

Ripley TSA ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 2 May 2017

Stage 2: 25 September 2017

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted inspector 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

	Secondary 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

Information about the secondary partnership

- Ripley TSA school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provides training in the secondary phase (11 to 16 age range). The partnership comprises 13 schools and five associate partnership schools, in four local authorities. Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy is the lead school. The programme leads to qualified teacher status (QTS), postgraduate certification (PGCE) and 60 Masters credits. The partnership has a link with Leeds Beckett University.
- The partnership recruited its first trainees for the 2015/16 academic year. At stage 1 of the inspection 16 trainees were on the course. There are 27 trainees in the cohort for the academic year 2017/18.
- At the time of the inspection the following subject specialisms were offered: biology, chemistry, English, geography, history, mathematics, music and physics.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited 11 schools, two of which were visited during both stages of the inspection. They observed seven trainees during stage one and six newly qualified teachers (NQTs) at stage two. In stages one and two, they observed mentors giving feedback to trainees and NQTs.
- Over the course of the two-stage inspection, inspectors met with trainees and NQTs; school staff with responsibility for teacher training and NQT induction; headteachers; the SCITT director and administrator; the link tutor; the external moderator; and subject mentors. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and looked at their work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including self-evaluation and improvement planning documents; trainees' files; information on trainees' attainment, employment and completion rates. Inspectors took into account 13 responses to Ofsted's online trainee questionnaire which trainees completed in 2017. In addition, inspectors carried out checks to determine whether the partnership meets all statutory criteria and requirements for initial teacher education (ITE).

Inspection team

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Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

Key strengths of the secondary partnership

- The SCITT director is relentless in her pursuit of excellence. The positive impact of her outstanding leadership is tangible across all aspects of the partnership. All leaders and managers are driven by a philosophy of continual improvement. This ethos contributes significantly to the excellent progress that trainees make during their time on the course.
- Leaders are highly reflective and responsive. They constantly seek feedback and act swiftly and effectively in response to internal and external evaluation. There are many strengths across the partnership and leaders are constantly looking for ways to become even stronger.
- The highly integrated structure and content of the programme produces confident teachers who are very well equipped to contribute immediately to their employing schools.
- Leaders across the partnership share a clear vision of teacher training that is relevant for schools today. Partner schools contribute to training the next generation of teachers to teach exceptionally well.
- The pastoral care of trainees is exemplary. The personalised support that they receive has a significant impact on the outstanding progress that they make. This high-quality support continues throughout their NQT year.
- The SCITT director has a wealth of experience of regional and national ITE issues. The recommendations from the Carter Review and Teacher Workload Review are a high priority for the partnership. Trainees and NQTs benefit from this aspect of their training.
- The SCITT administrator ensures that the management and organisation of all aspects of the programme are highly effective. There are very clear systems and protocols. Well-designed documentation contributes significantly to trainees' success on the course.
- The rationale for all decisions that leaders make is rooted in the teachers' standards. Ensuring that all trainees exceed the minimum level of practice expected of teachers is at the heart of the partnership's work. Consequently, outcomes for trainees are very strong.
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning are accurate and thorough. Rigorous selection procedures mean that the partnership recruits high-calibre trainees with a passion for teaching. Completion rates are very high. The partnership is particularly successful in enabling the high proportion of mature trainees to achieve well on the course.

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

The partnership should:

- ensure that it increasingly engages with schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances and those judged to require improvement
- continue to fine-tune the transition documentation that NQTs take with them to their employing schools.

Inspection judgements

1. All trainees make outstanding progress on the course. Their attainment against the teachers' standards is high. In the first two years of its existence the partnership has secured high-quality outcomes for trainees. The quality of teaching of over half the cohort in 2015/16 was judged to be outstanding. This proportion increased to nearly two thirds of the cohort last year.
2. Employment rates are high. Trainees are successful in gaining employment in different types of schools, both within the partnership and further afield. One trainee went straight into a subject leadership role. For personal reasons, a very small number of trainees from last year's cohort had not secured a teaching post at the time of the inspection.
3. Completion rates are very high. All 16 trainees who started the course last year completed it. These high completion rates are a result of highly effective selection procedures, coupled with the exceptional pastoral care that trainees receive throughout their course.
4. Recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous. Leaders are unwilling to compromise on the quality of trainees at the selection stage. There is a clear rationale for the range of activities that applicants must complete at interview. Applicants' subject knowledge is a high priority. The initial subject knowledge audit is used effectively as the starting point for this aspect of a successful applicant's training.
5. A clear rationale, rooted in the teachers' standards, informs every decision that leaders make. Their assessment of trainees against all of these standards throughout the course is extremely thorough. Leaders evaluate the grading methodology that they use at the end of the course and hone this to ensure that their final assessments are accurate and truly reflect trainees' performance. Having observed the final moderation meeting last year, the external moderator spoke highly of the strong assessment process. He was also very impressed with the quality of the robust discussions between the professional mentors from the partner schools.

