

University of Chester

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address Faculty of Education
Riverside
Chester
CH1 1SQ

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist inspectors 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. The University of Chester Faculty of Education and Children's Services works in partnership with a range of schools to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) in the primary and secondary phases, and to qualified teacher learning and skills status (QTLS) in the further education (FE) phase. The primary phase of the university works in partnership with schools spread across six local authorities in the north west of England. It offers a four-year undergraduate course leading to a Bachelor of Education (BEd) and two one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses, one in primary education and one in education for Early Years. The Early Years PGCE course is based on the Warrington campus of the university. The university also offers ITE, leading to QTS, through the award of a PGCE in seven secondary subjects. The University of Chester works in partnership with Warrington Collegiate and West Cheshire College to deliver ITE for FE teachers and trainers, which leads to the award of certificate in education (CertEd). The award is endorsed by Standards Verification UK. The University has formal Partnership Agreements with each of the colleges and these are designated

'Associate College of the University'. The university validates the awards and has overall responsibility for the quality of provision.

A commentary on the provision

4. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes.

- High levels of academic and pastoral care for trainees which result in levels of achievement which are consistently at least good.
- Effective central and school-based training and very good use of school and college-based colleagues to deliver training.
- Very good use of resources to support training and promote good attainment.
- Planning for improvement is detailed and robust. Evaluation cycles are well established and result in improving outcomes for trainees.

5. There are particularly strong features in some programmes that could be applied to other programmes or aspects of the provision.

- The exceptionally detailed and accurate analysis of data to identify strengths, weaknesses and trends in the primary phase.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

6. The University of Chester Faculty of Education and Children's Services works in partnership with around 400 schools in six local authorities: Cheshire; Warrington; Halton; Wirral; Shropshire; and Manchester. It provides ITE in the 3 to 7 and 5 to 11 age ranges for both a BEd course and for postgraduate trainees. At the time of the inspection there were 345 trainees following the four-year BEd course (across all four years) and 44 on the one-year postgraduate courses.

Key strengths

7. The key strengths are:

- the innovative, determined and highly effective leadership and management of the primary phase with a clear focus on improving communication, strengthening partnership working and raising attainment
- the very accurate and detailed collection and analysis of data to inform priorities and improve practice
- the highly reflective trainees who demonstrate very good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how pupils learn
- very strong centre-based training from a highly effective and experienced team of tutors
- robust and rigorous assessment procedures, resulting in most trainees making progress which is at least good
- a rich and creative curriculum which offers trainees opportunities to immerse themselves in understanding the place of the child in the wider community
- excellent use of resources, particularly the expertise to be found in partner schools and in the wider community.

Recommendations

8. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- ensure improvement and action planning are more specific in linking outcomes for trainees to measurable criteria for success. Targets for improvements in attainment should reflect trainees' good and outstanding starting points.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

9. Provision across the partnership is of a consistently high quality. Trainees have an excellent understanding of the place of the child in the wider community and are exceptionally well prepared to teach. Schools and a broad range of partners are enthusiastically encouraged to contribute to a partnership which is dynamic, forward looking, and very receptive to suggestions for improvement. It prepares trainees very well for beginning their careers in teaching. Trainees say that they are confident and very well prepared to begin their teaching careers. This view is endorsed wholeheartedly by headteachers who say that newly qualified teachers from the University of Chester are not only of a high quality but are well prepared to quickly assume additional responsibilities.

10. Selection procedures are rigorous. Trainees describe a very comprehensive recruitment and selection procedure. Materials available to prospective trainees make clear the high aspirations and rigorous demands of the course. Applicants are under no illusions about the high levels of commitment required. Selection and interview procedures make good use of the experience and expertise of headteachers and members of the faculty to ensure the recruitment of high quality trainees. Interviews include a skills audit which is used very effectively to identify trainees' particular strengths and areas of weakness. This audit contributes to the trainees' individual training plan, which is a very good tool for providing additional support for areas of weakness, and extra challenge for those trainees with high levels of prior skill and experience. Useful constructive feedback is offered to unsuccessful candidates, who often reapply and are successful in securing a place. Trainees' progress against their individual targets is regularly monitored and discussed with them, resulting in excellent academic support on both the BEd and PGCE course. The faculty has been successful in attracting men onto the training courses, with a significant rise in successful applications for 2010/11. The faculty is committed to increasing the representation of minority ethnic trainees and has adopted a range of strategies, such as a targeted approach to recruitment and attendance at recruitment fairs in inner city areas, for example, Birmingham and Newham. So far these strategies have had little impact and in most years recruitment of minority ethnic trainees is 2-3% below the targets set for it but broadly in line with local demography. This target has now been reduced by 3% in recognition of the recruitment difficulties the faculty faces. Employment rates are high, with 93% of the most recent leavers who responded to the faculty's survey being employed as teachers.

