



# The framework for the inspection of initial teacher education 2012

A SCORE response to the Ofsted consultation

31 January 2012

1. SCORE welcomes this Ofsted consultation into Initial Teacher Education (ITE) inspections. Effective Ofsted inspections of ITE are crucial to ensure (and enhance) the impact of a high quality teaching workforce. It is essential Ofsted applies a consistent approach to inspections across all ITE provision given the numerous teacher training routes on offer (e.g. Teach First, PGCE, Graduate Teacher Programme etc).
2. SCORE agrees with Ofsted that the teacher trainees' outcomes must remain at the heart of the inspection. The document goes some way to define these outcomes and on the whole we agree. SCORE particularly welcomes the focus of this document on:
  - Raising the bar of ITE through inspections with clearer and more challenging criteria for judging an ITE partnership to be outstanding or good.
  - Adopting a more proportionate approach to inspection that is informed by a robust risk assessment process. This will reduce over-inspection.
  - Collecting retention data of teachers; these data will be extremely valuable in informing policy on ITE.
3. SCORE is pleased to note the consultation document highlights the need to incorporate a thematic element into the inspection framework in order to gain more evidence on the quality of trainees' outcome in teaching specific subjects and aspects. However we are concerned the framework does not go far enough. There should be a much greater focus on the subject specific elements of the Initial Teacher Education, including pedagogical content knowledge and subject knowledge.
4. SCORE strongly supports subject specialist teaching in the sciences at primary and secondary level education. Initial Teacher Education providers have a responsibility to ensure trainees are selected on the basis that they have the right level of subject knowledge to begin with (whether this is through degree or Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses). The providers are then responsible for developing trainees' pedagogy, subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge before awarding qualified teacher status. Any framework for inspecting ITE must therefore include a judgement about subject specific provision.
5. SCORE recognises that any ITE partnership (and therefore Ofsted's inspection) is limited by the short duration of teacher training courses. SCORE believes that there are strong arguments for extending the length of teacher training courses to 18–24 months, bringing courses more in line with overseas masters level ITT and enabling providers to cover subject knowledge and subject pedagogical knowledge more substantially. As well as strengthening the subject knowledge of trainees, science teacher education has to include practical as well as theoretical aspects of the subject and therefore needs an extended period of training. Trainee teachers need to learn practical techniques, the management of learning in a laboratory, and also in the outdoors. It must not be assumed that highly qualified graduates, attracted

through the bursary offers, will all have sufficient depth and breadth of school-level subject knowledge to become effective teachers without substantial further provision as part of their ITT course. Extending the course would allow for proper development of subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and therefore make it more reasonable to assess these as part of QTS at the end of initial teacher training

6. This aside SCORE recommends the subject specific element of the Ofsted ITE inspection includes the following:
  - a. The trainee attainment referred to in the framework should include clear guidelines on a trainee's acquisition of subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. For instance, Paragraph 7 in the consultation document should include acquisition of sound subject knowledge and good pedagogical content knowledge as one of the trainee outcomes. Paragraph 19 should also include subject knowledge in addition to pedagogical content knowledge.
  - b. Presently there is no formal assessment of subject knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge throughout teacher training. One option would be for ITE institutions to include a subject knowledge test either prior to selection and/or pedagogical content knowledge test to obtain qualified teacher status. These types of tests are currently being developed by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation in collaboration with the Institute of Physics and Royal Society of Chemistry.
  - c. A proportion of the inspections should include subject specific inspections to ensure the unique aspects of particular subjects are appropriately covered by the ITE provider. For the sciences, ITE should include sufficient practical work experience, both laboratory and field work. This should be overseen by an appropriately trained teacher in the sciences to demonstrate the purposes of practical work in science teaching. Programmes such as the Getting Practical Programme would provide a useful guide to how practical work should be delivered by teachers.
  - d. Effective subject specific inspections must be undertaken by an inspector with relevant subject expertise. The subject inspectors within Ofsted are often hugely knowledgeable. Their expertise is underused in terms of helping teachers/trainers move forward. Whilst we understand that the number of speaking engagements a subject officer can undertake each year are limited, meetings with teachers/trainers are excellent opportunities for Ofsted to use their knowledge to promote outstanding practice, to take the challenge to others, point teachers/trainers in the right direction of approved resources and to promote genuine dialogue about improving science practice. Ofsted should enable and encourage this to happen more often.
7. SCORE welcomes Ofsted's commitment to track teachers throughout their careers to gather employment rates and retention data. SCORE would be interested in the data Ofsted obtains which will be invaluable for informing policy on ITE.

8. There should be an intrinsic link between Ofsted inspections at ITE and school inspections. For instance, Paragraph 38 in the consultation document should include placement schools (or trainees' views of them) as part of the inspection activities. We strongly support the Select Committee's recommendation that only schools that participate in a training partnership should be awarded the top grade in Ofsted inspection. Furthermore, Ofsted should inspect the quality of support offered to trainees by their school-based mentors; currently, the existence and training of these mentors is checked by Ofsted when they inspect ITE establishments; and the quality of teaching is inspected in the schools. However, the quality of the mentoring provision for trainees in schools is slipping through the net.
9. While the remit of this consultation is for the inspections of ITE providers, teacher training does not stop at the end of ITE. Schools have a responsibility to support Newly Qualified Teachers, particularly during their first five years in the profession (with developing subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge) and this should be part of the Ofsted school inspections.
10. ITE providers also have a responsibility to recruit as well as select trainees (this is particularly pertinent for science subjects including physics and chemistry ITE). The inspection should evaluate how well a provider does this and SCORE would like to see reference to this in Paragraph 14 and Paragraph 38 in the consultation document.
11. SCORE recommends the framework for Ofsted ITE inspections includes inspections of school based ITE and that these inspections specifically look for evidence of its effectiveness and its impact to the pupils in that school.