

# Swindon SCITT

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A secondary initial teacher training  
full inspection report  
2007/08

Managing inspector  
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## Introduction

The Swindon School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) consortium works in partnership with 10 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses in the 11-16 age range. It offers training in design and technology, English, information and communications technology (ICT), mathematics, and science. At the time of the inspection there were 19 trainees.

## Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a full inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Main inspection judgements

Standards achieved by trainees: Grade 2

Quality of training: Grade 2

Management and quality assurance: Grade 2

The next inspection of this provider will take place in accordance with the Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework.

## Key strengths

- trainees' relationships with pupils and staff in schools and their understanding of the wider role of the teacher
- trainees' ability to evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress and to use this to improve teaching and learning
- the prompt response to externally and internally identified issues to bring about improvements in provision
- the arrangements for mentors to meet and plan how to address trainees' individual needs
- the quality assurance of school-based training
- the leadership and management of the consortium.

## Points for action

- ensuring all trainees have sufficient experience of teaching Year 11 classes.

## Points for consideration

- increasing trainees' knowledge of how to extend and challenge gifted and talented pupils
- improving mentors' setting of targets for developing trainees' knowledge, understanding and skills
- developing subject-specific strategic and longer-term improvement planning.

## Standards achieved by trainees

1. Trainees' relationships with pupils and staff in schools and their understanding of the wider role of the teacher are outstanding. They set pupils high expectations and are very committed to helping them achieve as well as they can. They treat pupils fairly, consistently and with respect. As a result, pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour in trainees' lessons are good. Trainees establish very good collaborative working relationships with teachers and teaching assistants. They regularly share good practice and ideas with them, particularly within subject teams, taking the opportunity to play a full part in department meetings and developing subject resources. Trainees make very good contributions to the wider school community in their placement schools through assisting in a range of general school activities. Their communication with pupils, colleagues and parents is highly effective. Trainees have a good awareness of the professional duties of teachers and of specific school policies and procedures.

2. The ability of trainees to evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress and to use this to improve teaching and learning is strong. They reflect very well on their practice and undertake extensive evaluation of their lessons. Many trainees' evaluations are outstanding and focus sharply on pupils' learning. Trainees respond very well to feedback and act on this to improve their practice; they have been very responsive to guidance from school trainers. Opportunities to attend subject and whole school training activities are taken enthusiastically and demonstrate trainees' commitment to develop professionally. They exhibit a strong motivation to succeed and to achieve high standards in their work. However, only a few trainees regularly and critically engage in more creative and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

3. Trainees have a good knowledge and understanding of a range of teaching and learning strategies including those for effective behaviour management. They know how and when to employ these effectively to meet the needs and learning styles of different groups of pupils. Trainees strive hard to ensure all pupils work to their potential; in lessons, trainees effectively support and challenge pupils who are off task or making slow progress. Trainees generally have a good command of the subject and professional knowledge needed to teach their subject effectively. This is weaker in the areas they have not had much opportunity to teach during the course. Trainees are familiar with the range of national guidance on their subjects and have a good understanding of the Secondary Strategy. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are generally developed well. Trainees make particularly good use of interactive white boards to support teaching and learning.

4. The trainees' awareness of how motivation and emotional, social and cultural issues impact on pupils' development and well-being is secure. They consider well the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or for whom English is an additional language. Trainees' knowledge of how to extend and challenge gifted and talented pupils is less secure and has been restricted by limited identification of and access to these pupils. The promotion of equal

opportunities in schools and diversity issues are understood well by trainees. They also have a good understanding of the current legal requirements regarding the safeguarding of pupils and know whom to contact about child protection issues.

5. Trainees' lesson plans include clear and suitably challenging learning objectives. They are structured carefully, with relevant and well chosen content and suitable starter and plenary activities. Plans take good account of pupils' prior achievements, are well matched to their abilities, build effectively on previous lessons and identify suitable resources. Opportunities for meeting the different needs of pupils and for assessment are usually included in trainees' plans but are not always implemented fully in their teaching. Plans take good account of pupils' prior achievements. Resources are chosen and used wisely.