11. Most trainees make good progress towards achieving the standards required for QTS and over time it is an improving picture. Over the last four years attainment has been consistently good, with a significant increase in the proportion of trainees graded as outstanding in 2010. The proportion of trainees judged to be satisfactory has been about 10% in three of the last four years, and stands at about 11% for the current cohort. The proportion of trainees judged outstanding this year rose by seven percentage points, to 55%. The faculty is committed to analysing trends over time, in order to ensure all trainees achieve as well as they can. Analysis of how well specific groups such as men and women, and those on different courses, progress is exceptionally thorough.

12. All trainees spoken with were confident and demonstrated very good subject knowledge. They are particularly well prepared to teach letters and sounds, (phonics), and information communication technology (ICT). The promotion of trainees' confident use of ICT to enliven their teaching has been a strength of the provision over a number of years. Trainees' confidence in teaching phonics is more recent, and gained in response to requests from trainees for more focused support. All trainees spoken with during the inspection felt they had a very good understanding of *Every Child Matters* and a clear picture of how children learn and develop in the community. Inspection evidence from discussions and an analysis of trainees' files and assignments confirms this view. Trainees are very well prepared to teach in culturally diverse communities, with one trainee describing in detail her work in educating pupils about the lives of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities.

13. The faculty has been proactive in ensuring that BEd trainees have experience of working in a range of school contexts and non-standard settings. These include: Children's Centres; Greater Manchester Police; City Learning Centres and a range of galleries and museums. The work with Greater Manchester Police to promote a greater understanding of community cohesion is particularly innovative and provides very good tracking of progress against some of the standards for QTS.

14. The quality of central and school-based training is outstanding. Both provide excellent breadth and balance and result in highly reflective, confident and enthusiastic trainees. Each programme builds on the professional skills and knowledge trainees have previously acquired. Training programmes are carefully designed and regularly reviewed. Excellent balance between university tuition and school-based training results in good cohesion between what trainees learn in lectures and workshops and their application of that learning in classrooms. This is in part because school placement handbooks are explicit about exactly what it is that trainees are expected to do on a week-by-week basis. It is also because communication across the partnership is very good. Recent changes to the partnership arrangements have resulted in a tangible sense of shared commitment and enthusiasm. All partners share a passion for enabling trainees to become skilled teachers. School-based partners say that members of the faculty are readily available and highly responsive to suggestions for improvement. Trainees also speak highly of the ease of communication with all members of the faculty and their quick and ready response.

15. The promotion of equality of opportunity and valuing diversity is good. Pastoral and academic support for trainees is very effective and is a significant contributor to high completion rates. Trainees with particular learning and other needs are well supported and case studies evidence a good range of support and good partnership working with outside agencies. There is a very effective compliance team and safeguarding officer, who have an excellent understanding of all aspects of safeguarding. Training for safeguarding is of high quality with all of those who interview trainees having certified attendance at safer recruitment training. While attainment is rising, over the last four years, not all trainees have achieved as well as they should. The proportion judged satisfactory has been about 10%.

16. Resources are used exceptionally well to enhance the quality of provision. Additional external funding is efficiently used, such as that provided to work with 12 schools as part of the leading literacy schools project, funding for the promotion of ICT control technology, and training for future primary teachers of modern foreign languages. Working with a wide range of partners to provide exciting complementary placements is a particular strength. Trainees speak with great enthusiasm about the significant impact the wide range of special projects have on their teaching. These include a creative arts project based on Chester the Giant City, Sing Up, and a focus on international practice, which saw a group of trainees travel to Finland. Communication across the partnership is enhanced by the easy to access virtual learning environment (VLE) which provides good information about what is happening in the university and beyond. It also provides a forum where trainees can ask questions and share experiences and a depository for lecture notes, teaching resources and 'top tips' which trainees share among themselves. Trainees also speak very highly about the wide range and ready accessibility of resources to help them in their teaching, such as science equipment and historical artefacts.

