

University Campus Suffolk

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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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. University Campus Suffolk (UCS) is a joint venture between the University of Essex and the University of East Anglia established in 2007. UCS has a main campus located in Ipswich (UCS Ipswich). UCS (Ipswich) works in partnership with five other UCS centres based at colleges in Suffolk to provide initial teacher education (ITE) for teachers and trainers in the further education system. Courses lead to certificates in education (Cert Ed.) and professional graduate certificates in education (PGCE) awarded jointly by the University of Essex and the University of East Anglia. These qualifications relate to post-compulsory education and training. They meet the statutory requirements and are endorsed by Standards Verification UK. The UCS partnership offers full-time and part-time pre-service and in-service provision. UCS is also involved in ITE provision for schools through local school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) arrangements in collaboration with the local authority.

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
- the strong commitment to partnership development and improving outcomes for trainees
 - the quality of personal support for trainees which is responsive to individual needs and helps to build trainees' confidence
 - the skilled practitioners who encourage trainees to experiment and develop new approaches to teaching and learning.

Required actions

5. In order to improve the quality of provision, the partnership must:
- strengthen the rigour of self evaluation and monitoring through better use of data to inform the development of actions for improvement and improve outcomes for trainees
 - improve the effectiveness of target setting with trainees and the coherence of trainees' development planning, in order to provide a more accessible view of the progress they make
 - improve the consistency of the quality of the trainees' experience to match that of the best.

Recommendations

- In order to support the development of trainees' subject-specialist skills, strengthen their access to subject-specialist training and resources.
- In order to broaden trainees' awareness of the diversity of the FE sector, create greater opportunities for trainees to observe peers teaching in different FE contexts.
- In order to improve the quality of the provision, the partnership should ensure that the good practice developed in individual centres is systematically shared within the partnership so that all trainees benefit from high quality provision.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 3

6. The overall effectiveness of the partnership in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is satisfactory. Trainees' progress and attainments are at least satisfactory. The progression rate between the first and second years of the in-service programme is satisfactory, although progression rates are variable between centres. Trainers make mainly accurate judgements of the progress and achievement of existing trainees. Managers are aware of the need to improve the consistency of retention, progression and attainment between different centres.
7. Recruitment and selection arrangements are satisfactory. Centres provide detailed information to applicants and all centres consistently apply the selection criteria agreed by the partnership. The partnership has developed effective procedures to allow trainees to progress between different levels of awards. Managers are working to improve on-line application processes in order to gather more detailed information about trainees. However, the partnership does not evaluate sufficiently trainees' application data by different groups. When trainees' additional needs are diagnosed at interview, trainees receive prompt and helpful specialist support from the individual centres of the partnership. Managers do not evaluate the overall quality of support provided or its impact on the outcomes for different groups of trainees. The provider carries out relevant safeguarding checks on new trainees.
8. Training and assessment are satisfactory. The structure of the programme carefully links theory with practice, and in-service trainees in particular value the new insights and increased understanding this brings to their teaching. Trainees, both pre-service and in-service, are enthusiastic about their commitment to learners. They frequently make good use of their extensive vocational and business skills and personal experiences of working life to make learning more relevant and to motivate learners. Trainees reflect critically and thoughtfully on their teaching, and most are clear on their future direction and professional development needs. Most trainees develop satisfactory classroom management skills, and they regularly share ideas and experiences with their peers, for example of how to manage more challenging behaviour in the classroom. Trainees are skilfully encouraged by tutors to experiment with new approaches to teaching and learning. The best trainees are very creative in their approaches to learners. Trainees particularly value the personal support they receive from tutors which is responsive to individual needs and helps to build their confidence. They become more confident in using a wide range of resources, including ICT, effectively in teaching an appropriate range of learners.
9. Trainees generally make satisfactory progress in developing their personal skills in literacy and numeracy. Some are encouraged to gain recognised awards which will assist them with their subsequent applications. Although most trainees plan lessons effectively, a few do not provide sufficiently clear aims or objectives for learners, and do not plan sufficiently to meet the different needs of learners. The standard of trainees' written work is at least satisfactory;

however, a few trainees are slow to develop the required level of academic writing skills. Trainees receive timely and constructive feedback on their written work. The best feedback is highly personalised with extremely detailed suggestions to help trainees improve.

10. The great majority of mentors provide appropriate personal support for trainees and help them to develop their subject-specialist teaching skills. In the best cases, the combination of tutor and mentor feedback and clear target setting for trainees, ensure trainees have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement and the steps they need to take to improve. In less successful cases, a minority of mentors, particularly those who are not college-based, are less involved and their specialisms differ from their trainees' specialisms. Not all these mentors have had recent mentor training. In such cases, observation feedback provided to trainees contains very generalised comments which do not focus sufficiently on the individual trainee's specialist development needs and targets. Managers are aware of these inconsistencies and are taking steps to improve mentoring arrangements.
11. Trainees also improve their subject specialist teaching skills through regular peer exchange within the programme, which they value greatly. Although tutors encourage trainees to visit peers working in different FE contexts, managers are aware of the need to make this direct experience more systematic for all trainees. The partnership also provides an annual subject specialist workshop. Those trainees who attended found this a relevant and valuable experience. However trainees' attendance was low and managers are exploring ways to improve this. Managers also recognise the need to develop closer links between the different aspects of trainees' subject specialist development, including greater use of the UCS virtual learning environment (VLE).
12. Resources are satisfactory. Trainers and tutors are enthusiastic, well qualified and experienced. They are regularly involved in educational research or further professional development. Trainers model good practice in their approach to teaching and learning. All centres have satisfactory or better teaching accommodation and good individual facilities which are used effectively by trainers and trainees to support teaching and learning. Trainees have adequate access to research materials and resources, including extensive access to e-books (electronic books). Trainees also have satisfactory access to a partnership VLE, which has a dedicated area for teacher education. Managers accept that the VLE is currently underdeveloped and are working to improve its effectiveness in supporting trainees' progress and skills development.
13. The quality of the provision across the partnership is satisfactory. While many aspects are at least satisfactory, inconsistencies across the partnership, some identified at the previous inspection, impact on outcomes for trainees. The quality assurance of assignment marking is robust, and effective use is made of cross-partnership moderation of trainees' work. Tutors moderate the work of mentors informally through joint observation, but in some cases insufficient liaison occurs between mentors and tutors. The approach to tracking and recording individual trainees' progress has undergone frequent changes. The

