

Devon Primary SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Ringswell Centre Ringswell Avenue Exeter EX1 3EG
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Inspection dates	16 – 19 March 2009
Lead inspector	Chris Nye HMI

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's 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

The provider

3. Devon Primary SCITT works in partnership with 26 primary schools to provide primary initial teacher education (ITE) across the 5 – 11 age range. Partnership schools are spread over a wide geographical area and include schools that serve both rural and urban settings. Trainees who successfully complete the one-year course are awarded qualified teacher status and a professional graduate certificate in education (PGCE) by the University of Plymouth. At the time of the inspection there were 31 trainees on the course.

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
 - the trainees' and trainers' high levels of self motivation which result in trainees making outstanding progress and a highly cohesive course
 - the leadership of the training programme
 - the selection of high quality trainees with excellent potential to teach
 - the accurate assessment of trainees' progress
 - the use of the outcomes of trainees' assessments to inform improvements in training

- the very effective quality assurance procedures.

Recommendations

5. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:

- strengthen links between the focus of lesson observations and trainees' individual needs to accelerate trainees' progress further
- improve the quality of strategic planning further by incorporating more measurable success criteria related to training so it is clear when successful outcomes have been achieved.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

6. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. In the last three years more than half the trainees attained the highest grade with 65% achieving this in 2007-08. The provider's detailed progress records, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that the current cohort is on track to achieve similar results this year.

7. Recruitment and selection are strengths of the provision because they accurately identify those candidates with the greatest potential to be good or better teachers. Suitably qualified candidates apply for the course and the provider's publicity material successfully attracts candidates from groups, which are under-represented in the primary phase, such as men. Excellent documentation ensures that candidates are well prepared for the rigorous selection procedures, a strength of which is the way in which trainees' potential to teach is accurately evaluated. Wide ranging activities set against rigorously applied criteria result in a wealth of useful information about each candidate being collected during the selection process. This information is exceptionally well used to select only the most suitable candidates and to inform training. It also provides accurate data which establish a base line against which trainees' progress in each of the Standards can be measured at four assessment points during the course. Pre-course work helpfully prepares trainees for the course, especially by auditing their skills and subject knowledge. This in turn ensures training accurately focuses on individual needs. Very few trainees withdraw from the course, and those that do are well supported; for example, by being offered deferment wherever practicable. The number of trainees successfully gaining employment as teachers is high.

8. The tracking of trainees' progress is outstanding as a result of regular and robust evaluation. A recent external examiner's report judged the provider's assessment procedures to be 'exemplary'. Inspection evidence supports the view that trainees make excellent progress, and the resulting grade profile clearly demonstrates how well trainees develop their skills and professional understanding against the Standards. Subject knowledge trackers are used very effectively to target

additional support for groups and individuals. This is done through well focused subject knowledge workshops. Trainees' end-of-course evaluations are consistently and overwhelmingly positive; in particular they highlight as strengths the prominence of school based training, the quality of centre based training, the partnership's commitment to improvement and the excellent course structure.

9. The provider makes very effective and efficient use of the resources available to achieve the best possible outcomes for trainees. The recent move to Exeter has helped in the organisation of central training and trainees and schools welcome the greater ease of transport and accessibility. Resources are well focused on supporting trainees' needs, for example by a laptop loan system and excellent information technology and administrative support. Experienced and well qualified local authority advisors provide excellent central training. The allocation of resources to high quality partnership schools is well considered and helps ensure schools show continuing high levels of commitment to the training.

10. As a result of the high standard of training both at the centre and in partnership schools and the excellent cohesion between the two, the provision across the partnership is of very high quality. Levels of expectation of trainees are high, but so is the support that they receive. Trainees are given an appropriate degree of professional autonomy and, with the support of central and school based staff, accept responsibility for evaluating, monitoring and meeting their training needs. Learning conversations play a critical part in this process of evaluation, reflection and change. This process is well embedded at all levels in the partnership. It runs in tandem with the termly tracking of potential to teach as measured against the Standards and the weekly seminar meetings which are central to the success of the school-based training. This range of strategies is used to structure centrally taught sessions to meet the differing needs of trainees and to inform the provision of subject surgeries.

11. The provider has taken effective action to ensure trainees are well prepared in respect of national priorities such as teaching letters and sounds and using and applying mathematics. Furthermore, training ensures that trainees have the intellectual capacity, determination and skills to keep themselves up-to-date and well informed. Tutors evaluate their own practice rigorously and seek to further improve in light of trainees' and peer evaluations. As a result of an excellent provision, trainees have a very good understanding of the primary curriculum, and are confident and increasingly able classroom practitioners. Lesson planning is particularly good and results in pupils making good progress in their learning.