17. The faculty makes excellent use of experienced tutors from partnership schools to provide trainees with practical and up-to-date insights into important topics such as the teaching of mathematics and how to understand school attainment data. Trainees spoke with enthusiasm about a training session on the interpretation of 'RaiseonLine' data which was led by a headteacher. They also expressed an eagerness to learn more about how attainment data can be used to track and accelerate pupils' progress. All trainees, whether following the BEd or PGCE course, say that university tutors are inspirational and provide excellent individualised support and challenge. Tutors are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They model best practice in their teaching, enabling trainees to experience and discuss a range of teaching strategies and decide which best meet the needs of learners. Trainees are very well prepared for their future careers. As one headteacher said of NQTs from Chester: 'They have the edge when it comes to professionalism and are ready to take on the challenge. They are very well organised and prepared.' Employment data indicate they are also much in demand.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 1**

18. Innovative and forward-looking leadership is securely based on robust and accurate self-evaluation. There has been a relentless drive for improvement and a significant rise in the proportion of trainees graded outstanding over the last two years. The key priority for the faculty was to strengthen the partnership through devolving responsibility to the point at which it could have greatest impact. This strategy has been highly successful. School-based mentors are now much clearer about their roles and are revelling in their new responsibilities. This has been possible because communication across the partnership is good, and priorities are agreed among all of the partners and widely shared. Mentors say they have been very well prepared to assume new responsibilities and that the support and professional development provided by the university is of a consistently high quality.

19. Data are used very effectively to analyse trends, identify strengths and weaknesses, and inform priorities for improvement. The collection, analysis, and use of data to inform improvements are detailed, accurate and exceptionally thorough. Programme leaders and others use self-evaluation very well as part of a comprehensive review cycle which involves all faculty staff, trainees and other partners. For example, trainees identified a need for more training in mathematics. This resulted in changes to training, additional workshops, and to more rapid progress. Trainees were particularly appreciative of the extra-curricular sessions which they say boosted their subject knowledge and confidence to teach mathematics. Currently, the two most important tools for strategic planning are the self-evaluation document (SED) and the annual monitoring review. These are used to inform the faculty improvement plan and action plans. Improvement planning is detailed and well informed by an analysis of outcomes that identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. Strategic planning would be improved further by ensuring that success criteria are more specific in linking actions to expected outcomes for trainees, particularly in respect of the anticipated impact on attainment. As part of its commitment to sustained improvement, the faculty is considering ways in which its self-evaluation cycle can be simplified.

20. Leadership across the partnership has an excellent capacity to anticipate change and respond to local and national initiatives. The leadership team has been at the forefront of developing the role of the partnership and refining the role of partner schools. Curriculum design is innovative and creative. The many wide-ranging partnerships greatly enhance trainees' understanding of cultural cohesion and 'the place of the child' within a wider view of society. Course modules looking at global dimensions help trainees appreciate the importance of learning within a national and international context. The opportunity for trainees to work with a school causing concern has provided valuable additional experience and provided good support within a local context. Trainees are very well prepared to teach phonics and cross-curricular ways of working. This not only prepares trainees very well but helps partner schools to keep abreast of developing practice and initiatives. One mentor spoke of the valuable additional expertise trainees bring to the school in areas such as the use of ICT and science.

21. The faculty has good improvement plans in place, with a clear focus on increasing the proportion of trainees judged to be outstanding. The provider's record of improvement since it was last inspected, coupled with dynamic and committed leadership and very effective management, result in an outstanding capacity to improve.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

22. The University of Chester offers ITE leading to QTS, and the award of a PGCE in the following secondary subjects: art; drama; mathematics; modern foreign languages; physical education; religious education; and science. All courses cover the 11 to 16 age range with sixth form enhancement. At the time of the inspection there were 139 trainees on the secondary programme. The partnership includes around 85 secondary schools across the north west of England. These include 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 schools in both urban and rural settings.

Key strengths

23. The key strengths are:

- the good progress the trainees make, which is due largely to the excellent individual, pastoral and academic support they receive
- trainees' good understanding of whole-school issues, which is developed well by the effective professional studies course
- the range of good teaching skills, inspired by the enthusiastic and imaginative centre-based training
- trainees' up-to-date knowledge, which is due to their tutors' ability to anticipate and plan for change
- the development of trainees as reflective practitioners through the thoughtful design of the course and the challenging guidance they receive from their trainers
- the very well-conceived improvement plans, which have brought about considerable improvements in the programme and in trainees' achievement.

