

Shotton Hall ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 8 June 2015 Stage 2: 1 December 2015

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Ofsted Inspectors in accordance with the 'Initial teacher education inspection handbook'. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2015.

The inspection draws on evidence from each phase and separate route within the ITE partnership to make judgements against all parts of the evaluation schedule. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is requires improvement; grade 4 is inadequate

	Primary and secondary QTS
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees?	1
The outcomes for trainees	1
The quality of training across the partnership	1
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

Primary and secondary routes

Information about the ITE partnership

- Shotton Hall School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) partnership is led by Shotton Hall Academy, an outstanding school that also leads a teaching school alliance. It was reconstituted in the academic year 2013/14 from the previous employment-based initial teacher training (EBITT) provision that operated as part of the LearnEd partnership. There has been new senior management from July 2013, and no staff, data or resources were transferred from the EBITT.
- The partnership's purpose is to train graduates to gain qualified teacher status (QTS) with a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), primarily to meet the teacher recruitment needs of the partnership's schools. The PGCE is delivered and validated by the University of Durham. The teaching school provision at Shotton Hall also provides continuing professional development for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) as well as experienced teachers. There are 29 schools in the partnership, with four graded by Ofsted as outstanding, 17 as good, seven requiring improvement and one not yet inspected, which provide training placements across seven local authorities.
- At the start of the academic year 2014/15, there were 38 secondary and 11 primary trainees enrolled. There were 24 'core' trainees, 23 trainees following a School Direct training route (one salaried) and two self-funded trainees.
- The primary course in 2014/15 focused on the Key Stage 2 age range (7–11). This has changed in 2015/16 to cover ages 5–11.
- Most secondary courses cover the 11–16 age range. The secondary subjects followed are computer science with information and communications technology, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education, science (chemistry), and science (physics). Business studies and health and social care courses cover the 14–19 age range.

Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors observed the teaching of three secondary trainees in one partnership school during stage 1 of the inspection. The teaching of four primary and 12 secondary NQTs was observed in four primary and four secondary schools during stage 2. Inspectors interviewed school-based mentors, headteachers, class teachers, professional tutors, NQT mentors, the Chief Executive of Shotton Hall Academy Trust, the director of Shotton Hall Teaching School Alliance, and partnership course leaders. Inspectors observed mentors delivering training feedback to trainees following jointly observed lessons.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books, trainees' files, course handbooks, trainee targets and NQT career entry development plans. Inspectors analysed information on trainees' progress and attainment, their course completion rates and subsequent employment rates. Inspectors took account of the partnership's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Inspectors checked that the necessary statutory requirements for safeguarding and initial teacher training (ITT) were met.
- Inspectors took account of 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire and also reviewed the partnership's own trainee evaluations of the programme.

Inspection team

John Menendez, Additional Inspector
Michael Maddison, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Rafferty, Additional Inspector
Brian Cartwright, Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathleen Harris, Ofsted Inspector

Lead inspector (stage 1)
Assistant lead inspector
(stages 1 and 2)
Team inspector (stage 1)
Lead inspector (stage 2)
Team inspector (stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the primary and secondary partnership are:

- NQTs who are fully committed to their vocation of teaching and who are proud of their training, proud of their pupils' achievement, and proud of the profession itself: they are professionals from day one
- the consistently high-quality planning by NQTs of lessons that address the full range of their pupils' learning needs and starting points
- the effective impact of centre-based training for inclusion and equality that leads to teaching that has a strong impact on pupils' social, moral and cultural understanding
- the strong subject knowledge of trainees and NQTs which gives them the confidence to plan imaginative approaches to teaching which interest, inspire and motivate pupils
- the determination of trainees and NQTs to resolve challenges as they seek continuous improvements in their teaching, linked to their resilience in the face of setbacks and their persistence in working to tight deadlines
- the breadth and depth of school-based training experiences across the full range of types of school, including schools requiring improvement and schools set in areas of challenging socio-economic circumstances
- the effective selection and ongoing development of mentors, and subject leaders who are drawn from the teaching school alliance's specialist leaders in education (SLEs)
- the effective and swift responses by partnership leaders in adapting and developing courses in the light of evidence from the frequent monitoring and evaluation of trainees' progress.

What does the primary and secondary partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

- improve the accuracy and relevance of NQT career entry development plans so that NQTs and their employing schools are better informed about what further skill development NQTs need and how to achieve it
- further improve the ability of trainees and NQTs to use ongoing assessment of pupils' progress to make in-lesson adjustments to teaching in order to better meet pupils' immediate learning needs.

