

Keele and North Staffordshire Primary School Centred Initial Teacher Training Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 13/06/2016

Stage 2: 14/11/2016

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's 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 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 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

Overview of the ITE partnership

- Keele and North Staffordshire Primary SCITT (KNSPS) provides school-centred initial teaching training in the primary phase. The partnership operates in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire local authorities. There are currently 70 schools in the partnership. Seabridge Primary is the lead school and administrative centre. These schools are currently judged as outstanding, good and requiring improvement by Ofsted. Some are in challenging socio-economic circumstances. The partnership recruited its first trainees for the academic year 2014/15 after migrating from Keele University.
- KNSPS is a provider of School Direct and core postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) training routes. Of the 61 trainees at the time of stage 1 of the inspection, 48 trainees were on the School Direct route and 13 were on the core route. Training programmes for trainees on the School Direct and core routes are identical except for the application process and the organisation of school placements. One candidate in 2015/16 gained qualified teacher status (QTS) via the assessment only route. All trainees follow a programme to gain QTS and all have the opportunity to be certified by Keele University with a PGCE qualification. This can be at professional level or postgraduate level with 60 Masters credits awarded.
- Training focuses on the three to 11 age range. The specialisms currently offered are early years, English, foreign languages, humanities, mathematics, physical education and science.

Information about this inspection

- Over the two stages of the inspection, inspectors observed 11 trainees and nine newly qualified teachers (NQTs). They met with school leaders, trainee mentors, school-based induction tutors, trainees, NQTs and former trainees in 12 partnership schools and two employing schools.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the partnership's senior leadership team and strategic board, as well as with staff, trainees and NQTs from some schools that were not visited during the inspection. Inspectors visited trainee teaching sessions and observed part of the interview process for the next cohort of trainees.
- Inspectors reviewed the partnership's self-evaluation information and evidence provided to support this. They scrutinised evidence relating to training and the assessment of trainees, together with a wide range of partnership documentation. This included the partnership's pre-course compliance checks on trainees to ensure they have the correct

qualifications and experience and are safe to work with children and pupils. An inspector analysed trainees' responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Stuart Bellworthy HMI, lead inspector

Heather Simpson HMI, assistant lead inspector

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- Strong collaboration between all members of the partnership produces highly employable, reflective teachers who demonstrate strengths in all of the teachers' standards. Trainees are professional, have secure subject knowledge, and set expectations which motivate pupils. They plan and teach well-structured lessons.
- Very high completion, employment and success rates are features of the outstanding outcomes achieved for trainees.
- Leaders respond rapidly and comprehensively to feedback from both trainees and NQTs. Trainees', NQT and staff surveys support leaders' views of the outstanding success of the partnership.
- The partnership has a strong ethos developed around meeting local and regional teaching needs. Trainees are trusted and valued as 'associate teachers'.
- The course programme is well designed, intellectually rigorous and readily adapted to meet trainees' needs. Additional support for trainees is rapidly put in place where it is needed. Trainees' transition between placements is particularly well supported.
- Successful arrangements are in place for schools to play a full role in monitoring and further developing the partnership, including through a proactive and inclusive strategic board.
- The pursuit of excellence is clear and supported effectively by all those who work closely with the partnership, including teaching alliances, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent local authorities, Keele University and schools.
- The partnership's strapline is 'rooted in evidence, reaching for excellence'. Leaders ensure that it does exactly that, by leaving no stone unturned in ensuring that trainees receive the high-quality training, support and challenge they require to be successful teachers.

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

The partnership should:

- further embed new arrangements for the professional development of mentors to ensure that all are highly reflective in offering well-focused feedback to trainees following observations of their teaching
- develop a specialist training programme for working with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to further meet a local need.