6. A number of strengths are exhibited in trainees' teaching. They use a range of teaching styles including individual tasks, group work and whole class activities. Lesson objectives are shared well with pupils, good explanations and instructions are provided and questioning is used proficiently. Trainees create supportive learning environments in their classrooms and health and safety issues are well considered.

7. Trainees' monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress is good. They have developed a secure understanding of different forms of assessment, including peer and self assessment, and use this well to inform their planning and teaching. Through their involvement in marking internal examinations and contributing to the moderation of external coursework they have gained a clear grasp of National Curriculum levels of attainment and GCSE assessment criteria. Trainees mark pupils' work regularly and provide them with good guidance on how it can be improved. They keep detailed records of their assessments and use these effectively to provide clear oral and well written reports for parents and carers.

## The quality of training

8. The structure and content of the course is good and designed effectively to ensure trainees meet the Standards. Weaknesses in the structure of the ICT training, identified in the previous inspection, have been addressed. School placements are timed and organised well to provide suitable and complementary experiences for trainees; however, opportunities to teach Year 11 classes are limited for a few trainees. Central training is up to date and has evolved well in response to trainees' evaluations and in response to National Curriculum changes. There is an appropriate balance between central and school based training. The content of the professional studies programme and subject training is wide ranging and includes good coverage of relevant key educational and subject topics.

9. The different elements of the course link well with each other, central professional studies and subject training are complementary and there is good coherence between central and school-based training. In most cases, school-based professional studies programmes are planned to build on the central course. Subject

mentors structure the support and guidance they provide to complement central subject training and to enable trainees to undertake the centrally set school-based tasks. Assignments make a good contribution to trainees' progress in attaining the Standards.

10. The quality of central professional studies and subject training is good. Staff from partner schools and external speakers deliver professional studies well and use their knowledge of their own schools and national initiatives effectively to extend trainees' knowledge and understanding. Central subject training, provided mainly by the well qualified and experienced subject leaders, is informative and challenging. Modelling of good practice is used effectively and sessions employ a range of learning styles. In the best sessions, questioning probes trainees' learning well and encourages a high level of reflection. Trainees engage fully with the training and acquire the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills for meeting the Standards. The time constraints on central subject training sometimes restrict in-depth discussion of a topic's implications for classroom practice.

11. Good quality mentoring in schools supports trainees well in attaining the Standards. Subject mentors execute their roles effectively and meet regularly with the trainees to review their training. Mentors are thorough and sensitive in the guidance they give trainees, providing constructive and practical suggestions for improvement. Lesson observation feedback is often extensive, detailed and increasingly focused on the Standards and subject issues as the course progresses. The quality of a minority of mentors' work is less strong; for example, target setting is sometimes insufficiently linked to the Standards or to the specific knowledge, understanding or skill the trainees need to develop.

12. Trainers identify trainees' prior experiences, relevant knowledge and understanding well and use this information to respond to their individual training needs. The central course content and school placements are, where appropriate, suitably modified to do this. Subject knowledge audits are generally used well to identify trainees' subject enhancement needs. Most audits are comprehensive, detailed and regularly reviewed, particularly those for design and technology trainees. In other subjects, such as science and ICT, they are more limited and not always used fully by trainees and mentors. Information on trainees' progress in their first school placement is used effectively to inform their second placement. In addition, an outstanding feature of the monitoring of trainees' progress is the way mentors from both school placements meet in order to plan how to address trainees' individual needs in the second placement. A joint lesson observation, carried out by both mentors informs this process very well.