Inspection judgements

1. The senior leadership of Shotton Hall Academy took swift and substantial action to resolve the difficulties of the previous LearnEd, EBITT partnership. The new courses and partnership arrangements from July 2013 were designed to meet the partnership's carefully considered characteristics for new teachers. Those characteristics extended the necessary teachers' standards by emphasising the whole-school duties and privileges of a teacher. The training that has been developed as a result of this blueprint has been outstandingly successful. Employers are unanimous in recognising that NQTs are 'professionals from day one'.
2. This effective strategic leadership and strong capacity for improvement are also evident through effective quality assurance of the programme, led by SCITT course managers and conducted collectively with senior staff of partnership schools. Leaders have taken brave decisions to change key course elements when evidence showed that trainees' progress was at risk, including a change in how school placements were used. As a result, trainees are assigned to a 'long' placement and a separate 'diagnostic' placement in a different school. A new trainee assessment model, linked to Ofsted's school inspection framework, sets a wider-ranging and higher bar compared with the previous model of simply meeting the teachers' standards. This is helping to ensure that trainees are fully ready for the real world of professional teaching, but has marginally reduced the proportion of trainees achieving the highest grade because it is harder to achieve. This is further testimony to the partnership's successful drive for excellence.
3. Each trainee's progress during the course is accurately assessed by mentors and regularly monitored by course leaders. Course leaders, therefore, have a deep knowledge of the strengths and areas for development of their trainees by the end of the course. However, that detailed knowledge is not consistently summarised in the formal 'NQT career development plan' that is shared with trainees and their employing schools. Some targets are too generalised, and the actions to resolve any shortfall too vague to be effective. For example, a target labelled 'behaviour management' did not specify exactly which aspect of behaviour management needed attention. Equally, the solution, to 'attend some CPD to glean some tips' lacked specific objectives.

4. Outcomes for trainees are outstanding and are well above sector averages. Trainees demonstrate excellent practice in the majority of the standards for teaching and all those related to their personal and professional conduct. About two thirds of all trainees are awarded the partnership's highest grade, with slightly higher results for secondary compared with the first year of the primary course. Almost all trainees complete the course, and almost all gain full-time teaching posts in schools, including every primary trainee. Where trainees withdraw from the course this has been for valid and serious personal circumstances. Over half of the trainees are employed in partnership schools, and most (85%) are employed in the region.
5. The partnership recruits a higher proportion of men than women compared with the sector. This is most noticeable on the primary course, where six of the 11 recruits are men. The age profile of recruits mirrors the sector, but there were no recruits from minority ethnic groups in 2014/15. This increased to 7% of the cohort in 2015/16 and the partnership has successfully established links with a national organisation working to promote teaching among potential candidates from minority backgrounds. There is no significant difference in outcomes between different groups of trainees, between different subjects, or between core and School Direct pathways.
6. The partnership conducts all necessary background checks on candidates. It meets the statutory requirements for providers of ITT. Leaders of partnership schools are deeply involved in the recruitment and selection process. They look with forensic intensity for emerging evidence that candidates will have the ability to become 'professionals from day one', irrespective of their academic record or past career experience.
7. Training is led by expert mentors, and modelled by the good and outstanding professional practice of the class teachers in the partnership schools. High professional expectations start at interview, where candidates are expected to dress as professional adults and use standard English. All trainees are based at Shotton Hall Academy when they are not in their placement schools. This gives them a chance to see how schools work, including 'yard' duties at breaktimes, and the start and end of the day, and in the management of pupil movements around a big school site. By the time they start their new jobs, they really do 'hit the ground running', as one employing headteacher noted.
8. A common, strong characteristic of primary and secondary NQTs is the way they take command of the classroom. They organise their classrooms very well to best meet their pupils' learning needs and effectively promote good progress for their pupils. They create a classroom ethos that values high academic standards and a culture of trying hard, and where pupils are encouraged to seek advice and support if the work seems too challenging at first. Classroom behaviour is managed very well as a result of consistently good training at all of their placements.

9. Consistently excellent training across phases and subjects has drilled into trainees the prime importance of planning lessons that cater for the range of pupils' learning needs. As a result, NQTs consistently prepare lessons that are interesting and well supported by suitably pitched resources. Trainees have good subject knowledge, which is expertly deployed in their lessons to inspire and motivate their pupils and promote good progress. For example, in a primary geography lesson, pupils had to analyse a range of plausible explanations for the demise of the Mayan civilisation. This required thoughtful debate between pupils and with the teacher that deepened pupils' understanding.
10. Mentors carefully monitor the development of trainees' subject knowledge during the course, referring back to initial knowledge audits that take place at recruitment. Subject-specific training has been provided by Carmel SCITT, but from September 2015, Shotton Hall subject leaders took over this role. This classroom-based subject training is now often delivered by specialist leaders of education (SLEs) accredited by the Shotton Hall Teaching School Alliance. The University of Durham delivers the pedagogical basis of subject-specific learning and runs the Masters-level assignments leading to the PGCE award. This outstanding combined training programme is well balanced because it couples the practical teaching expertise of school-based trainers with high-quality educational theory tuition from national experts in their fields.
11. The subject knowledge training ensures that primary trainees are well prepared to teach literacy and numeracy. They receive up-to-date training from leading experts, particularly around the concept of 'mastery' in mathematics, and have access to international evidence from China and Singapore. There is sufficient additional training to enable them to deliver science and foundation subjects well. This is tailored to their existing subject knowledge and forms an important focus for in-school training by mentors.
12. Trainees and NQTs are good at assessing the progress their pupils are making in lessons. They evaluate this information to inform subsequent planning well, and also to provide helpful feedback to individual pupils. On rare occasions, however, NQTs miss opportunities to then adapt their teaching as the lesson proceeds. This leads to a few pupils not having enough time to get to grips with the new ideas being taught and therefore at risk of being left behind.

