

Northern Lights SCITT ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

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

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty’s Inspector (HMI) 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?	2
The outcomes for trainees	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

Information about the secondary partnership

- Northern Lights SCITT was founded by two outstanding girls' schools, Skipton Girls' High School and Feversham College. The SCITT operates within the Northern Star Academies Trust. The partnership recruited its first trainees for the academic year 2015/16 and has not been previously inspected.
- The partnership offers secondary postgraduate training in English, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, history, modern foreign languages, design technology and computing. In 2016/17, there were 17 secondary trainees with specialisms in English, mathematics, biology, chemistry, history and modern foreign languages. There are currently 20 secondary trainees, one of whom was a deferral from 2015/16, with specialisms in English, mathematics, chemistry, geography, history and modern foreign languages.
- Those trainees who are successful gain a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) from Leeds Trinity University, and qualified teacher status (QTS) from Northern Lights SCITT, to teach in the 11 to 16 age range with post-16 enhancement.
- For the first time in 2017/18, the SCITT offered core postgraduate training for primary trainees for the five to 11 age range. There are five primary postgraduate trainees. From 2018/19, the SCITT will also offer School Direct salaried training for primary trainees.
- The SCITT has partnership schools in Bradford and North Yorkshire local authorities which provide placements for trainees in diverse settings.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- During stage 1 of the inspection, the inspector visited three schools and observed six trainees teach. The inspector held discussions with the trainees observed and with other trainees in the schools. The trainees' files were reviewed.
- During stage 2, the inspector visited three schools and observed six newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teach. The inspector held discussions with the NQTs observed and with other NQTs working in the schools. Pupils' books from the lessons observed were scrutinised.
- During both stages of the inspection, the inspector held discussions with school-based mentors, training managers, induction tutors and senior leaders, including headteachers. The inspector held meetings with representatives of the partnership and subject leads. At stage 1, the inspector met all the trainees not visited in schools. At stage 2, the inspector met a group of five NQTs not visited in schools.
- The inspector evaluated a wide range of documents, including the partnership's self-evaluation documents and their improvement plans, recruitment and selection records, trainee tracking and assessment information and records for

the completion rates and employment of trainees. At stage 2, the inspector reviewed the partnership's response to the emerging areas for improvement identified at the end of stage 1 of the inspection.

- The inspector took into account 14 responses to the trainee online questionnaire from the summer term 2017.
- At both stages of the inspection, the inspector checked that the partnership met all the statutory criteria, including those for safeguarding, for initial teacher training (ITT).

Inspection team

Helen Lane, Senior HMI (lead inspector)

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

Key strengths of the secondary partnership

- Partnership leaders have a highly ambitious strategic vision and are committed to providing high-quality teachers in areas where recruitment is difficult.
- The partnership is rapidly improving as a result of the relentless drive for outstanding outcomes from exceptional leaders.
- Recruitment processes are rigorous and effectively promote the recruitment of resilient trainees that help to meet the local need in shortage subjects.
- The partnership promotes equality and diversity, both in the range of schools collaborating in the partnership and in the recruitment of trainees from underrepresented groups, including mature trainees.
- Improved systems of quality assurance at all levels have resulted in rapid improvements in the quality of mentoring, particularly over the last year.
- Training opportunities and pastoral support are highly personalised to meet individual trainees' needs so that trainees and NQTs become confident teachers.
- Trainees develop strong subject and curriculum knowledge, which enables them to plan well-structured sequences of learning to engage pupils.

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

The partnership should:

- continue the drive to raise completion and employment rates
- ensure that trainees are able to apply their training to plan learning activities which meet the needs of pupils with different abilities, especially for the least and most able

- provide trainees with further practical opportunities to strengthen their behaviour management skills in a variety of settings.