Recommendations

24. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:

- ensure its data are accurate and used better to monitor and evaluate the course
- increase the numbers of trainees completing the course, particularly in mathematics and science
- avoid grading trainees too highly, midway through the course
- make sure that all schools used for the second placement are able to help trainees meet their targets.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

25. Most trainees make progress to become good teachers by the end of the course. The provider makes bold decisions in selecting some trainees to shortage subjects where recruitment has fallen recently to below target in some subjects. The number of trainees successfully completing the course has been below average, particularly in mathematics and science. According to the provider's own information, most secure teaching posts, despite a recent decline in employment opportunities locally.

26. Trainees enjoy all elements of the training thoroughly. It has several salient strengths. One is the tutors' evident enthusiasm for their subject, which rubs off on trainees. Another is the improved professional studies programme, which is now a much appreciated part of the course. This gives trainees a very good understanding of whole-school issues. Above all, trainees welcome the days spent at the university during the first placement, which provide much needed opportunities to 'recharge their batteries', and learn from each other and from their tutors in order to prepare for the next week in school.

27. A long established feature of the course is the subject enrichment week, which gives trainees exciting opportunities to develop skills in unusual settings. Religious education trainees, for example, gained valuable experience of teaching multicultural and multilingual classes in London, a valuable opportunity, given the lack of similar schools in the partnership. In physical education, trainees have developed skills in outdoor activities such as orienteering. Drama and art trainees have enjoyed stimulating projects in Venice and Prague, which, among other things, have enhanced their empathy with learners who speak English as an additional language.

28. The trainees have a particular strength in preparing lesson and medium-term plans. These are based on trainees' good understanding of how to ensure their pupils make progress in and between lessons. Trainees make innovative use of resources or introduce lessons in an imaginative way that captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm; for example, in mathematics one trainee used ancient Aztec codes to introduce a topic on algebra. These strong teaching skills are due to the enthusiastic and, in their own words, 'inspiring' teaching they receive at the university. They have good ideas about how to personalise learning to match the needs of individuals in their class, to a large extent because of the highly personalised approach to training adopted by the partnership. They are interested in and knowledgeable about *Every Child Matters*. For example, from an early stage in the course they learn about, and quickly become interested in, inter-agency working and the importance of the common assessment framework. Trainees receive a high level of pastoral and academic support and are extremely well organised. This can be seen in the systematic way they have arranged the key documents in their files.

29. Trainees' subject knowledge is generally good, though some specific aspects are weak in a small number of trainees; these include the second foreign language for someone on the modern languages course, or specific skills in one of the activity

areas in physical education. In mathematics, trainees' excellent subject knowledge results in imaginative approaches to teaching and very good planning.

30. Trainees make rapid progress because tutors' initial assessment of their strengths and weaknesses leads to individual training plans which are firmly based on their needs. For example, following their interview, those who need support are directed to subject enhancement courses in modern languages, science or mathematics. Some trainees are expected to spend time in different types of school if their prior experience suggests they would benefit. During the first days of the course, tutors make a more detailed initial assessment before setting individual targets for the term and deciding on the most appropriate first placement. Tutors also give trainees an initial attainment grade. This work is at a very early stage of development and some tutors are uncertain about its use, although programme managers recognise its potential for measuring the progress trainees make over the course.

31. Throughout the year, trainees receive very helpful feedback from tutors and mentors. They are set relevant targets and their progress towards them is closely monitored. Where relevant, these targets are specific to the subject they teach. For instance, in modern languages some trainees are expected to use the foreign language more in their lessons; in physical education, trainees have to develop their experience in specific activity areas. At the end of the first placement, further targets are set for trainees and they are given an interim grade. In some subjects these grades are unrealistically high, giving some trainees a misplaced confidence in their ability. With other trainees, it gives the erroneous impression of regression in the second half of the course.

32. The partnership with schools is strong. Subject mentors are well trained and provide valuable support for trainees. They receive ample relevant guidance and support from the faculty, with which they describe communications as excellent. This helps bring about a high level of consistency in the school-based training. The professional mentor has a much stronger role in assuring the quality of the school experience, a clear improvement since the last inspection. They routinely undertake paired lesson observations and critically scrutinise records of the mentors' work with trainees. The partnership uses the skills of their schools' staff most effectively; teachers, for example, often make valuable contributions to the course as visiting lecturers. Not only does this make for a very efficient use of resources, it also ensures that the training is highly practical and contributes to the good progress made by the trainees.