13. An effective feature of training is the six three-day 'mini-placements' during the year, which give all trainees some classroom experience of schools in settings that are different from their two main teaching practice placements. It allows trainees to experience teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils who are not White British, pupils with moderate or severe special needs, pupils with disabilities, and pupils younger or older than the principal age range of trainees' respective courses. As a result, NQTs confidently deploy teaching assistants to support pupils with special needs and to challenge the most able. They accommodate the language needs of their pupils, and quickly establish effective communications with parents or carers from different social and cultural backgrounds.
14. Trainees learn about the key safeguarding and inclusion responsibilities of a teacher at a three-day, centre-based training symposium led by regional and national experts. This includes training on how to deal with bullying, e-safety, and the wider health and safety aspects of school activities, including the management of trips and visits. The training is especially effective in motivating trainees to bring these social, cultural and moral issues into their lessons. For example, an NQT used a newspaper's survey on public attitudes to same-sex marriage as source material for interpreting graphs, leading to questions for pupils to predict how attitudes might change in the future. An English trainee placed herself 'in role' as a pensioner, constructing a video diary to challenge her pupils' stereotypical views of old age. Another trainee has established a school debating society, and organised trips to Parliament.
15. The high expectations of partnership schools lead trainees to hold high expectations of themselves and what their pupils are capable of achieving. All NQTs are committed to continuing their professional development, and seek advice and guidance from their employing schools as much as they did from training mentors. They have developed a strong sense of commitment to teaching, alongside the desire to be even better at their profession, because staff in the partnership schools model this attitude. This shows itself in NQTs' seamless transition to professional life, including their involvement in extra-curricular activities, and their positive contribution to staff development and training in their employing schools.
16. All trainees take part in a 'triad' team-teaching approach at Shotton Hall, where they have to teach a literacy or numeracy topic within the context of their own subject specialism. This task is given at short notice early in the training year to mimic the pace and demand of full-time teaching and to test out trainees' resilience and perseverance. This approach also provides a context to help trainees establish a sustainable work–life balance. As a result, NQTs are coping well with the demands of their new job, another characteristic that is valued highly by their employing schools.

17. Primary NQTs visit one of the partnership schools for intensive subject training in physical education (PE), which is delivered by a local authority specialist adviser. The powerful impact of this training is immediately obvious in the number of sports clubs led by primary NQTs, and some have already taken on a role in coordinating PE in their schools.
18. Primary trainees learn to teach phonics as part of specialist subject training, and then through specific teaching practice in their placement schools. For most, this is arranged outside their allocated 7–11 age classes. In reality, the primary trainees receive ample opportunities to teach at Key Stage 1, experience early years settings, and also to visit Key Stage 3 classes. Because of this, provision for 2015/16 has now become '5–11' and covers both primary key stages.
19. The majority of NQTs take part in ongoing professional development training led by Shotton Hall Academy, and the remainder are part of the local authority's NQT support sessions. Shotton Hall course leaders contact every alumnus to check on their induction to their school. The feedback from these visits informs the content and timing of NQT sessions, and is further evidence of the seriousness given by the partnership to 'developing the professional beyond day 1'.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and newly qualified teachers' teaching:

Browney Academy, Browney	Durham County Council
Howletch Primary, Peterlee	Durham County Council
Ropery Walk Primary School, Seaham	Durham County Council
Sedgefield Community College, Sedgefield	Durham County Council
Shotton Hall, Peterlee	Durham County Council
The Hermitage Academy, Durham	Durham County Council
Walbottle Campus, Newcastle	Newcastle upon Tyne
West Lea Primary, Seaham	Durham County Council

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70215
Inspection number	10004341
Inspection dates	8–10 June 2015
Stage 1	
Stage 2	1–3 December 2015
Lead inspector	Brian Cartwright HMI
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	n/a
Previous inspection report	n/a
Provider address	The Academy at Shotton Hall Passfield Way Peterlee SR8 1AV

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our website for news, information and updates at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016

