

Newcastle University

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. Newcastle University is a well-established provider of initial teacher education in the primary and secondary phases. All provision focuses on trainees working for a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) at Masters level. A recommendation for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and a professional graduate certificate is a possible exit award for trainees whose teaching skills are of a pass standard but whose written work has failed to secure sufficient credits at Masters level. Many trainees use the Masters-level credits gained on the PGCE to contribute to the university's well-established Master of Education degree in Practitioner Enquiry.
4. The university plays a key role in providing continuing professional development for local teachers. For example, staff from the university work in collaboration with three other north-east universities to deliver the Masters degree in Teaching and Learning.

A commentary on the provision

5. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
 - trainees' strengths in the ability to reflect, identify learning needs and learn from professional dialogue
 - the rigorous recruitment process that is effective in attracting well-qualified trainees with the potential to become successful teachers.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

6. Of the 83 primary trainees, 12 are following the Primary French specialism which prepares them to lead the teaching of French in a primary school. These trainees undertake a four-week placement in schools in northern France. There are more than 300 partnership schools in Newcastle, North and South Tyneside, Gateshead, Durham, Northumberland and Sunderland local authorities. Fifty schools frequently provide placements for trainees; a total of 70 schools are hosting trainees during the academic year 2010/11. At the time of the inspection, trainees were midway through their second placement.

Key strengths

7. The key strengths are:
 - the selection of academically-able trainees who develop well as reflective practitioners
 - the positive impact of recent initiatives drawing on expertise within the partnership especially in the teaching of reading, the Early Years Foundation Stage and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - the good quality support from centre-based and school-based trainers
 - the unique approach to heightening trainees' awareness of diversity and equality: the coherence of centre-based and school-based input has ensured trainees feel well prepared to teach pupils who speak English as an additional language
 - the effective combination of experiences locally and in France which produces well-trained specialists in primary French
 - the developing strength of the clusters of partnership schools as drivers of improvement.

Recommendations

8. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
 - tighten procedures to quality assure the work of school-based trainers to resolve inconsistencies in practice

- ensure that the course structure, balance and timing of placements enable all trainees to make the best possible progress
- identify more frequently when timely intervention is needed to support individuals, groups and the cohort in meeting the QTS standards, and draw even more on expertise within the partnership to develop and enhance specific aspects of trainees' professional skills and knowledge
- relate action planning more closely to outcomes for trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

9. The programme is effective in selecting suitable trainees who achieve well, gain employment, often locally, and frequently go on to gain a Masters degree and to take on additional responsibilities in schools. The French specialists gain employment teaching French; some later take up subject leadership and lead-teacher posts.
10. Since the last inspection, the provider has sustained the strengths and acted to good effect on the points for consideration. Initiatives drawing on practitioners' expertise in delivering aspects of the programme, such as the teaching of reading, add considerably to the quality of the training and to trainees' progress in meeting the QTS standards. In the most recent survey of trainees who completed the programme, all respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of the provision. The university rightly judged all aspects of the provision to be good. Centre-based and school-based trainers refer to being on a journey of improvement. They acknowledge that although recent action has made a positive difference, there are areas to strengthen if trainees' attainment is to rise.
11. Trainees' attainment is good overall. In the last three years more than 80% of trainees have been judged to meet the standards well, with generally around one in four judged to be outstanding. A higher proportion excels in the standards relating to professional attributes. Trainees observed teaching in schools showed personal commitment to meeting the demands of the programme, good interaction with trainers and pupils, and a willingness to seek advice and to support each other. Many trainees achieve highly in assignments. They show a good level of critical, reflective thinking and depth of subject knowledge. These features reflect good arrangements to recruit and select academically-able trainees who have the qualities needed to be effective teachers.
12. Since the last inspection, the bar has been raised in the selection process. Candidates must have spent at least two weeks in schools. As part of the interview, candidates teach 'challenging' panel members from the university and partnership. Those candidates who wish to take the French specialism must demonstrate reasonable fluency in French. The increased emphasis on

selecting candidates with potentially-strong professional skills as well as attributes may account for the very low drop out rate so far this year. A higher than average proportion of males gain a place, complete the course and often meet the standards well. The university works with differing communities to promote teaching as a career and offers guidance to applicants from under-represented groups in applying and preparing for interview. The number of trainees from minority ethnic groups remains low although broadly similar to the regional average.