Inspection judgements

1. The outstanding leaders of the Northern Lights SCITT, including the strategic management board and the steering groups, demonstrate a relentless drive for continuous improvement in the quality of training and outcomes for trainees. Since the appointment of the director of the SCITT in April 2016, the partnership has improved rapidly. All stakeholders rightly hold the director in high esteem. The capacity for further improvement is excellent. All partnership staff demonstrate energy and enthusiasm for the success of the SCITT.
2. Leaders' commitment to recruiting high-quality teachers for schools where recruitment is difficult is exceptional. The SCITT is coordinating the 'Bradford for Teaching' campaign, which has received considerable financial backing from Bradford council. The SCITT has recently made a successful bid in partnership with other West Yorkshire SCITTs for an innovation fund to pilot innovative approaches to the provision of ITT, including increasing the supply of teachers from underrepresented groups, such as male trainees and those who speak English as an additional language.
3. Key to the success of the SCITT in training teachers to meet local needs in Bradford and North Yorkshire is the diverse range of partner schools. Trainees have the opportunity to undertake complementary placements and gain the skills needed to work in a variety of socio-economic contexts as well as schools judged to require improvement. Overall, trainees are well prepared for their NQT year.
4. Effective quality assurance processes are in place to check the quality of mentoring and the rigour of assessment. As a result, the quality of training and the outcomes for trainees have improved. More rigorous systems are now in place to assess trainees' attainment using the teachers' standards. Subject leaders and the strategic management board carefully moderate the assessment of trainees. Leaders take decisive action to ensure that grades for trainees' outcomes are correct. Assessment is accurate and rigorous.
5. The recruitment policy has improved since the new director took up post. As a result, applicants for 2017/18 underwent more rigorous recruitment procedures. The recruitment process engages partnership schools fully. An analysis of evidence from school-based mentors and subject leads shows that the vast majority of this current cohort of trainees are already successful in their current placements. Further demands will be added to the recruitment process for 2018/19 to ensure that trainees have strong written English skills.
6. The self-evaluation document is honest and reflects what leaders know about the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership very well. Improvement plans

are ambitious. They contain actions planned against rigorous success criteria which reflect the determination of leaders that this partnership will be outstanding. Leaders have been quick to address the emerging areas for improvement identified at stage 1 of the inspection. It is too soon to see the full impact of these actions. Stakeholders report that the partnership constantly evaluates its work and responds rapidly to the views of trainees and schools. The impact of this response can be seen in the changes to policy and practice brought about as a result of the feedback from stakeholders. For example, the programme for secondary trainees has been altered in 2017/18 in response to suggestions from last year's trainees.

7. As a result of the growth of the SCITT, leaders have taken succession planning seriously. New appointments will support the work of the director. These appointments are at an early stage and it is too soon to measure the impact of the additional staff.
8. The progress of trainees is regularly monitored through lesson observations, reports from mentors and moderation of evidence against the teachers' standards. Consequently, swift action is taken to support trainees if they are starting to fall behind. All trainees exceeded minimum standards in 2017 as a result of the impact of support plans. They receive timely and active pastoral support and, consequently, there were no withdrawals in 2016/17. NQTs say they received outstanding support from partnership staff during their training. NQTs speak about experiencing 'something special' as a result of the small size and personal approach of the SCITT. Trainees and NQTs are resilient, confident and reflective practitioners, strongly committed to self-improvement.
9. In 2016, all trainees who completed the postgraduate year gained QTS. Much of the quality of trainees' teaching was judged to be good, with some that was outstanding. In 2017, the majority of trainees' teaching was graded as outstanding, but for a very small proportion of trainees their teaching was less than good. Completion rates were broadly in line with the average in both 2016 and 2017. There were too few trainees to give a judgement about the attainment of different groups.
10. NQTs strongly value the support they have received in applying for, and being appointed to, teaching posts. Staff at the SCITT work tirelessly to ensure that trainees secure posts. As a result, recruitment rates have improved from below average in 2016. At the time, the second stage of the inspection was announced, all the trainees who completed in 2017 had secured a teaching post, although a very small number were temporary posts.
11. Leaders have high expectations of all those involved in training new teachers. Expert mentors must meet strict criteria before being recruited. Mentor training is regular and focuses appropriately on the stage of the training year. The director ensures that all mentors receive training by running sessions in

different locations and by visiting schools personally. The vast majority of trainees are very positive about the impact of mentors on their development. In the very few instances where mentoring has been less successful, leaders have taken swift action to address the issues and ensure that trainees complete a successful placement.

