

The Tommy Flowers SCITT Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 12 June 2017 Stage 2: 20 November 2017

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) and an Ofsted Inspector (OI) 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 each phase within 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

	Primary and 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

Primary and secondary routes

Information about this ITE partnership

- The Tommy Flowers SCITT Partnership offers primary and secondary school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) for graduates. The partnership is centred on a teaching school alliance in the Milton Keynes area, and is based at Denbigh School and St Paul's Catholic School. Staff from the SCITT worked extensively on graduate teacher training programmes in the past.
- The partnership was first established as a provider of initial teacher training in September 2015. This was its first inspection, at the end of its second year as an accredited provider of qualified teacher status (QTS). The partnership is overseen by an executive board of headteachers from the Milton Keynes area. Operational management of the SCITT is supported by two steering committees, comprising professional tutors, headteachers and mentors from Milton Keynes schools.
- The SCITT started with a cohort of 24 secondary trainees in September 2015. It then admitted primary trainees from September 2016. In the year of the inspection, 15 primary and 24 secondary trainees started the programme.
- Primary trainees specialise in either the three to seven age group or the five to 11 age group. Secondary trainees are prepared for work in the 11 to 16 age group.
- Secondary trainees prepare to teach one of the following secondary subject specialisms: design technology; computer science; English; geography; history; mathematics; modern foreign languages; physical education; religious studies; or science. The partnership intends to offer drama as a subject in the next round of applications.
- The programme covers three routes into teaching: a core postgraduate route, School Direct and School Direct (salaried). Trainees who successfully complete the programme are awarded a postgraduate certificate of education as well as QTS. Currently this award is made by the University of Leicester. From September 2018 onwards, the postgraduate certificate will be awarded by the University of Northumbria.

Information about the primary and secondary ITE inspection

- Inspectors visited 11 schools in total across both stages of the inspection, five at stage 1 and five at stage 2. The all-through school in the partnership was visited at both stages.
- Inspectors observed nine trainees at stage 1 and seven newly qualified teachers (NQTs) at stage 2. They met with other trainees and NQTs both in their schools and at the SCITT headquarters.

- Inspectors met with representatives of the executive board and the steering committee. They met with headteachers in each of the schools visited and with a wide range of mentors and induction tutors.
- Across both stages of the inspection, inspectors examined a wide range of documentation. This included the SCITT's self-evaluation document and improvement plan, programme guidance, handbooks, external examiners' reports, partnership agreements and information about trainees' outcomes, including employment and completion rates. At stage 2, inspectors reviewed the actions taken by the partnership in response to the findings at stage 1 of the inspection.
- Inspectors also reviewed trainees' and NQTs' work, including tasks and formal assignments, evidence demonstrating that they met the teachers' standards and their teaching files. This included samples of trainees' and NQTs' assessment of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took into account 29 responses to the trainee online questionnaire completed in summer 2017.
- Inspectors undertook a wide range of checks to ensure that the partnership is compliant with the initial teacher training requirements of the Department for Education and current safeguarding requirements.

Inspection team

Louise Adams HMI (lead inspector, stage 1)

Christopher Lee OI (team inspector, stages 1 and 2)

Simon Hughes HMI (lead inspector, stage 2)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

Key strengths of the primary and secondary partnership

- Tommy Flowers SCITT benefits from ambitious, thoughtful, responsive and inspiring leadership. Leaders are fully committed to providing a regular supply of high-calibre teachers for schools in the area.
- The vast majority of trainees teach at a consistently very high standard. NQTs often exceed levels of performance expected at such an early stage of their career.
- Consistently high employment rates for former trainees mean the SCITT is having a real impact on teacher recruitment needs in the Milton Keynes area. As the population increases in the region, the SCITT has strong capacity for growth and is very well placed to help meet expanding staffing demands in local schools.

- Local stakeholders hold the SCITT in high regard. Headteachers state that the SCITT is their preferred training provider. They attribute this to the excellent reputation it has for producing high-quality teachers.
- Trainees are fulsome in their praise for the programme. They rightly believe that they are extremely well prepared for their careers.
- All trainees reflect critically and astutely on their practice. They seek constantly to find even better ways of supporting pupils' progress and development. One of the ways they learn to reflect is by observing how the SCITT's leaders reflect critically on necessary programme changes to make it the best it can be.

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

The partnership should:

- reduce workload for trainees by simplifying how they are required to present evidence of their progress towards the award of QTS
- monitor even more carefully the progress and well-being of mature entrants to the profession to limit the number who withdraw for personal reasons.

Inspection judgements

1. The Tommy Flowers SCITT Partnership prepares a growing number of trainees exceptionally well for careers in primary and secondary teaching.
2. Headteachers employing NQTs from Tommy Flowers find them to be extremely well organised, enthusiastic and hard working. Inspectors found them to be highly reflective, keen to make a difference to children and young people's lives, passionate and dedicated.
3. Trainees are often 'talent-spotted' while studying or working at schools, often as teaching assistants, in the partnership. The SCITT builds productive relationships with prospective candidates and encourages them to apply to train when they are ready. All stakeholders like this approach to 'growing our own' teachers with previous experience of working in schools. It means trainees are extremely well prepared for their transition to the demands of full-time employment.
4. Leaders ensure that all candidates are subject to a strenuous selection process. First is a series of pre-selection tasks. Only if these are completed to an agreed and exacting standard are candidates taken forward for interview.
5. Selection processes are equally demanding for the primary and secondary courses. However, despite the rigour of these selection processes, a very small minority of candidates find that teaching is not for them and withdraw from the programme. Those who enter the programme after a period of time in other

careers or occupations are more susceptible to withdrawal than candidates entering earlier in their working lives.

6. Leaders have been unrelenting in their determination to build a coherent and comprehensive training programme. Very well-taught face-to-face sessions build, for example, on secondary trainees' subject knowledge or, for primary candidates, the technical skills to teach phonics effectively.
7. Trainees told inspectors how inspirational these sessions are, and how the great ideas they get from them are immediately imported into their everyday practice. This was confirmed by the high scores each session received in the programme's own evaluation system. Overall, evaluative responses from trainees to surveys and questionnaires reflect the very high level of esteem in which they hold the programme.
8. Taught sessions are complemented by excellent-quality course materials and high-quality mentoring. Leaders ensure that each trainee is mentored by experienced and expert teachers, recently trained for the role. Trainees appreciate greatly the extent of the mentoring support they receive. Inspectors saw striking examples of mentors both supporting trainees and challenging them to be creative and imaginative in their planning.
9. Good-quality notes of meetings between mentors and trainees evidence the high-quality professional dialogue which contributes to trainees' strong progress towards the award of QTS. This regular checking of each trainee's progress ensures that any emerging difficulties are picked up quickly. If necessary, leaders act decisively to find alternative placements or make suitable adjustments to individual trainees' programmes.
10. All trainees spend time teaching in two contrasting school placements. Most of these placements provide opportunities for trainees to work in different school contexts and with a wide range of pupils who have various and diverse needs. Trainees learn to differentiate learning activities accordingly. They do so efficiently.
11. Trainees are carefully prepared to support pupils who are vulnerable, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who speak English as an additional language. Each partnership school has its own unique characteristics and challenges. As a result, the award of QTS from the Tommy Flowers SCITT is particularly good preparation for anyone wishing to teach anywhere in the United Kingdom.
12. Trainees develop a wide range of teaching techniques and strategies during their time on the programme. All trainees plan lessons carefully, often in partnership with more experienced teachers. They also have a real appetite for

searching widely for good models and stimulating resources so that they contribute fresh ideas and approaches to their placement schools.

13. Trainees understand how to check pupils' learning regularly and effectively in lessons. This means they keep the pace of learning rapid. Many are already adept at assessing pupils' work formally. Secondary trainees, in particular, are quickly getting to grips with new GCSE specifications so that they understand fully the more demanding attainment criteria and expectations.
14. Trainees' work with other adults is impressive. In primary contexts particularly, trainees plan well-judged activities for teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. These include working effectively with small groups of pupils, supporting diligently individual children with reading or completing tasks, and helping to manage skilfully pupils with more challenging behaviour.
15. A large minority of trainees have already developed such purposeful teaching that pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are remarkable. In one Year 1 class, for example, two pupils, after a brilliant introduction from the teacher, spent 25 minutes developing an imaginative story from the resources provided with no adult intervention necessary. Their level of engagement was extraordinary.
16. All trainees acquire a vast repertoire of behaviour management strategies. If anything, they learn too many. A few trainees spend too long working out which system to use when simple reprimands or commands would be instantly effective. However, apart from some poor concentration in a minority of classes, during the course of the inspection, the team observed no poor behaviour.
17. The vast majority of trainees far exceed the minimum level required by the time they complete the programme. The majority achieve the highest level of attainment in relation to the teachers' standards at the end of their training. Nearly all receive the postgraduate certificate of education as well as the award of QTS.
18. Notably, trainees have outstanding subject and professional knowledge which they use highly effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding or extend their skills. In one secondary lesson, for example, an NQT was encouraging pupils to see the religious symbolism in several works of art. In a primary lesson, an NQT was using a well-known poem to develop pupils' literacy skills. At the same time, she took the opportunity to use accurate mathematical terminology to build their numeracy skills.
19. Primary trainees receive exemplary training to prepare them to deliver the full breadth of the curriculum. Trainees particularly appreciate the sessions on primary physical education delivered by specialist teachers from the

partnership. A few trainees are particularly well prepared to contribute to strong teaching in schools with imaginative or innovative approaches to curricula.

20. Trainees also benefit from high-quality training on teaching early reading, including introductions to the range of phonics schemes. All primary trainees talked with confidence about how well they had been prepared to teach mathematics. They also demonstrated, through their files and folders, their ability to secure good or better learning outcomes in subjects outside the core, particularly in creative subjects such as art, design technology and music.
21. Leaders ensure that, across the programme, trainees receive high-quality training on safeguarding. This helps them to plan assiduously the exercise of their responsibilities with regard to the 'Prevent' duty. It also helps them to recognise signs of neglect or abuse among pupils and to know to whom, in their placement schools, they should report any concerns.
22. Systems for trainees to record and demonstrate how well they have met all of the teachers' standards are extensive, but somewhat over-complicated and repetitive. Copying evidence into different formats adds a bureaucratic administrative burden to trainees' days and weeks, which is not in keeping with the spirit of recent recommendations on the reduction of teacher workload. Trainees gain little from undertaking this extra activity.
23. At stage 1 of the inspection, trainees were not able to express clearly or demonstrate how well they were progressing against part 2 of the teachers' standards. Leaders acted quickly to rectify this situation and have made significant adjustments to the programme to enable this to happen. This is a typical example of leaders' proven track record of acting decisively, and at pace, to enact necessary programme improvements.
24. In the two years since the inception of this programme, all trainees have secured employment. Nearly half are appointed to roles in their placement schools and a few find employment in schools outside the partnership. There is a high demand for trainees from the partnership.
25. The Tommy Flowers SCITT Partnership was established with the specific intention of providing a regular supply of outstanding teachers for Milton Keynes. The SCITT is successfully meeting this intention. When asked, headteachers affirmed that the SCITT is their ITE provider of choice.
26. School leaders concur with inspectors that the training successfully meets the partnership's aim to prepare trainees specifically for the needs of the Milton Keynes area. School leaders find that the programme provides trainees with a secure understanding of the context in which they are likely to be working.
27. Leaders provide high-quality and speedy pastoral care for any trainee who indicates that they are struggling. They go to great lengths to help trainees

complete the course. The secondary partnership manager, a driving force within the SCITT, is highly valued by all trainees. There is extensive evidence of his commitment to the trainees and his willingness to go the extra mile to support their progress and development. He models this tireless commitment to the rest of the team, who willingly follow his lead.

28. The strategic leaders of the partnership, notably those serving on the executive board, are passionate, enthusiastic, responsive and effective in ensuring that the programme delivers its original objectives.
29. Pivotal to the success of the SCITT are the partnership's highly effective quality assurance arrangements, which ensure that all aspects of the programme exceed minimum expectations. Self-evaluation processes are accurate and lead to sensible annual improvements to the programme.
30. Assessment of the trainees is equally accurate. Inspectors examined documents showing the rigorous processes undertaken by mentors in schools, link tutors and external examiners. These confirm that the programme team evaluates the performance of each trainee against all of the teachers' standards, using a scale that conforms to sector-wide expectations.
31. There is little variation between the outcomes of different groups of trainees, except in the withdrawal rates of those later entrants to the profession. Outcomes are equally strong on the salaried and tuition fee routes into teaching. There are no discernible differences between the outcomes for trainees on the primary or secondary phases of the programme.
32. Since most trainees find work in partnership schools, they maintain contact with the provider. This also means that, for the vast majority of trainees, the transition into employment is smooth. This is aided by helpful transition documents that identify well-thought-out targets for the NQT year. SCITT staff respond positively to any requests for help from trainees once they are in their NQT year. The SCITT complements this with formal training sessions that are highly regarded by the NQTs. These build very effectively on the work of the teaching school alliances that form the partnership.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe trainees' and NQTs' teaching:

Brooklands Farm Primary School, Milton Keynes

Caroline Haslett Primary School, Milton Keynes

Denbigh School, Milton Keynes

Falconhurst Primary School, Milton Keynes

Heronshaw Primary School, Milton Keynes

Jubilee Wood School, Milton Keynes

Lord Grey School, Milton Keynes

Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School, Milton Keynes

Oakgrove Primary and Secondary School, Milton Keynes

St. Bernadette's School, Milton Keynes

St. Paul's Catholic School, Milton Keynes

The Radcliffe School, Milton Keynes

ITE partnership details

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Lead inspector	Louise Adams HMI, stage 1 Simon Hughes HMI, stage 2
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Primary and secondary
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Previous inspection report	N/A
Provider address	C/o Denbigh School Burchard Crescent, Shenley Church End Milton Keynes MK5 6EX



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