13. Trainees make good progress overall in meeting the standards because of good-quality training at the university and in schools. The increasing expectations of trainees in the three main placements present challenging targets. Trainees valued working in pairs on the first placement as planning and teaching together gave them confidence. However, the relatively long period to the second placement and the brief lead into it do not favour those trainees who need much support to grasp essential pedagogical skills. Some trainees observed had moved on considerably in their teaching and were taking risks in approach and content, using games and active learning to engage pupils, and a range of strategies including praise 'for being good' and countdowns to manage pupils' behaviour. Others showed faltering progress because of insecurities in managing challenging behaviour and in planning and differentiating learning. Data show that, for many trainees, progress accelerates in the longer final placement. French specialists often sustain the marked progress made in their second placement in schools in northern France when they receive structured support from their French mentors.
14. Professional studies are the spine of the programme. Lectures, workshops and trainees' own presentations give all trainees a good theoretical and practical grounding in how pupils think and learn. The focus on developing independent, reflective teachers is also evident in the courses in the core and foundation subjects. Strands, such as special educational needs, curriculum innovation and citizenship, are threaded through the whole programme. Trainers draw on their own research and ensure trainees are also aware of how the findings in recent national reports are reflected in government priorities. The English course gives trainees a sound understanding of the 'simple view of reading' (*Rose Report*) and the structured teaching of synthetic phonics. Tasks are built into the first placement for trainees to augment and apply their knowledge, such as the use of miscue analysis to evaluate a child's reading performance. This provision has helped to raise trainees' satisfaction in feeling prepared to teach reading. However, not all trainees had, at the time of the inspection, taught phonics. While there is planned support for these trainees, there is scope to review the use of time and expertise in schools so that all trainees benefit from early experience in the teaching of reading.
15. The responsibility lies with trainees to develop their subject knowledge. They receive a clear picture after audits at interview as to where they need to improve their knowledge. When trainees take full advantage of support materials, booster sessions, one-to-one tutorials and 'mini-audits', they often make marked progress. Trainees know how well they are doing because of regular oral and written feedback from school and centre-based trainers.

Trainees' assignments are marked conscientiously. The better feedback identifies clearly the grounds for the mark awarded and where improvements could be made. For trainees who are less skilled in critical reflection, the feedback is not always specific enough to ensure improvement. This also typifies some of the written feedback in schools although it was clear in talking with trainees that they had often been given clear oral pointers. Trainees evaluate their own progress in meeting the standards; current records of professional development draw mostly on reports from school experiences with little support from other programme elements. The conscientious recording of the standards covered in lessons provides centre-based trainers with an opportunity to pinpoint those standards which are not being met well enough and where timely intervention would help trainees to upgrade their attainment. Trainees self-evaluate success in meeting the targets in personal action plans. Too often these targets, and those set by trainers, are general tasks to be done rather than specific action to bring about an immediate difference in meeting a particular standard.

16. The partnership remains strong. All schools visited were vibrant training venues where trainees were working with practitioners keen to support them and often giving significant time in high-quality mentoring, coaching and support. Judgements of the quality of trainees' teaching and progress were accurate. Schools know what is expected of them and value the detailed documentation, good contact with the university and prompt response when concerns arise. The cluster model of partnership works well. School-based trainers commented positively on meeting with other local trainers to discuss trainees' progress and to receive updates on training and aspects that add to their own professional development.
17. The university makes good use of expertise and available resources to promote trainees' progress and also equality and diversity. Trainees value highly the input from practitioners. One trainee reflected this in a comment to inspectors: tutors provide 'ideas that work in the classroom'. A science lesson with pupils on the beach, taught by an Advanced Skills Teacher, was described as inspirational. Trainees also benefit from working with specialist teachers, consultants and local authority personnel, with a partnership school hosting training in physical education and music delivered at a professional development centre. Although some trainees carry out two placements in the same school, they all experience a range of contexts through visits such as those to observe provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and that for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A unique, effective feature is the cumulative impact of sessions at the centre with visits to specialist partnership schools, selected because of the social and cultural heritage of their pupils. Diaries of trainees' reflections show trainees gain a good understanding of issues related to diversity and equality. Former trainees commented that they felt well prepared to teach pupils who speak English as an additional language, and current trainees referred to valuable information gained about Travellers and refugees.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

