

Leicester and Leicestershire SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Dovelands School Hinckley Road Leicester LE3 0TJ
------------------	---

Inspection dates	23 – 26 February 2009
Lead inspector	John Williams HMI

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects registered childcare and children's social care, including adoption and fostering agencies, residential schools, family centres and homes for children. It also inspects all state maintained schools, non-association independent schools, pupil referral units, further education, initial teacher education, and publicly funded adult skills and employment-based training, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), and the overall level of services for children in local authority areas (through annual performance assessments and joint area reviews).

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Reference no. 080190

© Crown Copyright 2009

Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by an additional specialist inspector 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. The Leicester and Leicestershire SCITT works in partnership with 25 schools in, or around, the city of Leicester; 9 are 'core' schools and 16 are 'associate' schools. It provides initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) in the Primary phase aged 5 - 11. The training programme also offers credits to a master's level post graduate certificate (PgCert) in the study of Primary Education, validated by Wolverhampton University.
4. The partnership aims to recruit trainees locally and train them to be teachers able to meet the requirements of the area. This includes the needs of many schools with a high minority ethnic population. However, the training also seeks to provide trainees with a wide range of experiences across school placements, from inner city to county schools.
5. The partnership is successful in recruiting each year its full target numbers of 25 trainees. At the time of the inspection there were 24 trainees remaining on the one year course.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

6. The key strengths are:
- the selection of trainees who demonstrate good potential to meet the Standards and gain employment locally
 - the excellent central training which equips trainees fully with the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to teach in an ethnically diverse community
 - trainees' skills in teaching ICT
 - the very effective training placements which offer a rich range of experiences and provide trainees with outstanding support
 - leadership and management at all levels within the partnership and especially the way the partnership manages change.

Recommendations

7. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:
- improve trainees' understanding of teaching the more able and those pupils with special gifts and talents
 - implement a virtual learning environment (VLE) or similar system that would help trainees and trainers communicate and share information.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

8. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding.

9. The provider recruits consistently well to its target number of 25. The management team and partnership schools invest much time and effort into recruitment and selection in order to maintain the impressive record of numbers who achieve QTS. Well above average numbers of men and those from ethnic minority communities enrol and do well. The selection process begins with expertly designed subject knowledge tests which identify those who have the necessary English and mathematics knowledge to progress to interview. For those prospective trainees passing these tests the interview process is rigorous; candidates are assessed

against a range of well thought out criteria. Unsuccessful candidates are provided with excellent advice and support so that they may consider applying again in the future. Successful trainees attend a July pre-course meeting during which further audits are undertaken by subject tutors. These inform the writing of sharply focused pre-course tasks which prepare trainees well. Trainees receive excellent support and guidance from the moment they are appointed to the course. Consequently, they make very good progress from the outset. Past and present trainees speak highly of this aspect of the training, together with the way their individual needs, both professional and personal, are addressed. For example, those from ethnic minority groups have carefully tailored provision that allows them to also fulfil family or religious duties.

10. The overall quality of the training at both the centre and in schools is excellent. Central training in the core subjects benefits from the expertise of skilled practitioners. Training in English and mathematics, for example, is carried out by local authority advisors, advanced skills teachers and staff who have a national reputation for excellence in their subjects. The principles of good teaching within each subject are firmly embedded in training sessions to develop the relevant knowledge, understanding and teaching skills; for example the "Rose Report" on teaching phonics is embedded in the English course. Trainers model effective teaching very well both at the centre and in schools. An excellent professional studies programme fully complements this subject training and represents a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection. For example, the section on managing behaviour is taught skilfully by the local authority specialist team, many of whom follow up with visits to trainees on school placements. This, along with school based tasks and visits from central tutors, brings a high degree of coherence to the course. Schools provide a rich diversity of training opportunities. Placement schools are very carefully allocated to provide trainees with teaching experiences across the whole 5 – 11 age range in a variety of settings. This is an outstanding feature of the training.

11. Resources are used extremely well. School - based mentors are well trained for their role and they carry out their responsibilities with great care and attention. Partnership managers assess the allocation of resources against impact and continually change the programme to improve trainees' outcomes. Learning resources are plentiful and allocated well. For example, every trainee is allocated a lap top with a wide range of good software. Trainees in turn, demonstrate outstanding skills and understanding in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning.