13. Trainees' progress against the Standards is monitored closely and effectively by the use of well constructed professional development profiles and practice of teaching reports. Procedures for identifying and supporting trainees who are causing concern are robust. The final assessment of trainees is thorough. Judgements are made systematically by mentors and subject leaders who are guided by clear grade descriptors. Good use is made of internal assessors, external consultants and the external examiner to provide effective internal and external moderation. Subject-

specific moderation has been strengthened this year. As a result, consistent and accurate assessments are made of trainees' attainment of the Standards.

## Management and quality assurance

14. Selection procedures are devised and implemented well. As a result, good calibre trainees are recruited, completion rates are generally satisfactory and employment rates for those who finish the course are high. Interviews are conducted effectively and decisions made on candidates are considered carefully, particularly the reasons for the rejection of candidates. The consortium is successful in recruiting trainees from minority ethnic groups. Subject leaders make good use of subject knowledge audits to probe trainees' subject expertise at interview and suitably designed pre-course tasks are set to prepare trainees for the start of their training.

15. The highly effective way in which the SCITT manager plans and manages the course ensures that trainees receive good training and attain good outcomes. Together with the SCITT policy committee, he sets clear expectations and provides clear direction to all involved in the training. There is good communication across the consortium and school trainers are highly appreciative of the prompt and effective response from the central team to queries and concerns they raise.

16. Good opportunities exist for trainers and trainees to contribute to the management of the training programme through the policy committee and the range of other meetings and events held to review and develop the course. The committee has a clearly defined role, which it executes well, and this enables its representatives to undertake suitable strategic course review and development. This has led to beneficial changes to the course since the last inspection; these have improved the quality of training.

17. The consortium's partnership agreement explains clearly the roles and responsibilities of all who contribute to provision. It is suitably cross-referenced to the requirements in the course handbooks. Trainees receive the same documentation as the trainers so they are fully aware of their entitlement. Schools are given clear information about the content of central training to enable them to better tailor their training to it. The subject course handbooks are mostly well structured and provide helpful guidance on how the programmes are to be delivered. However, some are less detailed than others and not as specific in their guidance for school-based training. The schools in the partnership are generally suitable bases for ITT and most have strong subject departments, though the subject curriculum for design and technology in some partner schools does not reflect contemporary developments in the subject. Professional tutors and subject mentors are suitably experienced to provide ITT and the training they receive gives them a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.



18. Subject leaders have a strong commitment to their role and responsibilities. Within the limitations of the time they have for their work, they manage the subject elements of the training well and their effectiveness is growing, particularly in the management and quality assurance of school-based training. Established subject leaders have a good knowledge of partner schools and subject mentors' backgrounds. While some subject leaders engage in activities to gain a wider understanding of ITT in their subject not all of them take the opportunities available to them to do this. Subject consultants provide them with effective guidance and support and this makes a positive contribution to the quality of subject provision.

19. The consortium employs a suitable range of quality assurance procedures that have been strengthened recently, particularly the role of professional tutors in monitoring the quality of the work of subject mentors. It has responded promptly and effectively to external evaluation. As a result, good progress has been made in improving the course since the last inspection and during this inspection. Central training is monitored regularly and subject mentors' weekly meetings with trainees are evaluated systematically and highly effectively by the quality assurance manager. The latter is a significant strength and mentors respond positively to the formal feedback they receive; it provides particularly good guidance to new mentors. Central tutorials with trainees are used well to evaluate the course and a quick response is made to rectify concerns raised by trainees. Whole-school quality assurance visits undertaken every three years by the SCITT manager and a headteacher are thorough and identify key areas for longer term development.

20. A good range of procedures for evaluating the trainees' and trainers' views on the quality of provision are used and these are analysed well. Other evaluative data and benchmarking are also suitably considered. This evidence is drawn on effectively to identify areas for development and devise suitable action. The comprehensive course improvement plan is regularly reviewed and revised. However, strategic and longer-term subject-specific improvement planning is underdeveloped. The consortium is not complacent and clearly has the capacity to improve provision further.