6. There are no significant differences between groups in attainment and employment rates. The partnership is particularly successful in enabling the high proportion of mature trainees to achieve very well on the course.
7. The highly integrated structure and content of the programme is extremely effective. School placements are of very good quality. The way the training is delivered enables trainees to constantly apply the theoretical to the practical. Trainees and NQTs told inspectors how much they benefited from being able to apply the content of the weekly Friday training sessions to their ongoing classroom practice. The coherent way that elements of the programme fit together has been further enhanced by ensuring that lead subject mentors and school-based subject mentors know the content of these weekly sessions well in advance. In this way, different aspects of training can be covered in depth. Trainees see the links between the generic and the subject-specific and can apply their learning immediately in the classroom environment.
8. This emphasis on constant practical application of their learning means that NQTs are confident classroom practitioners when they take up their posts and are able to contribute straight away in their employing schools. This was summed up by one headteacher from a partner school: 'I have confidence in the training because the SCITT provides high-quality teachers who are resilient and able to adapt to the demands of teaching.'
9. NQTs speak very highly of their training. They feel that they have been supported effectively to develop all aspects of the teaching standards to a high level. They recognise that they have been well equipped with the skills to apply their training successfully now that they are in post.
10. The very well planned weekly training sessions cover a comprehensive range of topics that enable trainees to develop into highly skilled and confident professionals. Without exception, all trainees and NQTs demonstrate consistently high standards of professional and personal conduct.
11. The training programme enables trainees to develop their skills in all aspects of the teachers' standards. Leaders have quite rightly ensured that the training is heavily focused on those standards relating to the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' progress and how effectively they meet the needs of individual pupils. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books provided evidence of the positive impact of this training. Trainees' and NQTs' teaching enables their pupils to learn well and to make good progress. They are able to assess pupils' learning accurately and confidently as a result of effective training in this area. They also successfully develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in their teaching.
12. Inspectors saw evidence of how trainees and NQTs effectively meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, helping them

to make to make good progress. This is the result of good-quality training in this area.

13. Trainees and NQTs have high expectations of their pupils. Lesson observations during the inspection show that, for the most part, they consistently provide appropriate challenge that enables pupils, including the most able, to make the best possible progress and achieve their full potential. They use effective questioning to probe and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.
14. The training programme includes preparing trainees to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders acknowledge that only a small proportion of schools in the partnership are in challenging socio-economic circumstances or are judged to require improvement. For one trainee, his placement in one of these schools changed his thinking on the type of school in which he wanted to work. Understanding the difference that a good teacher can make to disadvantaged pupils and the rewards that come with this had a significant impact on this trainee. He is now making a real difference to pupils' lives in a school in challenging socio-economic circumstances. Inspectors discussed with leaders the importance of ensuring that as many trainees as possible have the opportunity to experience meaningful training in these types of school.
15. Within the context of the schools in the partnership, leaders ensure that trainees have the opportunity to experience two contrasting placements. All trainees have two placements in primary schools, and have the opportunity to experience post-16 teaching. This enables trainees to develop a better understanding of why effective transition between key stages is so important.
16. High-quality training on behaviour management means that trainees and NQTs are well equipped to deal with any low-level disruption in their classes. Although very early in the start of the new academic year, it was clear that all NQTs had already established effective classroom routines. Pupils responded well to their teachers' high expectations of them. NQTs are able to create a calm and purposeful learning environment in which pupils can thrive.
17. Trainees and NQTs have a clear understanding of issues relating to safeguarding and bullying. At stage 1 of the inspection, inspectors identified a gap in the training relating to equalities. This related to trainees' understanding of issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. Leaders responded to this swiftly and effectively, wasting no time in organising training on this area. This training was very well received and leaders plan to develop it further with subsequent cohorts of trainees.
18. Leaders responded with equal alacrity to the small number of concerns identified in stage 1 of the inspection about ensuring consistency across all subject pedagogy days. Inspectors also asked leaders to ensure that sufficient

time was allocated in the programme to this aspect of training. Evidence provided during stage 2 of the inspection shows very clearly that leaders have taken action to ensure that all trainees benefit from a consistently high standard of subject training. Detailed and consistent session plans exist for all subjects. A shared online area has been created where lead subject mentors can upload these plans, resources and subject materials. Lesson observations show that NQTs are able to use their strong subject knowledge very effectively to develop pupils' understanding and skills.

