

Hastings and Rother SCITT

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Claverham Community College North Trade Road Battle East Sussex TN33 0HT
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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist 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

Explanation of terms used in this report

Attainment is defined as the standard reached by a trainee at the end of their training.

Progress is judged in terms of how well a trainee has developed professionally from their starting point to the standard reached at the time of the inspection or at a suitable review point.

Achievement is judged in terms of the progress made and the standard reached by a trainee at the time of the inspection or at a recent assessment review point.

The provider

3. Hastings and Rother School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) is a partnership of 11 schools working together to provide an 18 month initial teacher education course, leading to the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for the 11 to 16 age range. The lead school, Claverham Community College, gained Training School Status in 2000. Trainees choose to study one of three secondary subjects: mathematics, science or modern foreign languages. Trainees undertake 12 months of part-time study through weekly evening sessions and four short school placements. They then complete the final six months of the course through two full-time school placements. At the time of the inspection there were 12 trainees in cohort five, then on final school placements, and there were 15 trainees in cohort six. Trainees in cohort six began the course in September 2011 and are currently in the second term of their 12 month evening course.

Provision in the secondary phase

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
 - a very coherent programme of curriculum and professional studies sessions which fully support the development of good subject knowledge for teaching
 - trainees' ability to critique their own progress and a willingness to undertake additional independent research throughout the course
 - good support for trainees' welfare and individual pastoral needs
 - commitment of all personnel in partnership schools to work collaboratively to improve the course and support all trainees
 - well-planned school placements which give trainees chance to work in different school contexts, also accommodating the personal circumstances of many mature trainees.

Required actions

5. In order to embed greater capacity at all levels of management and sharpen the evaluation of the course the partnership must:
 - ensure that systems in place for evaluating the impact of provision on outcomes for trainees include rigorous analysis of data over time
 - review how best to involve all trainers in assessing the strengths and areas for development of the course so that all improvement planning has as its nucleus outcomes for trainees.
6. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment the partnership must:
 - embed greater consistency in the formative assessment of the Standards for QTS so that leaders have a more detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses in trainees' achievement.
7. In order to improve the quality and consistency of mentoring across the partnership the provider must:
 - design and implement a more rigorous training programme for all new and experienced mentors to enhance their ability to coach trainees so that they learn how to improve their practice and evaluate pupils' learning.

Recommendations

8. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:

- ensure that trainees have a secure understanding of how the components of the course integrate and contribute towards their achievement of the Standards
- continue to improve retention by carefully monitoring the progress of trainees, particularly in transition from the 12 month evening course into the first extended school placement
- improve preparation and guidance for the entry to the profession through more detailed use of the career entry profile and through better preparation for job searching, interviews and progression as a newly qualified teacher (NQT)
- improve resources so that trainees have easy access to centrally held course documentation and current educational research
- ensure that trainees' views are captured coherently, acted upon and inform the improvement planning process through representation on management committees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 3

9. The overall effectiveness of Hasting and Rother SCITT in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is satisfactory.
10. The attainment of the large majority of trainees is satisfactory and a few trainees achieve very well. The profile of attainment has fluctuated over the last three years and small numbers enrolled on the course make year-on-year comparisons more challenging. However, a stubborn profile of grade 3 attainment is starting to rise. The partnership is beginning to review how to accelerate rates of progress of more-able trainees to maximise their potential. Attainment overall remains satisfactory because despite some trainees achieving well, the picture over time is too varied and trainees do not secure consistently good teaching.
11. A few trainees demonstrate good achievement in teaching sequences of lessons which meet the needs of pupils and promote learning. These trainees diligently use knowledge acquired from curriculum and professional studies sessions to support their planning. Trainees who achieve well in the classroom employ good questioning techniques to develop pupils' thinking and effectively use resources to engage pupils. Learning is personalised to give pupils tasks and feedback that are targeted to help them make good progress. Inspectors saw an outstanding example of planning and teaching in a trainee's comprehensive use of different class work for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as gifted and talented pupils. This was then further differentiated in homework tasks, notably challenging gifted and talented pupils beyond their targets. Most trainees have a good understanding of how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities but their competency in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language is less well developed.
12. Trainees whose attainment is satisfactory rather than good tend to be overly cautious in their planning and reliant on didactic teaching methods which do

not inspire pupils to engage imaginatively in learning. A few trainees fully understand the relationship between behaviour and learning but most trainees are often nervous about managing behaviour. For this reason learning is often too controlled with limited opportunity for group, pair or independent work.