Inspection judgements

1. The director of KNSPS has a relentless determination to continually develop, review and improve the effectiveness of the partnership. She is ably supported by a senior leadership team which is dynamic, visionary and has an unerring moral purpose to provide high-quality teachers in the Keele and Stoke-on-Trent area. The vast majority of the partnership's NQTs are employed in this area, although some find employment elsewhere. Wherever they are based, all NQTs from the partnership have access to high-quality support, care and nurture after completing their course. Consequently, completion, success and employment rates are consistently above the national average.
2. The partnership's strategic board has a passion for excellence, provides strong strategic direction and holds the senior leaders to account for achieving ambitious improvement plans. The board is made up of senior leaders of partnership schools, the Keele University PGCE director and representatives from Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire local authorities. The KNSPS leaders and staff provide a very distinctive and inclusive approach to what they see as a family of partner schools, local organisations (such as the local authority), trainees and former trainees. Consequently, all stakeholders in the partnership are highly informed and supportive of the ITE provision. The KNSPS administrative team establishes and maintains close relationships with partnership schools, trainees and former trainees. Leaders demonstrate strong capacity to sustain and further improve the outcomes for trainees and the partnership as a whole.
3. A comprehensive programme of quality assurance, review and development planning supports continuous improvement exceptionally well. Leaders' drive and ability to be flexible and respond robustly to any emerging issues means that trainees quickly benefit from the improvements made. Trainees, NQTs and partner school leaders consistently provide extremely positive feedback regarding the responsiveness, support and personal approach of KNSPS.
4. Partner school leaders recognise the benefits of the partnership for

- both the professional development opportunities it affords their staff and because it provides well-trained teachers. The partnership holds training opportunities such as 'research breakfasts' which are open to all and regularly attended by staff from partner schools. These events enable best practice to be shared and have a broader pedagogical impact. In addition, the partnership encourages mentors and specialist leaders of education (SLEs) to further their career progression by participating in an accredited 'reflecting on practice' masters module so that they can then lead ITE training sessions.
5. Regular visits from personal tutors ensure that judgements of trainees by mentors are consistent across partnership schools. Thorough moderation arrangements make sure that assessments are accurate. Joint moderation between school placements by mentors further supports consistency and helps to provide a smooth transition for trainees between placements. As a result of feedback from stage 1 of this inspection, 'to improve the consistency of "teacher educators"' (mentors) expectations and sharp feedback to trainees', leaders produced a robust response. This included establishing a joint meeting between trainees and mentors at the beginning of the year to share the expectations of all roles, and the use of a training video to provide a model of effective feedback following lesson observations. Inspectors found evidence that the consistency of mentoring has improved for the current trainees. Nonetheless, leaders agreed with inspectors that these new arrangements are not yet embedded fully to ensure that all mentors offer the highest-quality feedback on teaching practice that is sharply focused on pupils' progress.
 6. Leaders set high expectations for applicants and have established very rigorous recruitment procedures. Recruitment interviews and multi-stage panels always include partner school leaders. This approach ensures that partnership schools know that all trainees will be of high quality. The rigour of the assessment process is clearly demonstrated by the accurate evaluation of trainee potential at the selection stage being reflected in the final outcomes of the training programme. Highly effective recruitment, training and retention ensures that the partnership is closely supporting regional recruitment needs. The partnership works closely with two local special schools, where the recruitment of specialist teachers is a difficulty. An example of the partnership leaders' moral determination to meet local needs are their appropriate plans to provide a specialist training programme in working with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 7. The partnership actively encourages more people to become primary school teachers. They have involved local pupils, partnership leaders, a local celebrity and an MP to support their recruitment drive. The pupils from Seabridge Primary School made a film about their recipe for 'marvellous teachers', which included 'a bottle full of knowledge so that they can be an inspiration and open up our minds'.

8. Schools in the partnership provide education in different socio-economic situations. This ensures that the partnership helps to prepare trainees to teach effectively in schools in a range of potentially challenging circumstances. Additionally, the partnership works closely with a small number of schools whose overall effectiveness is currently judged as requires improvement by Ofsted. Leaders of schools and the partnership are also keen that trainees are able to experience some of the more unusual challenges faced by schools, such as temporary relocations due to building issues.
9. The partnership is fully compliant with the requirements for ITE and has robust systems in place to check and verify this. Safeguarding requirements are fully met and checked twice by separate partnership staff. The partnership ensures that equality of opportunity is a high priority by including this in recruitment and selection practice, through support for trainees and through ensuring that trainees understand the importance of equality and diversity in their own work. The partnership provides a highly personal approach to ensuring that both current and former trainees are supported through the course, even in the unusual event that they are initially unsuccessful.
10. Outcomes for trainees in the first two years of the KNSPS partnership have been outstanding, with minimal differences between groups of trainees or between subjects. Inspectors visited trainees and NQTs across the range of subject specialisms and found no differences in the high quality of their readiness to teach well across the primary curriculum. Completion and employment rates over the last two years were well above the national average. Trainees are able to demonstrate excellent practice in a majority of the teachers' standards, especially those related to personal and professional conduct. Of the very high percentage of trainees employed, half of the 2015/16 cohort of trainees gained employment in the three local authorities that the partnership serves closely. Of those, three quarters were in partnership schools.
11. Inspection evidence shows that NQTs are confident, skilled at creating high-quality learning environments and demonstrate a secure knowledge of how to adapt teaching to meet the varying needs of learners, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The partnership ensures that trainees are very well equipped with the skills they need to teach across the primary curriculum, especially phonics, literacy, mathematics and physical education. Trainees also typically have strong classroom management skills, including ensuring that pupils behave well and knowing what to do if there are any concerns about bullying. Senior leaders and induction tutors in employing schools say that KNSPS's NQTs are exceptionally well prepared for their teaching posts, demonstrating strong subject knowledge and classroom management skills. These qualities ensure that the NQTs can adapt easily to the individual