19. There has been an increase in the number of days allocated to subject training for the 2017/18 cohort. Alongside the input from the lead subject mentor, the trainees will also take part in learning walks and lesson observations. This will enable them to benefit from the wider range of strong practice that exists across the partnership. Quality assurance of the subject sessions by the SCITT director is thorough. School colleagues from across the partnership are invited to attend the subject pedagogy days. This disseminates good practice further and provides another source of evaluation and quality assurance.
20. Trainees are extremely positive about the support and guidance that they receive from their subject mentors. One trainee said of his mentors: 'They are just fantastic – always ahead of the game – always there for you. I couldn't speak more highly of them.' Another trainee really valued their ongoing support and expertise, saying: 'They are really experienced and know what they are talking about.' The online and face-to-face training for mentors is of a very high quality. A recent audit of subject mentors' expertise shows that they have a wide range of skills and experience and it is clear that trainees benefit enormously from this. Leaders monitor trainees' reflections and action points from their weekly mentor meetings to ensure that they are of sufficient quality to help them to improve their practice.
21. The partnership benefits from the wealth of experience that the SCITT director has of regional and national ITE issues. The training programme has a strong focus on the recommendations from the Carter Review and Teacher Workload Review. This contributes significantly to ensuring that NQTs are well prepared to cope with the challenges that they may face throughout their career.
22. The transition documentation containing NQTs' assessment information, strengths and agreed targets for their induction period is valued by most induction tutors. However, in a small number of employing schools it was felt that the information provided was rather generic and did not provide enough detailed and specific information. Leaders are consequently looking to hone this documentation further.
23. The management and organisation of all aspects of the programme are highly effective. This is in no small part due to the very impressive skills of the SCITT administrator. Very clear systems and protocols exist, which means that all

aspects of the course run very smoothly. In the words of one NQT: 'It's like a well-oiled machine.' Documentation is very well designed and contributes significantly to trainees' success on the course.

24. Within this calm and organised environment, trainees benefit from exceptional pastoral care. Leaders know their trainees extremely well and are able to support them very effectively. Trainees grow in confidence in this nurturing environment, which helps them to make outstanding progress.
25. This support continues into the induction period. The SCITT director keeps in touch with NQTs via email, for example to inform them of relevant articles and resources that might be of interest. NQTs know that should they need any personal advice or support, it would also be forthcoming. One NQT described this as 'great after-care'.
26. Time is spent preparing trainees for their induction period at the end of course. The partnership then organises an NQT conference at the start of the spring term. Evaluations from this event are overwhelmingly positive, with NQTs saying how much the sessions will help them to complete their induction period successfully.
27. The combination of high-quality training, personalised support and very effective course organisation means that all trainees and NQTs speak extremely positively about the partnership. All those who spoke to inspectors said that they would have no hesitation in recommending Ripley TSA SCITT to others. Several of the trainees in the 2017/18 cohort applied to the course as a result of these personal recommendations.
28. The SCITT director is relentless in her pursuit of excellence. Her philosophy of continual improvement permeates all aspects of the partnership. This ethos makes a significant contribution to the very high standards that trainees achieve.
29. Leaders across the partnership are highly responsive and reflective. They constantly seek feedback and are quick to act on internal and external evaluation. An example of this was the extremely swift and effective way in which leaders responded to the small number of areas for improvement that were identified at the end of stage 1 of the inspection. Alongside information presented to inspectors about how they had addressed these areas, the SCITT director also presented a range of evidence of how they had further improved the aspects of the course that had been identified as strengths. This demonstrates a continual desire to make the partnership even stronger.
30. Leaders have high expectations of themselves and of their trainees. The ambition that they show for their trainees has a positive impact on trainees' excellent progress and attainment. Professional relationships and effective

communication exist across the partnership. The collaborative way of working contributes significantly to the success of the partnership. Strong systems of quality assurance and the sharing of good practice are at the heart of its success.

31. Self-evaluation and improvement planning documents are extremely effective. They are accurate and thorough and reflect the outstanding leadership of this SCITT. Leaders have a clear strategic vision for the partnership that is linked to regional and national issues within ITE. Leaders are aware that it is incumbent upon them to ensure that the outstanding practice within this partnership has a positive impact on schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances and those judged to require improvement throughout the region.
32. The partnership complies fully with all the requirements for ITE and has robust systems in place to check and verify this. Safeguarding requirements are fully met. Equality of opportunity is threaded through all aspects of recruitment and selection, and support for trainees.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and newly qualified teachers' (NQTs') teaching:

Ashton Community Science College, Preston

Blackburn Central High School, Blackburn

Bury Church of England School, Bury

Canon Slade School, Bolton

Carnforth High School, Carnforth

Chorlton High School, Manchester

Morecambe Community High School, Morecambe

Queen Elizabeth School, Kirkby Lonsdale

Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy, Lancaster

St Aidan's Church of England High School, Poulton-Le-Fylde

The Farnley Academy, Leeds

ITE partnership details

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Provider address	Ripley St Thomas CE Academy Ashton Road Lancaster LA1 4RS



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