12. Training is well organised. Training activities are carefully planned to ensure that all the teachers' standards are covered. Both subject knowledge days and professional studies activities make a strong contribution to trainees' development. As a result, attainment of trainees has improved.
13. Trainees rightly value the subject knowledge sessions and the subject leads highly. They deliver training and support to enable the trainees to become successful teachers. Trainees gain strong subject and curriculum knowledge which they use to plan effective sequences of learning. Leaders took swift action to address the concerns shared by a small number of trainees at the first stage of the inspection about the consistency of subject knowledge days across different subjects. These subject knowledge sessions are now quality-assured and subject leaders plan the programmes together to ensure consistency. Trainees enjoy high-quality professional studies inputs from specialists in their field. For example, a session on behaviour management at the end of the summer term was described as inspirational.
14. The majority of trainees and NQTs plan learning which engages pupils and supports them in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Most trainees and NQTs adapt their teaching to support pupils' different learning needs effectively, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, most pupils make good progress. However, despite additional training about differentiation at the end of stage 1, not all NQTs are skilful in adapting their teaching to meet the needs of the least able and most able pupils.
15. Trainees and NQTs have skills in developing pupils' writing, speaking and listening. Most NQTs use questioning very effectively to develop their pupils' understanding and speaking skills. Much of the work seen during the scrutiny of pupils' books demonstrates the effective development of extended writing.
16. Trainees receive effective training about the theory of behaviour management and have the opportunity to practise their learning in two complementary placements. Trainees and NQTs promote a positive climate for learning in classrooms based on good relationships with pupils and mutual trust. Most NQTs use schools' behaviour policies successfully, but a small minority find classroom management more challenging.
17. Trainees' and NQTs' commitment to the wider life of the school and their professional practice are rightly valued by school leaders. NQTs have high

standards of personal conduct. They are effective form tutors, confident in their responsibility to safeguard pupils and ensure that they are prepared for life in modern Britain. NQTs understand the signs that pupils are vulnerable or being bullied. They take opportunities to develop their relationships with pupils through involvement in school clubs, visits and intervention sessions.

18. The partnership builds on the understanding of trainees about different phases in education through joint sessions for primary and secondary trainees. Secondary trainees have had opportunities to promote their understanding of key stage 2 and post-16 teaching through appropriate placements.
19. Mentors have received additional training about target-setting. As a result, targets set during the training are focused on improving outcomes for pupils. Induction tutors confirm that the career-entry profiles and the targets set at the end of training have provided a helpful basis for the transition from the SCITT to the employing school.
20. Leaders take seriously their responsibility to support teachers early in their career. Staff have contacted all of the schools employing former trainees. One new NQT induction tutor spoke positively about the training opportunity to undertake joint lesson observations with an assistant director from the SCITT. The partnership has joined forces with other local SCITTs to provide a helpful range of workshops for NQTs during 2017/18. NQTs found the Northern Lights' workshop on behaviour management thought-provoking and useful.
21. The partnership complies with all aspects of the ITT criteria. It meets statutory duties for safeguarding, promoting equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination. Leaders have ensured that trainees fully understand the safe use of technology and social media.

Annex: Partnership schools

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

Beckfoot Oakbank School, Keighley

Feversham College, Bradford

Queensbury School, Bradford

Skipton Girls' High School, Skipton

Titus Salt School, Baildon

Upper Wharfedale School, Threshfield

ITE partnership details

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Stage 2	20 November 2017
Lead inspector	Helen Lane SHMI
Type of ITE partnership	SCITT
Phases provided	Secondary
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Previous inspection report	N/A
Provider address	Skipton Girls' High School Gargrave Road Skipton BD23 1QL



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