33. For most trainees tutors are able to provide a final placement that is well matched to the needs identified at the end of the first placement. For example, a trainee who needed to develop skills in managing challenging behaviour was placed in a school with classes that would give them the relevant experience and a mentor who would give them the support.

34. This closeness of match is not achieved in all cases. Modern language trainees needing to develop their ability to use the foreign language in lessons are not always placed in a school that can help them to do it. Physical education trainees do not all get enough opportunity to develop their skills in all activity areas. Sometimes a

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

35. The provider knows its strengths and weaknesses well. It makes excellent use of a wide range of information to assess where it needs to improve. For example, the recent report of the chief external examiner recognised the potential for increasing the number of trainees who reach an outstanding level by the end of the course. Other sources of information include the regular surveying of trainees' responses to different elements of the training and the tutors' identification of specific QTS standards that need more attention.

36. While the evaluation of the programme is accurate and well focused on outcomes, some of the evaluations at subject level are too descriptive and provide insufficient analysis of the effectiveness or impact of the course. Managers' use of some types of data requires further improvement. The self-evaluation document contains figures relating to recruitment and retention which are inaccurate. The brief progress review in the programme's improvement plan uses unreliable data that give the misleading impression the course is deteriorating. The over-generous grading by some subject mentors at the end of the first placement limits the scope for managers to use this information for self-evaluation. Some end-of-course attainment data are not sufficiently well analysed to judge the relative performance of different groups, for example, to compare the performance of men and women or of minority ethnic trainees. Although the evaluation of the programme is sharp and focused on outcomes, some of the evaluations at subject level are too descriptive and provide insufficient analysis of the effectiveness or impact of the course.

37. The programme, despite its small size, draws on a wide range of expertise at the university and in partnership schools; courses are extremely up-to-date. This was evident in trainees' acute awareness of current matters. Trainees in religious education, for example, already knew about an Ofsted report on their subject even though it had been published less than a week before the inspection. The close collaboration of faculty and school staff and their shared commitment to continuous improvement mean that programme leaders are well placed to keep the course at the cutting edge of national developments.

38. Planning for improvement is excellent. The programme improvement plan accurately identifies the most important priorities for development. These are clearly and explicitly linked to the programme's self-evaluation. The overall aim is for excellence. The plan's objectives and success criteria are sharply focused on trainees' outcomes. Part of the plan is appropriately designed to improve specific QTS standards. The links between the programme plan and the subject plans are strong and this helps ensure all partners are aware of the priorities and how to achieve them. Subject action plans are also focused on trainees' outcomes. An example is the religious education plan, which seeks to develop trainees' familiarity with different subject pedagogies.

39. This high-quality planning has helped to ensure rapid improvement in the programme since the last inspection. The previous report's points for action and consideration – the role of the professional mentor, the focus of improvement plans on outcomes, and the effectiveness of the professional studies course – have all been tackled very effectively. Furthermore, and more importantly, the provider's data show an improvement in trainees' attainment, and very recently in the numbers recruited to and completing the course.

Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

Context

40. The University of Chester works in partnership with four primary and eight secondary schools to offer an employment-based route into teaching. The schools are spread across a wide area extending from Chester, Warrington, Manchester and the Wirral to Lancashire and Shropshire. With the exception of one secondary school which is offering placements for two trainees, trainees are placed singly in schools. All trainees undertake a second school placement which is a minimum of four weeks long.

41. At the time of the inspection, there were four trainees training to teach in the primary-age phase and nine trainees training to teach in the secondary-age phase. Two secondary trainees specialised in physical education, two in art, one in mathematics, three in drama and there was one self-funded trainee specialising in dance/drama. One of the secondary trainees commenced her training in March and is being fast-tracked to complete in December.

Key strengths

42. The key strengths are:

- the very good progress made by trainees from the outset of the training, which is a direct outcome of rigorous auditing of individual needs and a well designed individual training plan
- leaders' capacity to plan strategically and to ensure that improvement is sustained and sharply focused upon improving outcomes for trainees
- the high retention and employment rates; the training programme successfully meets the needs of the local community
- the trainees' commitment to, and ownership of, their professional development, which leads to them having a very good understanding of their strengths and areas for development
- the trainees' knowledge of current educational thinking and national initiatives, which is promoted by leaders who are highly effective at communicating on a national, regional and local level
- the trainees' increasing knowledge and understanding of how to teach early literacy skills using a synthetic phonics approach, which is nurtured by effectively planned training sessions and visits to schools to observe excellent practice
- the trainees' very good understanding of linking theory with practice, which is aided by very close links between university-based and school-based training;

partnership is a strong feature with tutors knowing where excellent practice lies within their partnership schools

- the trainees' equality of access to high quality training in schools and in the university which is exceptionally well resourced and provides an excellent learning environment.