18. The university has sustained good capacity to improve through good management in evaluating its performance and in taking well-planned and effective action to bring about improvements, and good anticipation of, and response to, national and local initiatives.
19. Accurate self-evaluation runs alongside a tangible commitment to continuous improvement. Headteachers from partnership schools commented that changes since the last inspection had been well managed with a consequent improvement in the quality of the provision. The clusters of partnership schools have been influential in increasing the use of expertise in schools to deliver aspects of the programme and in heightening the involvement of school-based trainers in suggesting ways forward. A prime example is the input on the Early Years Foundation Stage, planned and led by a practitioner that includes a visit to her school for trainees to observe and discuss how children learn through play. To develop this further, she proposes to include teaching sessions related to the early phases of Letters and Sounds which will bridge well into the teaching of reading in Key Stage 1.
20. Centre-based and school-based trainers have worked well together to ensure the programme reflects current national priorities. The content of centre-based sessions is complemented by experience and training in schools in the teaching of reading and behaviour management. Time in special schools gives trainees an opportunity to observe and talk to staff about how they meet particular learning, physical and personal needs.
21. Course leaders make effective use of information from regular evaluations by trainees and from monitoring procedures to identify where amendments and additions to the programme will ensure all trainees gain the necessary experiences. Two examples illustrate this well: all French-specialist trainees are placed in Key Stage 1 for their first placement to ensure that they gain experience in teaching phonics before their placement in France; and the day spent in a Leading Literacy school observing experienced practitioners teaching guided reading and phonics, followed by evaluations of trainees' teaching, provided highly effective support for those trainees in the last cohort who did not teach phonics on placement. A similar day is planned to support current trainees.
22. Such initiatives have led to improvements in trainees' satisfaction ratings but their impact is not showing in the outcomes for trainees. This is partly because the focus has been on improving aspects of the provision with less emphasis on accelerating trainees' progress in areas where groups of standards or individual standards are less well met. The provider has data that would support this development, starting with grading against set criteria of trainees' performance at interview, and interim and final grades from placements. However, the limited amount of administrative support to input and analyse the available

data hinders its effective use to inform immediate amendments to the provision. Programme and course action plans are based on an analysis of evaluations from all in the partnership as well as from the monitoring of processes and procedures, including steps to ensure equality of opportunity in the selection of trainees. Although there are clear success criteria related to provision, few specify challenging outcomes for trainees.

23. The appointment of a partnership officer has strengthened links between the university and schools, brought more schools into the partnership and secured additional placements, especially in Key Stage 1. Through contact with schools, information from centre-based trainers and monitoring feedback to trainees, the partnership officer is building a picture of the quality of school-based training. This offers scope to tailor support and challenge even more closely to trainees' needs.
24. Quality assurance is good overall although inconsistencies in some procedures mean that opportunities to strengthen the provision can be overlooked. Although centre-based trainers visit schools to moderate the judgements of school-based trainers and to track trainees' progress in meeting the standards, not all school-based trainers have undertaken joint observations with centre-based trainers. Cross-moderation by school-based trainers is developing well within the clusters, and external examiners confirm the accuracy of trainers' judgements and of trainees' attainment. However, the effectiveness of new school-based trainers is not monitored quickly enough, especially on the second placement when the onus lies entirely with the schools to evaluate and foster trainees' progress.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

25. Newcastle University offers a one-year full-time secondary PGCE in seven subjects. It offers training in the 11-18 age range in English with drama, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages (French, German and Spanish), religious education and science. The partnership includes over 60 schools across seven local authorities in the north east of England. At the time of the inspection, there were 148 trainees on the programme.

Key strengths

26. The key strengths are:
- university tutors' good knowledge of the trainees and the excellent support for their personal and professional needs
 - the strong sense of partnership and collaboration across the provision
 - the way course developments involve members from across the partnership and take account of evidence from a wide range of sources
 - trainees' understanding of recent national developments, particularly in their subject area
 - managers' good use of resources in supporting training and course improvements
 - the good training for mentors and tutors' prompt and effective responses to queries and requests for additional support.

Recommendations

27. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
- consolidate recent strengthening of provision to ensure that a high proportion of trainees feel well prepared for teaching in a diverse society
 - enhance further the monitoring of provision and school-based training
 - make more use of national benchmarks in analysing provision
 - ensure that trainees focus more on evaluating students' learning when reviewing their lessons.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