13. A key strength of most trainees is their ability to critique their work and improve their progress through measurable targets. Many capitalise upon the chance to review their weekly performance in reflective journals. For school-based trainers these provide useful insight about trainees' self-assessment of their progress and that of their pupils. However, a few trainees fail to accept advice from mentors, limiting their progress. For these trainees reflective journals are descriptive rather than evaluative and trainees do not see the relationship between the evening course and training in school. A few trainees do not have an accurate view of the quality of their teaching, hindering their ability to understand guidance from mentors.
14. Selection and recruitment processes are consistent and rigorous. Interview questions are suitably challenging in judging aptitude for the course. Trainees confirm that initial auditing of their subject knowledge through tests and written tasks leads to useful pre-course tasks. Past and present trainees speak highly of the clear guidance for upgrading their subject knowledge before induction and they willingly undertake enhancement courses to consolidate subject knowledge. Subject-based plans provide trainers with a good overview of trainees' strengths and areas for development but action plans to personalise progress of trainees' teaching ability are less secure. There is insufficient indication of how quickly a trainee can move from observing teaching to team teaching and finally to solo teaching. This is because the provider is not consistently matching rates of trainees' progress against achievement of the Standards.
15. The provider promotes recruitment from under-represented groups and while the proportion recruited is modest, the part-time nature of the course successfully attracts candidates from many professions. Mature entrants combine part-time study with family commitments but despite this flexibility, the provider has not consistently met annual recruitment targets. Recruitment to modern foreign languages and science is slowly improving but recruitment of mathematics trainees remains challenging.
16. In recent years the percentage of withdrawals has been of concern. As a result the provider has sharpened interview questions to gain better insight about commitment to teaching and potential candidates now meet current trainees to discuss demands of the training. This, coupled with leaders' analyses of why trainees withdraw, is slowly lowering withdrawal rates. Leaders effectively support trainees at risk of failing and a cause for concern process gives most trainees the necessary support to make at least satisfactory progress. Leaders are just beginning to evaluate recruitment, retention and destinations data to inform improvement planning.
17. The 12 month course of carefully sequenced lectures and weekend workshops helps trainees learn about planning and teaching and key educational agendas

currently shaping national priorities. Most trainees comment favourably about case study material used in curriculum and professional studies sessions. Sessions are often delivered by personnel from partnership schools and most model good practice. Trainees have a good understanding of the professional duties of teachers, including safeguarding and child protection, and are confident in discussing planning for different levels of ability. Revised timing and content of the four short school placements within the 12 month course means trainees benefit from more focused work on placements, subsequently informing debate in evening sessions. A weakness in the training is the lack of guidance about research for jobs, preparing for interviews and the career entry profile. Trainees on final placement possessed little understanding of recruitment processes and were ill-prepared for the coming months of national teacher recruitment. Leaders have rightly identified key areas needing improvement: enabling trainees to fully understand how the components of the 18 month course are integrated, the tracking of Standards and helping trainees be better prepared for the two full-time school placements.

18. Trainees have some understanding of how they are assessed against criteria which identify characteristics on a one to four scale and have good appreciation of criteria for written assignments. Not all trainees have a clear grasp of the competency model of the Standards as a way of demonstrating their cumulative ability to know, understand and demonstrate achievement. The Standards tracking document for trainees, mentors and programme managers is used in many different ways and therefore progress of trainees over time is not easy to trace. Leaders do not always have an accurate picture of trainees' strengths and weaknesses.
19. The partnership has good collegiality. Trainers are passionate about their work and give generously of their time. Roles are now clearly defined in course documents. Pastoral support for trainees is good. School visits by the three curriculum tutors effectively support the development of trainees' subject knowledge for teaching and visits serve as a way of moderating judgements by mentors and programme managers. Some mentor meetings are well documented and most trainees are complimentary about the rigour of mentor meetings. Weekly meetings combine trainees' reflections with evaluations by mentors and sometimes lead to purposeful targets for the week ahead enabling a few trainees to make good and occasionally outstanding progress. While some trainees receive sharply focused targets, others do not. This is because of inconsistencies across the partnership in the quality of guidance for trainees about their teaching and evidence against the Standards. Some trainees do not receive enough challenge and they plateau, unable to determine how to move forward. Improvements are being made; a new mentor training programme is being devised in response to the findings by the new quality assurance manager and leaders are judiciously focusing upon helping mentors to move the current trainees on so that their attainment is at least good by the end of the course.
20. Individual schools are well resourced and trainees are increasingly able to use information and communication technology in teaching. The resource base at the lead school is occasionally used by trainees for research but resources do

not offer sufficient breadth in contemporary educational papers and teaching resources. Deployment of personnel in roles across the partnership is well managed and the relationship between different responsibilities is understood by most trainers. The course director, curriculum tutors and quality assurance manager have an increasingly strategic view of training across the partnership but their roles in ensuring consistency of judgement about trainee achievement warrant development. The course director strives to ensure that trainers have up-to-date information but all members of the partnership do not have easy access to information arising from meetings. Leaders are currently investigating the development of a virtual learning environment (VLE) for the partnership to enhance communication and share resources.