Recommendations

43. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:

- encourage trainees to reflect more on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning
- ensure that all trainees receive well focused, subject-specific feedback from their mentors in schools.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

44. Trainees studying on the employment-based route are very well prepared to enter the profession as newly-qualified teachers. Over the past two years, their attainment at the end of the training has been outstanding. The partnership recruits trainees who possess the potential to be outstanding teachers and who thrive on the bespoke training that this route provides. From the outset, their needs are rigorously audited and monitored. Every trainee has their own individual training plan which is well designed to build upon their prior experience and to address their training needs. Retention is very good: no trainees withdrew last year. Employment rates are also very good with many trainees gaining employment in one of their placement schools. This demonstrates the high regard that partnership schools have for the training. The training programme meets the needs of the local community very well.

45. The vast majority of trainees join the course having worked in school as a teaching assistant, instructor or coach. The trainees are highly committed to becoming outstanding teachers and take their professional development very seriously. They are keen to discuss their professional practice and are constantly seeking ways to improve. A key strength is the flexibility of the training. During the inspection, this was mentioned over and over again by current and past trainees. Their individual training plans drive the training and the trainees ensure that these are under constant review. Consequently, trainees make good progress from the outset. One trainee has been fast tracked and this is a good example of the attention paid to meeting trainees' individual needs and tailoring the training accordingly.

46. Although the inspection took place early in the academic year, most trainees demonstrate good skills in managing behaviour. They possess a range of strategies and are confident in selecting the right strategy to address a particular behavioural issue. The university training in behaviour management, together with school-based training, plays a significant part in developing this confidence.

47. The small number of trainees on the employment-based route brings challenges as well as benefits. The challenges lie in ensuring that trainees have opportunities to network with one another to share good practice. The university is particularly successful in meeting this challenge. Trainees have excellent opportunities to attend central training sessions with trainees on the PGCE programme. Mentors, trainees and tutors see this as a key strength of the training. As a result trainees show a very good understanding of how to link theory with practice. They are highly reflective, particularly in relation to the impact of their teaching style on pupils' behaviour and pupils' motivation. They are less reflective, however, on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. For some, this skill needs developing further.

48. The partnership is strong. Many schools have been in partnership with the university for a long time and they possess a shared understanding of what constitutes good training. University tutors know where good practice lies in partnership schools and are very good at planning opportunities for trainees to observe excellent practice. Their second school placement is also well conceived to enable them to gain experience in a school in a very different context. Trainees

benefit significantly from this breadth of experience, which encourages them to engage in lively debate about what they have observed and experienced.

49. There are good levels of consistency across the partnership, which are facilitated by well planned mentor training and high quality course documentation. Mentors have a very secure understanding of their important role on this school-based training route and they work very effectively with university tutors to provide high level support for trainees. Most trainees receive very good quality written feedback on their lessons which is standards related. During the inspection, mentors were observed giving accurate and well targeted feedback to trainees following lesson observations. In some instances, however, there is scope for more specific subject feedback, particularly in relation to subject knowledge for teaching and progression in learning. If a trainee encounters difficulties, the partnership is quick to introduce a strategy to overcome them. All trainers know the trainees very well indeed and track trainees' progress accurately and rigorously.

50. There is no perceptible difference in the rate of progress made by secondary and primary trainees. Both have equality of access to high quality training. Mentors are very conscientious in ensuring that the trainees receive their entitlement to a weekly tutorial. The trainees' understanding of community cohesion is enhanced by their participation in a project with Greater Manchester Police which involves visiting a primary and a secondary school in challenging circumstances in Manchester. Here they gain first hand experience of observing good practice in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils from a wide range of minority-ethnic backgrounds and from areas of social deprivation. This is a further example of how their horizons are broadened through excellent opportunities to visit schools in different contexts.