28. Inspectors agree with the provider's judgement that trainees' attainment is good. All trainees seen during the inspection show the potential to meet the standards for QTS. Trainees display strengths in professional attributes. For example, they are reflective, take responsibility for their professional development and are keen to develop their skills and knowledge. They are aware of a wide range of pedagogical approaches and develop good working relationships in the classroom. Strong trainees cater well for different abilities, use creative learning activities in lessons and show strong class management skills. The small number of weaker trainees are still developing assessment skills or do not use lesson objectives sharply enough to focus learning; some do not cater sufficiently for the needs of the more able students. In written evaluations, trainees respond well to prompts that help them to focus on students' learning and how they assess learning. Where these prompts are not present, evaluations focus too much on the quality of teaching rather than learning.
29. The different elements of the course combine well to enable the very large majority of trainees make good progress towards challenging targets. University-based training is complemented very effectively by school-based training. For example, assignments involving school-based tasks help trainees to see how educational research informs practice. Trainees benefit from seeing university tutors modelling good practice in training sessions and appreciate the many ideas for use in the classroom that they are shown. The strong emphasis on personal reflection helps trainees to identify how they can improve. Trainees' reflections, recorded as blogs, help them to benefit from the support and advice of tutors and fellow trainees. All trainees benefit from auditing their subject knowledge at the beginning of the course, although the subsequent monitoring of trainees' subject knowledge development is uneven.
30. The good quality school-based training includes regular, structured meetings that enable subject mentors to review progress and set short-term targets. Where targets focus sharply on professional development and progress towards the QTS standards, trainees make rapid and secure progress. For example, a physics trainee taught an AS-level lesson which included developing students' skills in addressing coursework tasks. Feedback from the observations identified the need to offer clear and explicit instructions when setting up the task and how to provide effective feedback when marking students' work. The trainee's subsequent medium-term target was to develop the approach further to include pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by adapting the lesson and working with learning support assistants. Where they are less effective, targets focus more on 'things to do' rather than developing skills, and targets for improvement identified in lesson observations do not always feed into the records of the mentor meetings.
31. Trainees are assessed accurately against the standards for QTS. The new assessment system, where trainees are assessed against successively more

- demanding criteria as they go through the year, has the support of partner schools. Early evidence suggests that it is helping to develop consistency across different schools, although the provider has identified the need to provide additional training for a small number of school-based trainers.
32. The partnership enjoys a strong reputation locally and several recent former trainees have made successful starts to their careers in local schools. Good communication, support for weaker trainees, and strong relationships between university staff and school-based mentors successfully promote consistency across the partnership. Guidelines help to ensure that training from professional tutors in different schools covers similar topic areas and this is among the provision monitored by the university's quality assurance consultant. A further strength of the partnership is the involvement of school-based trainers in course developments, such as recently when a team of partnership tutors worked together to draw up the criteria for assessing trainees.
 33. Mentor meetings are well attended and highly regarded. A particularly effective feature is where the professional tutor and/or subject mentor meets the trainee in advance of the practice. Not only does this put the trainee at ease but it also provides an excellent opportunity for additional discussion and sharing of information. However, moderation across schools is limited and in any one year the quality assurance consultant is able to visit only a minority of schools.
 34. Teaching rooms at the university are well equipped and those contributing to the training have appropriate expertise. In the university, trainees appreciate the many contributions from visiting speakers from both inside and outside the partnership. In addition, managers provide funding for local visits which have a positive impact on trainees' subject knowledge and understanding. Funding for a quality assurance consultant has helped managers to have a clearer overview of provision across the partnership and helped schools to evaluate their provision against others. Trainees appreciate the excellent university library and the strong support offered there by the library staff. In addition, the conveniently-situated learning resource centre offers a wealth of resources for classroom use. References in the course handbooks to reading lists and useful websites help trainees to access subject-specific material from a range of sources.
 35. The partnership's policy for promoting equality, diversity and cohesion and the prominence given to the university's equal opportunities policy on the PGCE web-site demonstrate the university's commitment to equality and tackling discrimination. Inspectors found no evidence of trainees experiencing discrimination or harassment. There is no consistent pattern of different achievement by different groups. In 2009/10 the success rate for the small minority ethnic group was lower than other groups. However, current minority ethnic trainees are making progress in line with that made by others. A clear attainment gap between men and women in 2008 has been successfully narrowed in more recent years.
 36. The 2010 Newly Qualified Teacher Survey indicated lower levels of satisfaction with training on how to teach in a diverse society than in other providers. In

response to this, managers have ensured that current trainees are experiencing much more comprehensive training, covering a broad range of diversity issues. The additional provision is beginning to have an impact on how well trainees feel prepared for teaching in a diverse society.

37. The thorough selection process includes all appropriate checks and involves representatives from partner schools. The range of activities, including a presentation, a group task, an interview and a written task enable interviewers to make accurate assessments. Rejection letters give helpful advice on reasons for rejection and how a future application could be strengthened. The provider makes a good contribution to meeting national needs: four of the seven subjects offered are subjects where recruitment of teachers is difficult. Local needs are met well. For example, in English, 88% of those gaining jobs were employed in schools in the north-east region, and in the shortage subjects of mathematics and science the figure is close to three quarters. In modern languages, the recent focus on recruiting trainees with a Spanish rather than a German specialism reflects the needs in local schools.
38. The university analyses applications and success rates from different groups. The course attracts a large number of well-qualified applicants, many with previous experience in schools, and the proportion of trainees with a high degree classification is above the sector average. Except in modern languages, recruitment generally either meets or is close to target, although figures for 2010/11 are slightly less positive. Completion rates and employment rates are broadly average, although recent figures for geography are particularly strong, with 100% completion in the last three years and high employment rates. The university recruits only low numbers of minority ethnic trainees and recruitment from these groups has not risen despite targeted advertising and promotion. The proportion of mature trainees is below average.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

39. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate. Managers show a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of provision across the partnership. Engagement with the wider teacher training community is helping course leaders to evaluate provision against others in the sector, for example through professional dialogue with other providers and tutors' experience as external examiners. Improved data analysis has helped managers to identify which standards for QTS trainees meet well and which standards they meet less well. Managers collect data about the performance of groups over time and are beginning to identify patterns and make improvements where they are most needed. However, recent analysis has not always included a comparison with national figures.
40. All members of the partnership are clear about their roles, what is expected of them and when. Managers ensure that views from across the partnership are

heard, formally through the Partnership Committee but also through course evaluations from professional tutors, subject mentors and trainees. Trainees evaluate their school placements and managers ensure that these evaluations are fed back to each school.

41. Improvement planning is good, rather than outstanding as judged by the university. Improvement plans have appropriate areas of focus and school-based trainers are aware of the key priorities. Planning includes a focus on outcomes but some success criteria are insufficiently precise, making subsequent review more difficult. Improvement planning makes reference to previous evaluations, input from members of the partnership and external examiners' views; it has a clear impact on improving provision and is beginning to have an impact on improving outcomes. For example, following evaluation from trainees, managers identified training in teaching students for whom English is an additional language as an area for development, and this is included in the improvement plan and subsequent action plan. Managers are awaiting end-of-year evaluations from trainees to confirm that this has led to measurably better preparation for teaching in a diverse society. Other examples of management decisions leading to improvements include strengthening the process for supporting 'at risk' trainees and the introduction of new assessment criteria for students. The strengths identified in the last inspection have been maintained and consolidated, and managers have responded effectively to both the issues for consideration and/or action.
42. Leaders and managers have successfully improved provision and maintained good outcomes across all subjects. They have secured a high-quality workforce and manage provision across the partnership well. Completion rates have been sustained in line with average figures across all subjects. Staff involvement in research makes a positive contribution to the experience of trainees. For example, the university has used research funding to purchase a set of digital cameras so that trainees can record their own performance and collect evidence of students' progress in the classroom. Although the impact of the project is not widespread, some trainees have enhanced their teaching through using the cameras in their lessons to aid students' learning and assess progress.
43. The university responds well to national initiatives and has adapted university-based training appropriately. As a result, trainees have a sound understanding of issues surrounding the teaching of early reading and their role in ensuring students' safety when using the internet for learning. Trainees understand the importance of students reading for understanding and can describe how they incorporate literacy objectives into a lesson. For example, geography trainees show a good understanding of how the subject can contribute to developing literacy; however, they are less aware of issues surrounding global citizenship and education for sustainable development.
44. Trainees show a good awareness of recent developments in their subject areas. For example, modern languages trainees know the key ideas, such as the use of target language and the teaching of reading, contained in a very recent Ofsted report into language teaching. They also ensure that, in lessons,

students have opportunities to obtain authentic foreign language texts. Science trainees know about the Assessing Pupils' Progress initiative and what it is used for; they also understand issues around the teaching of BTEC science in Key Stage 4. Trainees are able to discuss the likely impact of the English Baccalaureate on their subject but have less understanding of the broader implications. Training in the university, complemented by additional training in schools, enables trainees to develop their understanding of how to cater for a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, through training and/or personal experience, trainees know how to modify their behaviour to ensure that students on the autistic spectrum can take a full part in lessons.

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

		Primary	Secondary
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		2	2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	2	2
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	2	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	2	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2	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

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

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

¹ 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.