

South West Teacher Training

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Lead inspector	Anne Looney HMI

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one 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

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. South West Teacher Training provides School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) in partnership with 20 schools to provide secondary initial teacher education in the 11 to 16 age range leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The partnership offers training in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages and science. At the time of the inspection there were 33 trainees.

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:

- the comprehensive and rigorous selection process which results in the recruitment of trainees who are well suited to the school-centred nature of the programme and who have the personal and professional qualities to make good progress
- the manner in which the training is personalised to meet trainees' needs
- the coherence of the central and school-based subject training
- the effective and efficient use of resources which benefit trainees and schools
- the effective use of the electronic portal which aids communication and facilitates the tracking of trainees' progress
- the commitment of all partners to the programme
- the way in which the provider anticipates and responds to change.

Required actions

5. In order to improve the quality of provision, the provider must:

- improve the consistency of the quality of written feedback that teachers other than mentors provide for trainees on their classroom practice and the consistency of the work undertaken by the professional tutors
- have a more strategic approach to quality assurance and the improvement planning cycle.

In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider must:

- prepare trainees more effectively to teach in an ethnically and culturally diverse society.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

6. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good. Effective recruitment procedures ensure that the provider attracts and selects trainees with the potential to become good teachers. The training and assessment are good and lead to most trainees consistently making good progress to achieve challenging targets.

7. Attainment for those who complete the course is good. There has been a trend of improvement in the last three years: the proportion of those attaining the highest grade has risen and there has been a reduction in the proportion of trainees judged to be satisfactory, particularly in science. Overall at least three quarters of trainees are judged to be at least good.
8. There are a significant number of key strengths shown by trainees. Trainees are enthusiastic and self-reliant and have good organisational skills. They quickly develop a good rapport with their students. They reflect well on their own practice and are increasingly focusing on the impact of their teaching on students' learning. Their lesson planning is good and shows a clear understanding of the needs of students with learning needs and/or physical disabilities. Trainees are not yet, however, consistently planning to meet the needs of the highest attaining students in their classes. They have good personal ICT skills and apply them well in the classroom. All trainees show an understanding of formative assessment and the best trainees are expertly using a range of assessment strategies in the classroom. The understanding, and use of summative assessment, is still relatively underdeveloped for most trainees.
9. Recruitment and selection procedures are good. They are evaluated regularly in the light of trainees' outcomes and are therefore continually being refined. Record keeping and tracking of recruitment procedures have been much improved of late. Recruitment is buoyant and the provider recruits well to target. Although the recruitment of minority ethnic trainees is not high, the provider has worked hard to increase numbers, broadening the recruitment area. Screening procedures are aligned well to the local authority's processes and further secure the provider's assessment of trainees' fitness to teach. Selection processes include well-differentiated tasks which probe trainees' personal and professional potential. This year there has been an appropriately strengthened focus on the examination of trainees' subject knowledge at interview. Subject knowledge is audited rigorously prior to the course and the outcomes of these audits inform trainees' individual training plans well. These plans give precise early targets and lead to trainees making good progress from the start. Employment rates are high. The provider meets the needs of the local community well. Approximately one third of trainees take up employment in partnership schools with a growing number of ex-trainees becoming skilled subject mentors themselves.
10. The central general professional and subject studies are well linked. The content of the central training is comprehensive and up to date. It is enhanced by the expertise of outside speakers whose sessions give trainees the opportunity to experience best practice. The central subject studies are effectively developed further in schools by subject mentors. The general professional studies programme, however, is not consistently followed up in school-based training and this deprives trainees of the chance to apply their central training in the school context.
11. Trainees receive good systematic training from their subject mentors and this, together with the trainees' reflection on these sessions, is documented in detail by the vast majority of trainees. These records are, in turn, used well by mentors and trainees to review progress on a weekly basis. Ongoing verbal feedback is

regular, helpful and of high quality. Feedback on assignments is insightful, supports trainees' reflection and develops their ability to link theory with practice. From the outset trainees are set challenging targets, including those for subject knowledge. These are reviewed regularly by subject mentors. Progress towards these targets and achievement of the standards for QTS are tracked well. All trainers make effective use of the portal to record grades, which results in a process that is transparent and easily accessed by all. The electronic transfer of assessment information is particularly helpful as trainees move from one placement to the next.