51. Phonics is very well covered in both the central training programme and in schools. Primary and secondary trainees access this training. They have excellent opportunities to observe highly skilled practitioners teaching early literacy skills, and they visit a leading literacy school in Rock Ferry which is renowned for its practice. In addition, the university has produced an 'I Spy early reading and synthetic phonics' booklet and an 'I Spy literacy across the Key Stage 3 curriculum' booklet. All trainees have copies of these excellent resources which serve as diaries of their observations throughout their training. As a result trainees are well aware of the importance of developing pupils' phonic awareness and phonic skills. They can talk confidently about strategies to improve pupils' and students' literacy skills. In particular, secondary trainees are drawing upon their training in this area to reinforce pupils' literacy skills post Key Stage 2. Mentors and tutors also attend phonics training and are well equipped to support trainees.

52. The trainees possess a good understanding of how to plan lessons for pupils with a range of special educational needs. Some have very well developed knowledge and understanding, having worked with pupils with specific learning needs and disabilities prior to starting their training. They are very good at sharing this knowledge with each other. Their understanding of special educational needs is enhanced further by a university training session on inclusion.

53. The faculty of education has recently moved to a new campus by the river in Chester where trainees have access to excellent library, and information and communication technology resources. Teaching rooms are exceptionally well equipped with the latest technology and teaching and learning resources. Trainees make very good use of the available resources to support their teaching, and they benefit from attending training in an environment which is totally geared to providing excellent models of good primary and secondary practice. The virtual learning environment is being increasingly used by trainees and tutors. Communication within the partnership is very good. Leaders and trainers set high expectations for themselves and for the trainees throughout the training. Overall effectiveness of the employment-based route is outstanding.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 1**

54. Capacity to improve is outstanding. There is strong evidence that the programme is constantly under review and that improvements have resulted in improved outcomes for trainees.

55. Recently, there have been changes in the management structure. The management of the training route is now incorporated within the current primary and secondary programmes in the university and this is resulting in greater consistency between all training programmes. A significant benefit is the opportunity for trainees on this small training route to network and work closely with trainees on the PGCE route. Their knowledge and understanding of good professional practice and their subject knowledge develop well because the links between university and school-based training are strong.

56. The partnership evaluates the quality of provision extensively and the outcomes are used to drive the improvement-planning process. External examiner reports are detailed. The external examiner confirms that assessment is accurate. Internal moderation is robust so that trainees receive accurate feedback on where their strengths and areas for development lie, and mentors and tutors can tailor training accordingly.

57. Self-evaluation is firmly based on the systematic analysis of trainee outcomes. All partners are involved in the process. Leaders are quick to respond to issues as they arise while at the same time they take a well-measured approach to implementing strategic decisions. There are plenty of examples of changes which have been introduced in response to feedback from trainees and trainers. For example, trainees are now more confident in planning for the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language following the introduction of a directed task and through their participation in the Manchester social cohesion project.

58. Leaders are proactive in anticipating and responding to change. The university is engaged regionally and nationally with policy and this heightens trainees' awareness of keeping up-to-date with current educational thinking and initiatives. The

training programme has been modified successfully to take account, for example, of *The Every Child Matters Agenda*, the Rose Reviews, the Williams Review and the 14 to 19 curriculum. A greater emphasis has been placed on preparing trainees to work in a diverse society, with the result that trainees are confident in discussing the issues and how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds.

59. The training route is exceptionally well led and managed at university level and in schools. Improving outcomes for trainees lies at the heart of improvement planning. Staff development is integral to the process and is driven both by the priorities in the improvement plan and by personal objectives. University tutors are well represented on national bodies and keep trainees up-to-date with current research and educational thinking. Trainees are very good at talking about a wide range of educational topics because tutors promote their interest and encourage them to read and find out. Mentor training is also well focused upon improving outcomes for trainees.

60. The employment-based route has an excellent track record of continuous improvement. Resources are targeted very well to ensure that trainees receive high quality training and are enabled to meet challenging targets from the outset of their training. The trainees and newly qualified teachers interviewed during the inspection were highly committed to becoming outstanding teachers. The training programme prepares them very successfully to meet their aspirations.

Summary of inspection grades

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

		Primary	Secondary	Employment-based routes	ITE for FE
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		1	2	1	2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	2	1	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1	2	1	2
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1	2	1	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	1	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1	2	1	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	2	2	1	2

CAPACITY TO IMPROVE FURTHER AND/OR SUSTAIN HIGH QUALITY

		Primary	Secondary	Employment-based routes	ITE for FE
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?		1	1	1	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1	2	1	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	1	1	2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		1	1	1	2

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