

# University of Manchester

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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**Provider address** School of Education  
Oxford Road  
Manchester  
M13 9PL

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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 is a long established provider of one year postgraduate programmes in primary and secondary initial teacher education leading to a Post Graduate Certificate of Education. The primary programme prepares trainees to teach children between the ages of five and eleven. The secondary programme offers six specialist subjects: English (11–18), mathematics (11–16 and 11–18), science (biology, chemistry and physics, 11–16), design and technology (11–16), business education (14–19) and modern languages (French, German and Spanish, 11–16 and 11–18).

## A commentary on the provision

4. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training primary and secondary programmes:
  - the sustained outstanding quality of the programmes which results in high outcomes for trainees, high levels of employment, often within the partnership, and high levels of satisfaction of newly-qualified teachers and employing headteachers
  - the strong coherence of the programmes due to the tight interplay between centre and school-based training and the good balance of subject and pedagogical knowledge
  - the flexibility within the programmes to personalise training and to ensure that individual needs are met extremely well.
  
5. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:
  - encourage strongly external examiners of the primary and secondary programmes to provide a formal, critical evaluation of course content and trainees' performance, in addition to the required report for the university.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

6. Of the 142 primary postgraduate trainees training to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), 16 are following the Primary Languages Platinum Specialism which prepares them to lead the teaching of French, German or Spanish in a primary school. These trainees undertake a four week placement in schools in Belgium, Germany or Spain. A further 47 trainees are taking the Primary Languages Bronze Specialism which is in its second year. These trainees are expected to teach French as part of their final placement. There are more than 150 partnership schools in Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cheshire and Derbyshire. Each university professional tutor has the responsibility for a group of 12 trainees and for a cluster of around 12 schools in sectors radiating from the city centre. At the time of the inspection, trainees had completed one placement and were undertaking centre-based training.

### Key strengths

7. The key strengths are:
- the pervasive collegiality and 'can-do' ethos which bring out trainees' enthusiasm, their willingness to work hard, their wish to improve and to reflect on their own performance honestly and realistically
  - the high quality and challenge of the training, most especially in mathematics and science
  - the highly effective provision to develop trainees' subject knowledge alongside their knowledge of how to teach it
  - the wide range of school-based experiences and the tailored use of practitioners and expertise from within the partnership to plan and deliver training
  - the regular auditing of trainees' progress and their views, with a timely response to identified needs so that trainees benefit quickly from improvements and amendments.

### Recommendations

8. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
- strengthen tutors' skills further in their work with trainees to deepen the quality of critical reflection, to set precise targets and to ensure that all trainees record high quality evidence against the standards

- extend and explore the use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to enhance trainees' progress in all subject areas.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

9. The programme is highly effective in ensuring that trainees complete their training, achieve outstandingly well, gain employment and stay in teaching. They often go on to gain a Masters degree with the university and to take on additional responsibilities in schools, including the training of current trainees.
10. Trainees are correct in that they get a very good deal. Although the cohort size has increased since the last inspection, very high quality training has been sustained as the university itself judged. Improvements and amendments to the content of the programme, most especially in English, have secured greater consistency of quality across the courses. In 2010, newly qualified teachers who had trained at the university expressed 100% satisfaction with their training in ten key aspects, including the overall quality of the programme. This was well above the average for similar providers. A key factor is the collegiate, 'can-do' ethos. Trainees are very well supported by professional tutors (university-based) and accredited tutors (class teachers) who constantly challenge them, expect them to give of their best and pass on practice that works. As a result, trainees are motivated, keen to improve, and make at least good, cumulative progress. In the last three years, most trainees have been judged to meet well the standards for qualified teacher status. In 2009 and 2010, more than half were judged to be outstanding. Employment rates are high with three out of four gaining a job in partnership schools. Former trainees commented that on taking up a teaching post they felt 'ahead of the rest' because they were very well prepared for all aspects of teaching including the teaching of reading: employing headteachers concurred with this view.
11. Recruitment and selection arrangements are outstanding and support high quality outcomes for trainees. Trainees are highly suitable with good academic skills matched by strong professional attributes. They are selected through a rigorous, well structured process which includes all necessary safeguarding checks. The tests, presentation and interview allow trainees to convince university and school interviewers of their sound subject knowledge and their commitment to teaching. Those wishing to take the modern languages specialism must also demonstrate reasonable fluency in the target language. The university actively seeks to recruit trainees from minority groups and from differing prior experiences. It has been particularly successful in increasing the number of male trainees, including those from minority ethnic groups. The current number of trainees from minority ethnic groups is low but the decision to consider a wider range of first degrees has resulted in a higher number of candidates from these groups being interviewed and also offered places for the next programme.
12. Trainees make at least good progress in meeting their targets and the standards because the training meets their needs extremely well. The