12. Trainees attain well and no group underachieves. Carefully targeted support ensures male trainees and those from ethnic minorities make particularly good progress. Trainees demonstrate strengths across several aspects of teaching. For example, planning shows a clear understanding of learning outcomes and core subjects are taught well. The teaching of ICT is a particular strength. They use a variety of methods ranging from whole class plenary, groups, pairs and individual work in order to achieve their teaching objective. They benefit immensely from working alongside expert practitioners.

13. Trainees make outstanding progress from when they begin the course. Most have degrees that are not rooted in a primary school subject and so they have to take full advantage of the extra booster training or 'clinics' that the partnership offers in order to improve their subject knowledge to a good standard. The auditing and development of subject knowledge has an impressive impact on trainees' progress and developing their confidence in teaching.

14. Trainees are becoming good and confident teachers. There are no major areas of their work that are underdeveloped although the trainees' understanding of the needs of higher attaining or gifted and talented pupils is somewhat limited. Trainees are good role models and the strength of their personal attributes is a key feature of their achievement. For example, they develop outstanding relationships with both pupils and staff. They quickly become immersed in the ways of school working and therefore many obtain teaching posts in one of their placement schools. All evaluate their teaching well in terms of what it is that pupils know, understand and can do. They use this information effectively to plan the next lesson to ensure all pupils make progress.

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

15. The partnership demonstrates outstanding capacity to sustain high quality outcomes. There is much evidence of improvement since the last inspection and clear reasons why this can continue.

16. The partnership is in an excellent position to monitor the progress of individual trainees because right from the outset it assesses against clear criteria, and then monitors and sets targets against these criteria. E-portfolios are used really well in this process and they are supported by communication through email. However, currently there is no coherent electronic system, such as that provided by a VLE, to link these lines of communication together.

17. Challenging targets are set for all trainees within a climate of continual assessment against the Standards. For instance, each trainee is assessed regularly and their performance is graded at the end of each placement. Clear guidance is given on how to achieve the Standards. Trainees also self assess against the same criteria and agree judgements with the school tutors and external quality assurance tutors. These discussions provide clear targets for improvement so that each trainee knows how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve and, crucially, how to go about doing it. Thus virtually all trainees have achieved the Standards for QTS over the last three years. On-going and final assessment is carried out and moderated by a range of partnership staff to ensure there are accurate judgments about a trainee's achievement and attainment, especially around the pass / fail boundary.

18. Leadership is excellent throughout the partnership. Quality assurance is a strong feature with the course manager and trainers at all levels playing an effective role. Their findings are used well to make further course improvements. One key feature of quality assurance is that core subject tutors monitor and assess trainees teaching their subject and are thus able to make judgements about the impact of their training. As a result, training in these subjects is continually modified for the benefit of trainees.

19. Self-evaluation is rigorous, comprehensive, accurate and supports planning for improvement. Although improvement planning is better than that seen at the previous inspection there is scope to focus even more on what the partnership knows it needs to do to continue to maintain high standards. That said, there have been clear improvements in all areas of provision since the last inspection. This is a small provider with an openness to discussion and self criticism. The management team know in detail the strengths of each part of the provision and can use this information to plan a very good set of experiences for individual trainees. They also quickly get to know where and when weaknesses may arise, so that issues can be dealt with swiftly, for example in compensating for weaker mentoring in a placement. Remedial action such as intervention or extra training is speedily put in place when there is an area of concern. The partnership steering group and the course manager are very effective in not only supporting the training programme but in bringing about change. Their expertise at senior level in schools means that national and local initiatives are always included in the course content. Thus the trainees receive very up to date training in primary teaching.

20. A comprehensive range of procedures are used for self-evaluation and course review. Much emphasis is placed on trainees and past trainees' evaluations; the latter are even followed up for feedback when the course manager and quality assurance tutors visit schools to see trainees or trainers. All are committed to improving on what is already excellent work. An impressive track record of improvement, commitment to becoming better, with the right structures and personnel in place, means that the partnership is in an excellent position to improve further and maintain the high standards achieved.

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?	2
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?	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?		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.

Any complaints about the inspection or the reports should be made following the procedure set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk