

# Durham Secondary SCITT Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates 24–27 March 2014

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This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector in accordance with the *ITE Inspection Handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from January 2013.

The inspection draws upon evidence 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*

	Secondary QTS
<b>Overall effectiveness</b> How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	<b>1</b>
The outcomes for trainees	1
The quality of training across the partnership	1
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

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## **The secondary phase**

### **Information about the secondary partnership**

- Durham Secondary SCITT is a school-centred partnership between 36 secondary schools in County Durham, six secondary schools in the Northern region, four further-education colleges, Durham Local Authority and Durham Education Business Partnership. The lead school is Woodham Academy. Currently there are 49 trainees following a programme to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and a postgraduate certificate in education which is validated by Sunderland University. Of these trainees, 36 are on a core programme and 13 are training through a School Direct route.
- The age-range and choice of subjects offered for training is very different from that at the time of the last inspection. Core trainees train in the 11 to 16 age range in art and design, science (biology), science (chemistry), English, geography, history or mathematics. The core programme also offers training in the 14 to 19 age range for health and social care. In the current academic year, School Direct training places are available in the 11 to 16 age range in English, chemistry, drama, geography, mathematics, modern languages and physical education. This is the first year of the partnership's involvement in a School Direct training programme.

### **Information about the secondary ITE inspection**

- Inspectors visited seven partnership schools and observed 16 current trainees and two former trainees teaching. All observations of trainees were carried out jointly with a school-based mentor or class teacher. Inspectors observed school-based colleagues providing feedback to trainees following the lesson. Inspectors scrutinised the training files and held discussions with all trainees observed and four other trainees.
- Discussions were held with further groups of current trainees and former trainees, school-based mentors, school tutors and a number of headteachers.
- Inspectors also met with a group of subject specialist tutors and representatives of the course-development committee, the quality assurance committee and the partnership's steering group.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including data about the outcomes for different groups of trainees, improvement plans, findings of the partnership's monitoring and evaluation, and minutes of partnership committees.

## **Inspection Team**

Katrina Gueli HMI	Lead inspector
Mike Maddison HMI	Assistant lead inspector
Kathleen Harris AI	Team inspector

## **Overall Effectiveness**

**Grade: 1**

### **The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:**

- trainees' high level of commitment to developing their practice, their very reflective approach and their responsiveness to the outstanding training and support they receive, which enables them to make rapid progress
- the partnership's reputation within the region for ensuring that, by the end of the course, trainees are highly professional, effective teachers, which leads to consistently high employment rates
- the very coherent, high-quality, individualised training provided by the partnership and its high expectations for trainees' performance throughout the course, which has led to an increase in the proportion of outstanding trainees by the end of their training
- trainees' subject knowledge, their very effective management of behaviour and their well-developed ability to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of different learners, enabling all groups to make good progress
- the drive, determination and success of the partnership's leaders and schools in sustaining existing strengths and promoting continuous improvement as a result of robust monitoring, incisive evaluation and very effective, targeted actions
- the partnership's very rigorous approach to recruitment and its responsiveness to the changing subject-specialist teacher needs of schools in the region.

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

### **The partnership should:**

- further increase the proportion of trainees whose teaching is outstanding by
  - carefully analysing best practice in post-lesson discussions across the partnership to ensure that all mentors and class teachers maximise the impact of this aspect of training on trainees' progress
  - ensuring all trainers focus sharply on setting subject-specific targets for trainees.

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The outcomes for trainees are outstanding.**

1. By the end of the course trainees are very skilful teachers who demonstrate high personal and professional standards. As a result they are much sought after by partnership and other schools in the region, and rates of employment are consistently high. When they complete their training, trainees' teaching is typically good and often outstanding. They are highly reflective, strongly committed to continually improving their practice and extremely willing to embrace the wider aspects of the teachers' role.
2. The proportion of trainees graded outstanding has risen since the last inspection. This reflects the ambition of the partnership to produce only high-quality teachers for the region. It also reflects the outstanding training provided and the excellent individual support that trainees receive from school-based colleagues, subject-specialist tutors and the course directors.
3. Trainees plan and structure their lessons very skilfully using a wide range of resources and approaches, including new technologies, so students are engaged and challenged to make at least good progress. They are extremely receptive to the high-quality advice given by subject mentors and specialist subject tutors and this, combined with their strong subject knowledge, gives them the skills and confidence to be creative and innovative in the classroom.
4. Trainees have a very well-developed understanding of how to meet the needs of different groups of learners and how students' individual barriers to learning can be overcome. Those interviewed by inspectors could provide detailed explanations of ways in which they had adapted their teaching or used alternative strategies to promote effective

learning for disabled students, those with special educational needs or those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. This is a strong feature of trainees' practice because very effective centre-based training combined with visits to partnership special schools, contrasting placement experiences and a wide variety of course tasks prepares them extremely successfully. Improvements over time to training in these areas are clearly reflected in trainees' current teaching and in the sharp rise in the proportion of former trainees rating their preparedness in these respects as at least good in the NQT survey.

5. Trainees are similarly confident in their ability to manage students' behaviour. They follow school policies closely, take effective steps to 'nip in the bud' any unacceptable behaviour and fully recognise that they have the responsibility to teach in a way that engages students and promotes good behaviour for learning. Although, at the time of the inspection, current trainees had only been in their placement schools for a relatively short period of time, they had quickly established positive relationships with their different classes enabling lessons to proceed well.
6. Partnership schools are highly positive about the skills and abilities of current and past trainees, and the NQTs they have appointed. Schools repeatedly noted that core trainees are 'school ready' when they start their first placement because pre-course tasks and the initial weeks of training have enabled them to develop quickly the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make rapid progress once they start teaching. Trainees on the School Direct programme are viewed equally positively when they join their second placement school in the spring term because their school-based experiences and the centre-based training have enabled them to make rapid progress.
7. The proportion of trainees who complete their training and gain QTS is high and on a rising trend over time. Most trainees also achieve a post-graduate qualification. A key factor in securing high completion and attainment rates is the extremely rigorous approach to recruitment. The process not only ensures trainees are suitable to teach but also determines whether they have the desire and determination to be good and outstanding practitioners. There are no marked differences in completion, employment or attainment rates between different groups of trainees.

### **The quality of training across the partnership is outstanding.**

8. Former and current trainees are highly satisfied with the quality of their training as shown by their responses to partnership evaluations, the NQT survey, Ofsted's online questionnaire and through views shared with the inspection team. They consistently praise the quality of support

provided by all those involved in the partnership and greatly appreciate the extent to which training is adapted to meet their individual needs.

9. The very careful tailoring of training to meet trainees' needs and the coherent combination of different training elements enables trainees to become good or better teachers very quickly. An extensive range of pre-course tasks, which are followed up in early subject-specialist training sessions, develop trainees' curriculum knowledge, encourage reflection and ensure gaps in subject knowledge start to be addressed. At the start of the course, training quickly provides the essentials needed to prepare both core and School Direct trainees to be effective in the classroom. As the programme continues, high-quality school-based experiences, focused tasks and valuable one-to-one support enable trainees to practise, reflect on and develop their skills and knowledge speedily.
10. Training has prepared current trainees very well for the impending changes to the National Curriculum. The trainees continue to work closely with specialist subject tutors and their placement schools to ensure they are fully prepared for the future by understanding and addressing implications for their practice.
11. Trainees are thoroughly prepared to manage students' behaviour through the combination of three specialist training sessions spread across the course, school-based training and their first-hand experiences. For each of the last two years, all those responding to the NQT survey rated this aspect of their training as good or very good. Current trainees are equally positive at the mid-point in the course. Trainees have well developed understanding of different forms of bullying and their role in tackling or reporting issues when they arise.
12. All trainees training to teach in the 11 to 16 age range gain first-hand experience of post-16 education through a training placement in an 11 to 18 school or time spent in a sixth-form college. This experience in conjunction with subject-specific training and individual study ensures they feel very confident to teach their specialist subject beyond GCSE. However, at this point in the course, those interviewed were less familiar with some of the wider changes to post-16 education. Links with Teesside University support health and social care trainees to develop successfully their understanding of progression routes post-19. All 11 to 16 trainees visit primary settings to explore the teaching of literacy, numeracy and their subject in Key Stage 2. Many trainees have a much more extensive experience as a 'subject specialist in residence' where they work collaboratively with primary teachers on a week-long subject project. These enhancement opportunities not only contribute fully to the development of their teaching but also ensure they have a very secure understanding of the typical skills and experience of pupils transferring to secondary school.

13. Placement schools are very carefully selected to meet trainees' development needs and to ensure a high-quality training experience is provided. Those chosen give trainees the opportunity to learn from observing good and outstanding teaching and the contrasting contexts of the two main placements enable trainees to become confident in teaching students with differing abilities and diverse learning needs.
14. Trainees benefit from excellent mentoring in schools. Mentors are selected because they are high-quality practitioners who are very skilled in promoting trainees' progress by prompting them to reflect on and improve their practice. This coaching is very effectively balanced with the provision of clear guidance, valuable practical advice and the setting and monitoring of developmental targets. As a result trainees very quickly develop their teaching skills and an understanding of how students learn. A partnership focus on improving the quality and frequency of subject-specific target setting has sharpened mentors' practice, but this is not consistently embedded across the partnership. Trainees also receive helpful feedback from class teachers following lesson observations, but this is not always effective in promoting their reflection and progress. The assessment of trainees is very accurate because the judgements of school-based mentors and tutors are robustly moderated by partnership tutors, course directors and external moderators.
15. General professional studies and subject-specific training place a strong emphasis on equipping trainees with the knowledge and skills that they need to promote literacy and numeracy effectively through their subject teaching. Almost all trainees who responded to Ofsted's online trainee questionnaire felt that they knew how to promote the development of students' literacy and mathematical skills, although data suggest they feel a little more confident in relation to literacy than mathematics. Observations of trainees' teaching and discussions with inspectors confirm trainees can successfully use a range of strategies to support students' literacy and mathematical skills development.

**The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding.**

16. All those involved in the partnership focus relentlessly on securing the best possible outcomes for trainees. Course leaders and those involved in partnership committees or groups are highly reflective about the partnership's effectiveness and are constantly seeking to bring about further improvement.
17. Partnership schools are exceedingly well engaged. They are fully involved in the ongoing development of the training programme, the



quality assurance of training, the monitoring of outcomes for trainees and shaping the partnership's strategic direction. School-based trainers appreciate this high level of involvement and that their contributions are valued. Leaders and managers take full account of the views of current trainees and former trainees in driving improvements to existing provision and identifying how the course could be enhanced further for future cohorts.

18. Leaders' monitoring of the partnership's effectiveness is extremely robust and their evaluation is incisive resulting in the very accurate identification of the partnership's strengths and areas for development. To achieve this they analyse a wide range of data and qualitative evidence including feedback relating to trainees' performance against the Teachers' Standards, trainees' evaluations of each different aspect of their training, the accuracy of assessment of trainees, and the findings of internal and external moderation. Subsequent action plans focus sharply on bringing about measurable improvements in provision and/or outcomes for trainees. The impact of actions is checked frequently to ensure planned improvements are being secured or to determine if alternative steps need to be taken.
19. Members of the quality assurance committee are robust in holding course leaders to account and this contributes very effectively to sustaining existing strengths and driving further improvement. For example, they have rightly sought to confirm that schools and subject-specialist tutors new to the partnership are maintaining existing high quality. Emerging issues, however small, are addressed in a very timely and effective way to secure improvements for current and future trainees.
20. Recruitment for both the core and School Direct programmes is highly effective in selecting trainees with the potential to be good or better teachers by the end of the course. High partnership expectations at the recruitment stage result in a number of trainees being given conditional offers, followed by reassessment, to ensure they are well suited to teaching, have strong subject knowledge and are able to manage the demands of the course. The partnership has been extremely responsive to the changing recruitment needs of schools in the region. There has been almost a complete change in the age-range and choice of subjects offered for training since the last inspection but, because these changes have met local recruitment needs so well, employment rates have remained consistently high.
21. The partnership has an outstanding capacity for further improvement. Against a backdrop of increasing cohort size and extensive change in the subjects offered for training, the strengths identified at the last inspection have been sustained and outcomes for trainees have

improved. The extension of the course-director team since the last inspection and the lead school's very effective support for the partnership have enabled high-quality provision and outcomes for trainees to be successfully maintained during some periods where one or more key personnel have been absent.

## **Annex: Partnership schools**

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Bishop Barrington School  
Haughton Academy  
Joseph Swan Academy  
King James I Academy  
St Bede's RC Academy, Lanchester  
St Robert of Newminster RC School  
Woodham Academy

## ITE partnership details

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