programme is coherent and comprehensive but with in-built flexibility to allow for amendments as the need arises. Courses intermesh and draw explicitly on the content of professional studies which covers well the strands of Every Child Matters, including safeguarding and the effective management of pupils' behaviour. Trainees receive a good grounding in foundation subjects. The introduction this year of three 'themed weeks', which become increasingly complex, gives trainees a practical awareness of cross-curricular planning.

13. Since the last inspection, course leaders have increased further the focus on developing trainees' subject knowledge, particularly in relation to the teaching of reading. They use the outcomes of the audits at interview to tailor support to help trainees progress in English, mathematics and science. In training sessions, trainers marry pedagogy closely with subject knowledge so that trainees gain a very clear understanding of what they need to know, how best to teach it and how it links with current educational thinking. Those trainees that take full advantage of training sessions and of the wealth of support materials often make outstanding progress and show soaring confidence, particularly in teaching mathematics and science. Part way through the programme, trainees who undertook their first teaching placement in Key Stage 2 are more tentative in how to teach early reading. Additional workshops on the teaching of systematic phonics are well-timed to support these trainees before their final placement in Key Stage 1. There is scope to ensure that all trainees gain an early, secure grounding in 'what phonics teaching looks like' (accredited tutor).
14. The overall quality of training at the centre and in schools is outstanding. Trainees are particularly inspired by training in science and mathematics. Sessions are often fast paced, lively and engaging with trainers modelling effective classroom practice, linking practice to research. Trainers prompt trainees to think how they would apply the content for pupils of different ages, for pupils who speak English as an additional language and/or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Trainees value highly the way that centre and school-based trainers get to know them as individuals and treat them as colleagues. Trainers often give considerable time to advise, support and coach, especially in behaviour management, in planning lessons, using assessment for learning and assessing pupils' progress. Professional and accredited tutors regularly track and report on trainees' progress in meeting the standards. The most effective written feedback is incisive and developmental. It accelerates trainees' progress through deepening trainees' critical reflection on teaching and learning, as well as the identification of precise targets for improvement and astute selection of evidence against a standard. Inconsistencies in the quality of feedback constrain the progress of some trainees.
15. The partnership has expanded since the last inspection and remains strong. The high quality of provision has been sustained because of the commitment of a large core of schools that have been partners for a considerable time, the clarity of expectations of trainees and trainers, and the very good communication between the university and schools. New coordinators and accredited tutors are well supported, and experienced trainers are regularly

consulted on developments, such as how to grade trainees' progress. Facets of the training have been taken on by the partnership: schools have developed training materials related to the Early Years Foundation Stage, and all trainees, for example, observed the teaching of structured systematic phonics and guided reading in Leading Partners in Literacy schools.

16. The university makes outstanding use of available resources to promote extremely well not only trainees' progress but also equality and diversity. A highly effective feature of the partnership and provision is the flexibility to meet trainees' needs. Two good examples are the way that tutors and schools are being consulted about where best to place those trainees who are taking the modern languages specialism and the organisation of additional workshops and coaching sessions when trainees identify areas of uncertainty. The university is drawing well on schools' strengths to ensure that trainees benefit from seeing and hearing about effective practice. Some schools have hosted twilight sessions on aspects such as cooperative learning, and trainees visit a socially and ethnically diverse school to see how community cohesion is fostered effectively. All trainees gain experience of differing school types and contexts through their four placements. This, together with sessions frequently led by teachers with specialist expertise, personnel from local authorities and educational consultants, prepares them well to teach in a diverse society. Some trainees also use the enrichment week at the end of the programme to gain extra experience in schools with a high proportion of minority ethnic pupils.
17. Trainees make good use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to contact others and to access materials. Overall, the use of the VLE and information technology is variable with potential for development across the programme. Trainees have rightly raised concern that the accommodation at the centre has not kept full pace with the increase in their numbers, especially space for workshops and for socialising in the short breaks between sessions.

## **The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality**

**Grade: 1**

18. The university has sustained outstanding capacity to improve further and to sustain high quality provision. Self-evaluation is accurate and well grounded. Action taken since the last inspection has resulted in higher outcomes for the trainees and in markedly higher levels of trainees' satisfaction. This is because the provider and the partnership are jointly involved in a constant and rigorous cycle of evaluating the quality of the provision and its impact on the trainees' progress. They take effective action to deal with issues. They anticipate and respond to current development and educational initiatives and use clear improvement planning to structure change.
19. Leaders and trainers at the centre and in the partnership work together very well to sustain the high quality of the provision. Quality assurance runs



throughout the whole programme; professional tutors moderate the judgements of accredited tutors, and trainees' assignments are carefully marked and rigorously moderated. External examiners confirm the accuracy of trainers' judgements and of trainees' attainment. Their written reports follow university protocols and formats, but the format gives limited scope for examiners to report formally and critically on the content of subject programmes or on the effectiveness of the training. As a result, the reports are not always as helpful as they could be in informing action planning.

20. The outcomes from the monitoring of all aspects of the programme have resulted in reasoned amendments and changes. For example, candidates' presentations at interview are now graded against set criteria which are also used to grade subsequent presentations on the programme. This information, part of the frequent collation of feedback on aspects of trainees' performance, is providing a useful basis to look for possible trends and correlations in trainees' progress. Leaders take action when concerns arise. Amendments were made promptly to this term's course content and arrangements as a result of trainees' evaluations of the first term. Similarly, leaders have drawn up an action plan to address the inconsistencies in the work of professional and accredited tutors as identified by internal quality assurance.
21. A strength of the leadership is the commitment to work with the partnership to provide the best for the trainees. This was a recommendation from the last inspection and the growing involvement of the partnership is a key feature of the effectiveness of the overall provision. Initiatives are introduced following consultation within the partnership and debate at partnership committee level. The development of the provision in modern languages has already led to former trainees now delivering language teaching in primary schools.
22. Innovative ideas are piloted, such as the video link with a school to allow trainees to observe the teaching of science, and their efficacy is evaluated before their full introduction to the programme. A current example, arising from the increased need for placements especially at Key Stage 1, is the discussion about the possible use of paired placements to challenge those trainees who show the potential to be outstanding. Developments in programme content since the last inspection have kept trainees abreast of current educational debate, most markedly in the need to teach structured synthetic phonics and comprehension skills. Similarly, the training in the humanities has been reshaped alongside the introduction of themed weeks to build on current high quality school practice in taking a creative approach to the curriculum. The appointment of, and structured support for, trainers with recent classroom experience and specialist expertise has been a key strand in the effective way the programme reflects national and local priorities.
23. Improvement planning is sharply focused on key priorities. Plans are well advanced to introduce different levels of partnership and to pass increased responsibility to selected schools to arrange placements and lead aspects of training. The three-year partnership plan has proved effective in steering improvements. It is coming to an end and provides a timely opportunity to link

even more closely with subject development plans, particularly in identifying intended outcomes for trainees.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Context

24. The provision leads to Qualified teacher Status (QTS) in six secondary subjects: business education (in the 14–19 age range), design and technology (11–16), English (11–18), mathematics (11–16 and 11–18), modern languages (11–16 and 11–18) and science (11–16). The partnership comprises over 120 secondary schools. At the time of the inspection there were 235 trainees on the programme. All had completed their first placement in schools and were undertaking centre-based training.

### Key strengths

25. The key strengths are:
- the high quality and enthusiasm of trainees, many of whom are imaginative and creative in their approach to teaching
  - the selection process, which recruits trainees with the qualities required to complete the course successfully and to gain employment
  - the consistently high standards of mentoring across the partnership
  - the strong systems for evaluating provision, which include a clear focus on maintaining the highest standards.

### Recommendations

26. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- ensure that all trainees are prepared fully for teaching in a diverse society
  - formalise methods for measuring trainees' progress.

### Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

27. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes is outstanding.
28. Inspectors agree with the provider's judgement that trainees' attainment is outstanding overall. The attainment of trainees in mathematics is good. Trainees show strengths in professional skills and personal qualities that promise much for their future careers. They demonstrate strong knowledge of their subject areas, they can explain subject-related ideas clearly and they plan well. Less than half way through the course, many of the strongest trainees are

already showing imaginative and creative approaches to their lessons and are prepared to try out new ideas. Trainees are enthusiastic and focus very clearly on improving their practice: they have high aspirations and are determined to succeed. As a result of thorough training in the university and in schools, trainees have a good understanding of how to keep students safe; they know of appropriate responses to safeguarding issues and how to deal with bullying. Lesson plans of the very small minority of weaker trainees have learning outcomes that lack precision or have insufficient focus on students' learning.