21. Groups of trainees attain equally well with no differences in achievement by gender, age or ethnicity. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory and there is no evidence of discrimination or harassment. The provider carefully balances decisions about trainees' school placements to try and accommodate personal circumstances as well as giving trainees exposure to diverse school contexts. Most trainees have good theoretical knowledge of equality and diversity but not all trainees are sufficiently prepared for teaching in culturally diverse schools. A few trainees lack sustained practical experience of working with pupils from differing socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 3**

22. The provider has satisfactory capacity for further improvement, and management at all levels in the partnership is starting to revisit and refine the processes for quality assuring the course. Nevertheless over recent years there has been no significant change in the proportion of trainees graded as outstanding by the end of the course. One reason for this is that despite changes being made in response to feedback from trainees, the external examiner and the annual review, there is limited analysis of quantitative data to determine targets which are concerned with raising the achievement of trainees.
23. The process of self-evaluation takes account of feedback from trainees, views of trainers and advice from the external examiner but evaluation of views from external stakeholders such as schools employing NQTs is underdeveloped. Collation and evaluation of graduate destination data is emergent. The self-evaluation document is honest in recognising areas which need urgent development and where there are key strengths, but judgements are too generous. This is because the leaders do not always use quantitative data to evaluate outcomes for trainees and some of the more recent changes to quality assurance systems need longer to show significant impact. Leaders are starting to evaluate trainees' performance through updates about trainees' achievement for written assignments, interim school and end of placement reports, but the missing link is a clear picture of how trainees progress in achieving the

Standards. The monitoring of trainees' progress towards the Standards is a key area for improvement.

24. The provider has satisfactory capacity to anticipate and respond to change locally and nationally. The small nature of the partnership means that leaders know the partnership schools well and many leaders are part of regional networks to keep up to date with local and national policy. This supports trainees' understanding of local school contexts and most trainees are well informed about national policy such as the new academies bill and how this is affecting schools locally. Leaders have worked together to determine how best to raise the profile of the course to deal with difficulties in recruitment. There is limited planning for innovation and cutting-edge work in developing the schools workforce locally.
25. Since the last inspection the provider has been slow to develop tighter quality assurance work but this has recently gathered momentum. The course director has set a clear vision for future development and is establishing more systematic approaches to evaluating the quality of school-based training and a more robust mentor training programme. There are clear signs that the new quality assurance role is starting to help the partnership evaluate practice more rigorously and support the executive committee in leading developments across the partnership. The course director works effectively with mentors and programme managers in responding to recommendations from the external examiner and external moderator, for example in reviewing the content and timing of school-based research tasks in the trainee planner.
26. Moderation and standardisation of assessments, especially across the three subject strands is not always secure but the quality assurance manager is beginning to provide a more precise picture of where strengths lie in the partnership work. Models of the very best practice are not yet fully established as part of a training package for new and experienced mentors. Mentor training is not comprehensive enough in differentiating the support needed for new mentors, nor the opportunity to fully develop the experienced mentors by drawing upon the most recent research in initial teacher education.
27. The cycle of improvement planning has been remodelled so that a series of realistic improvement plans are led by designated programme managers, with assessment of impact by the course director and executive committee. The new format has helped leaders set out the actions to be taken, the personnel involved, resources required and a timescale for success criteria to be met. The four priority areas are informed by recent self-evaluation but are not underpinned by analysis of data about trainees' progress, expected outcomes from interview nor destinations data. However the pace of change is accelerating and the executive committee is starting to focus upon the link between strategic priorities for the partnership and consistency in day-to-day operational practice. There is an urgent need to make outcomes for trainees the main focus of all improvement planning.

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

		Secondary
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		3
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	3
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment/selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	3
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	3
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	3
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	3
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	3

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Secondary
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?		3
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		3
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		3
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		3

¹ The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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