lessons well to include aspects of the Every Child Matters agenda and ensure that work is matched to the different abilities of pupils. Most trainees make effective use of information and communication technology to support key teaching points. Some make very effective use of interactive whiteboards to fully engage pupils in their learning. Most trainees make effective use of time at the end of lessons to assess the progress of pupils. However, some lack the necessary confidence and experience to adjust the lesson focus in response to pupils and the use of learning reviews to facilitate good pace to lessons.
12. Good coherence exists between centre-based and school-based training to ensure the vast majority of trainees make good or better progress. The well structured, taught element of the course ensures that all trainees are kept abreast of local and national initiatives. An extensive range of training opportunities is offered through context learning at base schools, partner schools and visits to other educational settings. The impact and implications of the Rose, Williams and Byron Reviews, for example, are fully embedded into lectures, and implicitly referred to when trainees complete assignments. Good links are established between theory and practice, evident through detailed

lesson planning and well-written assignments. Issues related to inclusion, equality and diversity are addressed throughout the course.

13. Trainees are made fully aware of the skills required to teach pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, not all trainees get the opportunity to test these out through relevant practice in suitable schools and they are given limited insight into the promotion of community cohesion.
14. The formal mentoring system is effective in ensuring trainees make good progress against the Standards. It ensures that trainees are provided with consistent messages about their progress by making sure that targets and feedback are shared between the tutor, mentor and trainee. Assessment systems are thorough and keep track of trainees over a period of time. Initial assessments are very extensive and individualised to meet the needs of trainees. The termly assessments provide very detailed pen portraits of each trainee against the Standards, effectively summarising what needs to be achieved next. Good support mechanisms are available to ensure that trainees who are not making the progress expected receive more bespoke training such as additional tutorials and the opportunity to observe lessons. Targets are set regularly and followed up at mentor review meetings. These meetings form the backbone of school-based training and detailed records are monitored electronically by professional tutors and programme leaders. However, some inconsistencies exist in the quality of school based training. For instance, the quality of feedback from mentors ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. This is because some mentors focus too heavily on an overcomplicated lesson observation sheet rather than discussing in detail the quality of the pupils' learning experiences and trainee's achievement against the Standards.
15. Excellent resources and innovative use of ICT to increase sustainability fully support the achievements of trainees. Efficient use is made of both financial and human resources to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees. The centre provides a good venue for training and trainees have very good access to library facilities and web based materials. Schools within the partnership provide very good venues for training and the base schools provide an extra training resource for contextualised learning at the start of the academic year. Trainees have good access to laptops and hand held ICT equipment to support their development and aid communication with the centre.
16. The quality of provision across the partnership is good. The partnership agreement is very clear, encouraging whole school involvement. Key stakeholders such as headteachers are heavily involved in partnership activity. There is an extensive range of schools involved, including leading literacy schools and those judged as outstanding through inspection. Trainees and schools judge the communication with the centre to be very good because programme leaders are proactive and quick to respond to any concerns raised. The quality of mentor support for trainees is good because the provider funds time out of class to enable meetings between trainees and mentors to take place during the school day. All trainees report that the weekly review meetings generate excellent professional dialogue about their progress and the setting of new targets. However, some procedures are overly complex and sometimes

impede trainees from making outstanding progress. Furthermore, the provider is yet to make best use of professional tutors in ensuring consistency of training across the partnership through quality assurance.

17. Equality and diversity is effectively promoted. Pastoral support is excellent and there are no incidents of bullying or discrimination. Trainees state that individualised support and pastoral care are seen as real strengths. Flexibility is built into the course in order to ensure trainees with disabilities achieve their potential. Data is regularly analysed in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and disability, confirming no differences exist between the attainments of different underrepresented groups. Although support is individualised some placements are not best fit for some trainees and a small number of trainees are not sufficiently well prepared to teach pupils within a diverse society.

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

Grade: 2

18. The strong links with the employment based route into teaching facilitates efficient management of the SCITT provision. Programme leaders work closely together to ensure that the training programme is responsive to both local and national initiatives. Self-evaluation, although a little over generous in its judgements, is securely based on the detailed and systematic analysis of trainee outcomes, the monitoring of feedback from trainees and close scrutiny of TDA data such as the NQT survey. This is further supported by efficient financial management and the involvement of key stakeholders from the partnership in decision making.
19. The annual cycle of monitoring and self-evaluation involves all stakeholders and is monitored regularly by the Senior Management Team (SMT) who review trainee progress at every meeting. Furthermore, progress on the points for action in the development plan are reviewed regularly at SMT level and used to identify areas for future improvement. Reports from the external examiner and moderator provide detailed evaluative information related to the quality of provision with clear pointers for where to improve provision further. Despite a wide range of data being collected it is yet to be interrogated in depth to assess the impact of provision on the trainees' outcomes and identify areas of provision that need further improvement.
20. Leadership is excellent at anticipating change and being innovative in identifying and securing the necessary workforce and partnership development to meet the needs of local schools and trainees. National initiatives such as the Rose reviews for early literacy skills and the curriculum, the Williams report and the Every Child Matters agenda are covered well. Newly qualified teachers and employing headteachers interviewed during the inspection, all commented on the strength of trainees' knowledge of pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and their understanding and implementation of recommendations from recent national reviews. The

provider is also meeting the local need for high quality early year's practitioners due to trainees excellent knowledge of how young children learn and an ability to teach lessons which meet the needs of young children in the Early Year's Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

21. Programme leaders are constantly seeking innovative ways to improve provision using ICT and the drive to move to a paperless course is developing well. Data is used effectively to identify underperformance of trainees and initiate intervention for individuals. The provider is working closely with a software company to further develop an e-portfolio web based system and is currently in the second year of development. A wide range of data is gathered about the progress of trainees and stored electronically in a comprehensive e-portfolio. This e-portfolio platform has enhanced the opportunities for the quality assurance of training by school based trainers and professional tutors. Furthermore professional tutors can now track the activity of trainees to ensure deadlines are met. However, as yet, leaders are unable to interrogate the data it holds and this is a missed opportunity to support self-evaluation and further improvement.
22. Improvement planning is good overall. Leaders constantly seek ways of improving provision through dialogue and regular management meetings. Strategic aims are clearly identified and inform the phase development plan. This plan is based securely on feedback from trainees and schools and the analysis of data. It is not, however, clearly expressed in terms of improving outcomes for trainees. Although responsibilities are clearly identified to ensure lines of accountability and effective monitoring, success criteria and timescales are too general. Furthermore, they are not specifically linked to trainee outcomes, to facilitate the assessment of overall effectiveness.
23. The trend of improvement in outcomes for trainees, together with the systematic and effective processes for evaluation and development planning, indicate that the Pilgrim Partnership has good capacity for further improvement.



## 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?                            |  | 1       |
| 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 November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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