29. The overwhelming majority of trainees make at least good progress from their starting points. Outstanding communication across the partnership and excellent management structures have helped to establish and maintain a programme which is highly coherent and provides trainees with growing levels of challenge. Results from the national Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) Surveys and other feedback are very positive. For example, in 2010, 94% of respondents rated as good or better their training in the relevant knowledge, skill and understanding to teach their specialist subject, a figure significantly above the sector average. A similarly high proportion gave positive views about the quality of support and guidance that they received in achieving the QTS standards.
30. In the university, trainee-led sessions help to ensure that the course is personalised, flexible and responsive to need. University tutors frequently model good practice, based on high levels of expertise and understanding of current practice. University tutors use the initial audit of trainees' subject knowledge very well to identify areas of strength and weakness, and ensure that trainees build on their existing knowledge; the role of school-based mentors in monitoring trainees' subject knowledge development is more limited. Trainees value highly the university-based professional studies course and feel that it is complemented well by training in the placement school. Many trainees benefit from opportunities to work with able students, and those on 11-18 and 14-19 courses have substantial experience of working in the post-16 sector.
31. On placement, trainees benefit from regular and helpful feedback on their professional development and make excellent progress towards challenging targets. On the small number of occasions when target-setting is less effective, targets focus too much on generic classroom issues such as management of behaviour and classroom presence, rather than issues relating to subject pedagogy. Formal assessment takes place periodically through a well-designed and fully-understood process, using criteria that relate to the QTS standards. Although assessment methods identify effectively how an individual trainee can progress to the next level, systems to measure the long-term progress of trainees are not fully developed.
32. Mentors in placement schools have high levels of expertise and are very supportive of the partnership. Excellent communication and course documentation contribute strongly to the consistently high quality of subject mentoring. Mentors and trainees are absolutely clear about what is expected from them in terms of training and assessment. The school liaison team makes

a strong contribution to ensuring that trainees experience high-quality training and that good practice is shared across partner schools. Mentors value the quality of mentor training, and benefit from additional meetings that keep them well informed and offer good opportunities for moderation and sharing expertise. Some mentors take advantage of opportunities to build their professional skills, for example through further professional study or becoming involved in university-based research projects.

33. Managers make very effective use of resources: this makes an excellent contribution to trainees' positive outcomes. Trainees report that all the resources they need, including information and communication technology (ICT), are available and this contributes to their effective and confident use of ICT in lessons. A strong team of university staff, many of whom are nationally recognised experts in their fields, provide excellent support for trainees' academic work and personal needs. Visiting lecturers enhance the programme, for example in developing trainees' class management skills or in developing expertise in electronics for design and technology trainees. Trainees benefit from working in well-equipped schools. They appreciate the excellent university library, and in addition, modern language trainees benefit from using the university language centre.
34. All groups of trainees make at least good progress. Trainees' relationships with subject tutors are strong, based on mutual trust and respect. Trainees routinely contact tutors for advice and guidance and appreciate the helpful responses they get. For example, one trainee found the early part of the course very challenging and was considering withdrawing. Intervention and support from tutors enabled the trainee to settle into the programme, gain in confidence and make a positive contribution, for example through the trainee-led sessions.
35. All trainees demonstrate their understanding of diversity through completing an assignment, part of which involves planning and evaluating a lesson, and this is supported by further experience in schools. For example, to strengthen trainees' understanding of teaching students who speak English as an additional language, one school offered an open training session which was attended by 60 trainees. Enhancement weeks offer an additional opportunity for trainees to broaden their experience. However, for a minority of trainees, limited opportunities to work with students across the full range of different social and cultural backgrounds means they are not fully prepared to teach in a diverse society. For this reason, the aspect is good rather than outstanding as judged by the provider.
36. Completion rates are above average for the subjects offered and particularly impressive in some subject areas. For example, the English cohort has an average retention rate of 95% over recent years. Although completion rates for minority ethnic trainees are in-line with national average figures rather than above, there is some evidence of the university successfully narrowing the gap in completion rates between minority ethnic and other groups of trainees.
37. The programme recruits high numbers of well-qualified trainees. The excellent selection process, which includes all appropriate safeguarding checks, enables

all those involved in selection to make effective judgements about candidates' suitability. University tutors provide successful candidates with individual feedback, identifying strengths and areas for development, together with a reading list. This process, along with subject knowledge enhancement courses, is very effective in helping trainees make rapid progress from the start of the course. The two-week primary placement is also very well planned and makes a significant contribution to trainees' understanding of Key Stage 2 curricula and transition issues from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.