resulting trainees' personal development records are too complex and do not provide an easily accessible overview of individual trainees' progress against professional standards. The links to trainees' initial assessment are not always clear. Managers recognise this and are taking steps to introduce improvements, but these are yet to be implemented.

14. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Equality and diversity are carefully embedded in modules throughout the programme and through observation and assessment. Trainers show good practice in treating each trainee equitably. The provider encourages applicants to disclose specific needs, and appropriate specialist support is offered. Trainees demonstrate a good awareness of equality and diversity and safeguarding in relation to the diverse range of learners in FE, and most trainees successfully embed this into their teaching. Trainees also show satisfactory awareness of their responsibility to support the development of learners' skills in literacy and numeracy, although they do not always have the skills to do this effectively. Managers have been slow to improve the monitoring of equality and diversity across the partnership in respect of the outcomes for different groups of trainees.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 3

15. The partnership has a satisfactory capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to secure improvements. All partners demonstrate a strong, enthusiastic and continuing commitment to partnership development and to improving outcomes for trainees. Since the previous inspection, UCS has developed more quality assurance structures and processes, although some of these are still too new to demonstrate direct impact on outcomes for trainees.
16. The self-evaluation document is open and honest, and clearly demonstrates that the partnership is sufficiently aware of strengths and areas for improvement. Managers take into account a wide range of information, including feedback from trainees, and from external examiners. They frequently review aspects of the partnership's performance and develop action plans through a range of committees comprising representatives from UCS centres. However managers do not underpin action plans with sufficiently detailed analysis or evidence at the overall partnership level. Managers recognise the need to improve the effective use of data across the partnership to better inform the development of actions for improvement and improve outcomes for trainees. Annual programme reviews are detailed, but the quality monitoring of the range of trainees' experience, for example, the quality of mentoring or additional learning support, is not yet sufficiently systematic across the partnership.
17. The provider has satisfactory ability to anticipate change and prepare for, and respond to, national and local initiatives. The partners within UCS work very closely and value very highly the strong personal relationships and growing institutional identity of UCS. Individual centres are involved in a number of local and national initiatives, for example participation in the local CETT and the

development of an equality and diversity tool for use within colleges. Outcomes of these initiatives are being increasingly shared across the partnership. Regular contacts with national bodies such as the Institute for Learning inform developments within the programme. Within the region UCS is making increasing professional development opportunities available to staff in schools, colleges, adult and community learning, prisons and work-based learning. UCS has recently taken the strategic decision to focus on the development and delivery of Masters level provision at its main USC (Ipswich) campus and FE ITE programmes are now being delivered at a nearby UCS centre within a college. It is too soon to judge the impact of this move on partnership development. Managers are strongly aware of the need to maintain effective links between all UCS centres across phases of ITE provision.

18. The effectiveness of the provider in planning and taking action for improvement is satisfactory. UCS (Ipswich) is now undertaking an organisational restructure in order to plan more effectively for the future. These include a detailed review of arrangements for gathering feedback from trainees. The overall effectiveness of the self evaluation process is satisfactory. Partner institutions prepare detailed individual self evaluation documents which contribute to the annual self-evaluation process. The partnership self evaluation informs detailed action plans, as does the institutional annual programme review. However, action planning is not based sufficiently on the detailed evaluation of performance, including the use of data from across the partnership, and success criteria are not always made sufficiently explicit.
19. The relatively recent development of the UCS partnership limits the availability of historic data on outcomes for trainees; however, current data on the outcomes for trainees are not yet used sufficiently to improve provision. Some of the actions from the last inspection have not yet been fully addressed. For example, the insufficient monitoring and evaluation of equality and diversity at partnership level and the monitoring of mentoring arrangements to ensure the quality of trainees' experience. Good practice from individual centres is not yet being systematically shared. The partnership is aware of a number of areas for improvement of provision, and has demonstrated in its planning a commitment to action. However, to date, there has been insufficient evaluation of the impact of plans and actions on improved outcomes for trainees.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

- West Suffolk College
- Great Yarmouth College
- Lowestoft College
- Otley College
- Suffolk New College

Summary of inspection grades¹

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

Overall effectiveness

		ITE for FE
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		3
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	3
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	3
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	3
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	3
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	3
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	3

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		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?		3
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		3
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		3
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		3

¹ The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted July 2008; Reference no: 080128.

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