12. Lessons are regularly observed and provide detailed and graded assessment of trainees teaching against the Standards. However, the focus of each lesson observation is not always made sufficiently clear and does not consistently link to individual development needs.

13. Monitoring of central and school based training is very robust and training and support for both school based tutors and class teachers is detailed and judged by participants to be of the highest quality. For example, school based tutors regularly

meet together and new tutors are well supported through additional targeted training and a 'buddy' system which allows them to be matched with an experienced tutor. Class teachers also receive training annually. Communication across the partnership is excellent. Documentation is of very high quality and trainers and trainees report that when problems arise, they are rapidly responded to and resolved. The extensive use of the provider's portal is of considerable help in overcoming issues of distance. There is focused training on the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity so that trainees are well prepared and confident to teach in culturally and geographically diverse settings. Part of the outstanding impact of the provider's commitment to equalities can be seen in the meticulous tracking of trainees' progress and the high levels of pastoral and academic support. Trainees say they are highly valued as individuals and their learning needs are very well met.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 1

14. The provider demonstrates outstanding capacity to sustain and further improve the already high outcomes for trainees. This is because trends over recent years show that there is an impressive record of improvement and high quality outcomes have been maintained. There are numerous examples of how detailed monitoring and evaluation have led to succinct and effective plans to resolve issues and improve outcomes for trainees. The way in which the move of the training centre to Exeter has been accomplished with minimal disruption to training is a good illustration of this.

15. The provider accurately and comprehensively reviews its own practice. The detailed data collected by the provider demonstrates that there are no significant differences between different groups of trainees. The outstanding leadership and commitment of the programme manager and senior tutor are inspirational for both trainers and trainees. The involvement of all partnership school headteachers, all of whom serve on management committees, and the commonly held vision of how the provider can develop mean that there is an effective balance between challenge and support. As a result of this, and the meticulous attention to detail in all aspects of the provider's work, the drive for continuous improvement is excellent.

16. The provider's self evaluation is accurate and incisive, drawing upon a wide range of internal and external evaluations including those of all partnership schools, trainers, and both past and present trainees. Detailed consultation with school and centre based trainers, as well as the close links with Devon Local Authority, ensures that the views of all those concerned are taken into account when evaluating the success of the training and when planning future improvements. The rigorous systems of quality assurance ensure that high standards of training are maintained, and the outcomes usefully inform improvement planning. For example, the focus on personalised learning results from the exemplary systems of tracking the assessment of trainees' progress. Regular visits to schools by the programme manager and

senior tutor follow a strict pattern against clear criteria. These visits feature joint observations, interviews of trainees, mentors and class teachers and the scrutiny of trainee files. This helps to ensure consistency in assessing trainees' progress and attainment; inspection evidence confirms that such assessment is accurate.

17. Trainees' evaluations are very positive, with a high percentage judging training, pastoral support, assessment and feedback as outstanding. Detailed and on-going analysis of evaluations and external examiners' reports by, for example, the examination board enables the provider to identify swiftly where improvements are needed. For instance, the need for further training in assessing pupils' work and progress was indicated last year and this is now central to all subject and school based training.

18. Leadership at all levels anticipates change extremely well, and the positive attitude modelled by leaders is reflected in the attitudes of trainees seen during the inspection. This is not only in respect of the training, but also with regard to supporting partnership schools in anticipating and identifying change and responding to local and national priorities. There is, for example, clear evidence of how the provider has responded to the Rose and Williams Reviews on improving the teaching of English and mathematics. Former trainees interviewed during the inspection confirmed that the provider was highly proactive in providing training in teaching letters and sounds. This has been further developed this year with training for class teachers which ensures a common entitlement for all trainees with regard to support for teaching of early reading. During the inspection, inspectors observed trainees confidently and successfully teaching children early reading skills.

19. Strategic planning is clear, of high quality and focuses on priorities that have been identified as the result of rigorous evaluation and monitoring. The action plans that result are well considered. For each priority there is a clear rationale as to why it is a priority which links to monitoring and evaluation outcomes. Actions are well planned with personnel, timescales and resources all clearly indicated. Success criteria which relate directly to trainees' teaching and assessment are clear and measurable against outcomes for trainees. Some of the success criteria which relate to training are less well defined. For example, one priority indicates that 'All trainees develop good knowledge, understanding and practical skills to support diversity, inclusion and global awareness'. This does not indicate clearly enough how the provider will know when this will have been achieved because it does not define what 'good' knowledge and understanding are.

Summary of inspection grades¹

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?	1
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

¹ 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.