38. The programme makes a strong contribution to meeting national needs: the provider recruits and trains substantial groups in design and technology, mathematics, modern languages and science, where national demand for teachers is high. The programme also meets local needs very well: for example roughly three quarters of those obtaining teaching jobs last year were in local schools, with a figure of 84% for design and technology. Employment rates are in line with sector averages and above average for providers in the north-west region. In recent years, the provider has consistently met recruitment targets, although recruitment fell below target for modern languages in 2010.
39. The proportion of trainees from under-represented groups overall is broadly in line with national averages. However, the proportion of male trainees on the programme and of mature trainees in science is above average. Managers monitor the proportion of places offered by ethnicity and gender in relation to the proportion of applications received and can verify that the process does not discriminate against any particular group. The provider makes appropriate efforts to attract applications from under-represented groups, for example through recruitment fairs and targeted advertising.

## **The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality**

**Grade: 1**

40. Leaders and managers successfully sustain high quality outcomes across the breadth of provision. They are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of performance across the partnership. Self-evaluation is accurate and is well focused on outcomes. Evaluations include input from mentors and trainees and are based on information about all aspects of the provision. As well as using information from formal evaluations, course developments take account of views from across the partnership through regular meetings of mentors and management committees. Evaluations provide information that is easily analysed and that gives a clear picture of performance over time. Appropriate and very effective moderation procedures include external examiners in each subject. Managers make excellent use of comparisons with national and other benchmarks to identify areas for improvement and collect and analyse information about the performance of different groups over time. However, at a subject level, documentation for self-evaluation and action planning is uneven.

41. The moderation process is effective in supporting partner schools to improve. Feedback from trainees is summarised in a report for each school with a comparison with average responses, which is then sent to the professional and subject mentors. External examiners provide good levels of support but not all offer sufficient challenge. Even so, management decisions in response to comments from external examiners have led to improved provision. For example, improvements in English include a greater use of trainee-led sessions, the introduction of joint lesson observations by trainees and peer assessment of each other's work. Improvements in mathematics include successfully resolving an inconsistency in mentoring. The one recommended area for improvement identified at the last inspection has been addressed fully.
42. Excellent improvement planning is clearly related to evidence of previous evaluations and outcomes, and includes input from a range of stakeholders, including individual subject areas and the programme team, as well as responding to national priorities. Strategic planning has a sharp focus on key issues, many with a clear focus on improving outcomes and not just provision. Success criteria are clear and measurable. However, written plans lack support from additional evidence of how managers review improvement against the success criteria identified in previous plans.
43. Managers take great care over which schools are used, and only use placement schools that meet the high standards of provision expected. Employment rates above regional averages indicate that teachers trained by the partnership enjoy a strong reputation locally. Results over time from NQT surveys demonstrate trainees' increasing satisfaction with the majority of aspects of the course.
44. Managers have maintained a high quality workforce within the university. Trainees benefit from the significant academic research of university tutors, such as research into subject-specific teaching methodologies. Some staff are at the forefront of national and international developments in their subject, and, as a result, are in a good position to anticipate change. In addition, the programme is flexible and able to respond quickly to trainees' needs and emerging national priorities. For example, through a taught session on phonics, English trainees gain a good insight into current developments in teaching early reading. Other trainees know strategies for teaching students with poor literacy skills but have little understanding of teaching reading itself. Trainees make good progress in understanding how schools support learning for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They build on the training they experience in schools and the university through personal research and make the most of opportunities on placement to put into practice what they have learnt.
45. Trainees show a broad understanding of national developments. For example, trainees show excellent understanding of the principles behind the Assessing Pupils' Progress initiative and are fully familiar with recent changes to examination arrangements. Mathematics trainees discuss confidently the role of functional mathematics in developing students' understanding of the subject. At

the time of the inspection, trainees' understanding of 14–19 diplomas was less secure than other aspects of recent curriculum development.



## Summary of inspection grades<sup>1</sup>

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Primary	Secondary
<b>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?</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
	How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	1	1
	How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?	1	1
	How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?	1	1

<sup>1</sup> The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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