- requirements and expectations of the schools in which they are employed.
12. Trainees use assessment information confidently to plan their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities and starting points. Inspectors found that NQTs' assessment skills improved from stage 1 of this inspection, because they received further training regarding the changes to the national assessment measures and had used their skills to quickly adapt to their current school's assessment systems. Training ensures that NQTs are fully aware of the needs of all groups of pupils including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, NQTs check the progress of different groups carefully and teach lessons that both challenge and support pupils well.
 13. High-quality training and placements support trainees' progress effectively during an intense course. A consistently high proportion of trainees achieve excellent outcomes by the end of the training programme. Some NQTs have the confidence to plan exciting and inspiring lessons with high expectations for pupils' learning and progress. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson about integers and scaling, the NQT ensured that all pupils were highly engaged and clear about their tasks. She planned a well-structured lesson and made effective use of a teaching assistant to support and assess pupils during the lesson. Consequently, pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson and made progress in developing their mathematics skills.
 14. Training is high quality, research driven and underpinned by strong academic and pastoral support. All trainees achieve the PGCE element of the programme. This provides high-quality intellectual development with a strong emphasis on philosophy, and is supported strongly by Keele University. This is seen by the partnership stakeholders as an essential component in the professional development of the trainees.
 15. Teaching placements are well organised in contrasting primary school settings. All trainees undertake placements in both key stage 2 and key stage 1 or Reception, giving them teaching experience across the primary age range. KNSPS staff complete quality assurance visits to all placements to ensure that both mentors and trainees know what is expected of them. Where rare placement adjustments need to be made, KNSPS staff resolve these quickly and effectively. All trainees visit a special school as part of the course and a high number of trainees then request a special school placement. Trainees are also given the exciting opportunity to go on a trip to France, learning how they would plan a residential trip for pupils. This broad, inspirational training enables the partnership to consistently produce well-rounded, highly employable teachers.
 16. Trainees have a good knowledge of how to keep children safe by completing safeguarding modules such as 'Prevent' training and gaining a Level 1 safeguarding certificate as part of their teacher

- training course. They understand their responsibilities and know what actions to take if they have any concerns about pupils. This provides a secure starting point for trainees when they become NQTs and is highly valued by employers.
17. Trainees are given excellent guidance to develop their teaching skills through the clear and effective development targets they are set and through the support they receive from subject experts and personal tutors. Assessment of trainees against the teachers' standards is rigorous, thorough and accurate. High-quality support and nurture continues following the course, especially for those NQTs in partnership schools. Both trainees and employers say the assessment only route provides a good balance of rigorous assessment and practical support.
 18. Trainees' responses to the 2016 Ofsted trainee online questionnaire were extremely positive. This provides strong support for both trainees' and leaders' views that all aspects of the training are of high quality and prepare trainees to teach very well. Trainees regard all aspects of their training positively, especially the comprehensive and highly personal approach they receive.

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

Ball Green Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent

Barlaston CofE First School, Staffordshire

Blurton Primary School (now Meadows Primary Academy), Stoke-on-Trent

Forsbrook CofE Primary School, Staffordshire

Hassell Community Primary School, Staffordshire

Hempstalls Primary School, Staffordshire

Kemball School, Stoke-on-Trent

Knypersley First School, Staffordshire

Langdale Primary School, Staffordshire

Seabridge Primary School, Staffordshire

St Chad's CE Primary School, Staffordshire

St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent

The Willows Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent

Thursfield Primary School, Staffordshire

ITE partnership details

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	Stage 2 14/11/2016
Lead inspector	Stuart Bellworthy, HMI
Type of ITE partnership	School centred ITT
Phases provided	Primary
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Previous inspection report	Not applicable
Provider address	Seabridge Primary School Roe Lane Newcastle under Lyme ST5 3PJ

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