12. There is some variability in the consistency of internal lesson gradings given by teachers as a result of differing interpretations of the criteria. The provider is aware of this and is planning training for teachers other than subject mentors. Joint observations of trainees' teaching, although a regular feature, are not consistently completed by school-based and other trainers. Neither of the above weaknesses have any impact on the accuracy of the final assessment but they do constrain the quantity and quality of formative feedback that trainees receive on their classroom practice.
13. The use of resources is outstanding. The provider has excellent central training facilities, particularly for design and technology and science. The training rooms model good learning environments. Trainees have excellent access to literature from the University of Exeter's library and to the online library at the University of Roehampton. Trainees are also provided with laptops, of which they make extensive use for all aspects of their training and teaching. Membership of subject associations, financed by the provider, ensures that their subject knowledge is up to date. The portal, which was developed in-house to meet the provider's needs, plays a key role in supporting trainees with their organisation, record keeping, communication and resource sharing. It is highly valued by all partners. Partnership schools are good learning environments for trainees.
14. There is a strong commitment to South West Teacher Training shown by all partnership schools. The provider has been successful in recruiting new schools, often through the advocacy of enthusiastic teachers who are ex-trainees. Considerable care is taken in the placement of trainees and programme managers act quickly to remedy any issues that might occur. Training for subject mentors is good, providing an effective balance between information giving and training. Attendance at these meetings is, however, inconsistent. The provider ensures that important information reaches subject mentors but those who do not attend miss the in-depth moderation and networking opportunities such meetings afford. All partner schools ensure that trainees have access to a professional tutor but the inconsistency in amount and quality of the interaction between trainee and professional tutor leads to variable provision.
15. Trainees receive very strong professional and pastoral support to help them make the most of their training. They have ample opportunities to express their views and state that they feel confident to report any incidents of discrimination or harassment. There is an equitable allocation of resources and outcomes for identifiable groups are comparable. Completion rates are not consistently high as there have been a number of withdrawals in science and ICT. The partnership's

subsequent careful analysis indicates that there is no pattern to these withdrawals. Trainees' preparedness to teach in a diverse society is not well developed.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 2

16. The provider has good capacity to improve as evidenced, in particular, by the rising trend in trainees' attainment and the improvement in key areas since the last inspection. The provider assesses its own performance well using a wide range of evaluative instruments. The provider values, and acts on, the feedback of all partners. A particular strength is the manner in which the provider elicits the views of trainees, taking their opinions seriously and making changes to provision where appropriate. The provider uses the wide range of evaluative data well to form a clear picture of the strengths of the provision and broad areas for improvement. The formal self-evaluation document, however, while detailed, is insufficiently analytical in terms of trainees' outcomes.
17. The portal is used well as a monitoring tool by senior subject mentors, subject course tutors and senior managers. The ease of use and the effectiveness of this system have been carefully evaluated. The provider has been successful in securing funding which will allow managers to investigate more closely, and evaluate, the impact of the portal system on trainees' outcomes.
18. The quality assurance consultant has been used effectively to review, via questionnaires, the quality of provision. The provider has now strengthened its quality assurance procedures through the appointment of well-qualified senior subject mentors to lead mentor training and to oversee and monitor the work of subject mentors. The provider has deployed the senior subject mentors and quality assurance consultant well to intervene in response to training issues in schools. This approach to quality assurance, however, is reactive and the provider does not have a sufficiently clear strategic view of how quality will be assured. Furthermore it is not clear in the job descriptions of the senior subject mentors where time for their monitoring visits will come from.
19. Both internal and external moderation confirm the security of the final assessments, including that at the pass/fail borderline. This is further endorsed by the subject-specific external examiners' reports. These reports identify clearly areas for improvement which are acted on appropriately by the provider.
20. The manner in which the leaders at all levels anticipate and respond to change is outstanding. Trainers ensure that trainees have a good awareness of national initiatives, and programmes are regularly updated to ensure that current initiatives are given appropriate prominence. As a result, trainees are well informed about the Rose and Williams' reviews and can talk confidently about curriculum changes at Key Stages 3 and 4.

21. Changes at programme management level have been very well managed to minimise disruption to training. Succession planning is also being well managed at middle leader level, through the appointment of the senior subject mentors to support the subject course tutors and through the employment of new, well-qualified, course tutors as the need arises. At the time of the last inspection middle leaders were insufficiently involved in the management of the programme. This has considerably improved and middle leaders now play a full and effective role in recruitment, programme management and at examination boards.
22. The provider has used the improvement planning process to bring about changes in the programme. A good example of this is the way in which the quality of mentoring was targeted following the last inspection and subsequently improved. The wide range of data gathered through the monitoring process informs the improvement plan. Plans are shared well across the partnership and all evaluation systems are transparent. Middle leaders, in particular the subject course tutors, although now more involved in the improvement planning process, do not have a sufficiently strategic role as they are not involved at the onset of the improvement planning cycle. The plans themselves are comprehensive and detailed but have, in the recent past, had too many competing priorities. The current plan has been refined and now has identified key priorities and a more effective system for review, with specific success criteria, although not all of these are measurable. Those that are measurable do not refer consistently to outcomes for trainees.

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?		2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	2
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	2
	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?	2
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

		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?		2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		2
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?		2

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.

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