

# Edge Hill 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. Edge Hill University and its predecessor institutions is a long-established provider of teacher training. Opened in Liverpool in 1885, it is now situated in extensive grounds near to the town of Ormskirk in West Lancashire. It is a large provider and, as such, has a network of study centres across England, including one in Shrewsbury. Its partnership of schools and colleges is extensive and stretches as far afield as the West Midlands, North-east Lincolnshire, the Isle of Man and into Wales. Training is provided for those wishing to teach in the Early Years, in primary, Key Stage 2/3, secondary or the post-compulsory education and training sector through a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Some of these courses are flexible in nature and may be taken, for example, over six terms rather than three.

4. The Primary and Early Years programmes comprise an Early Years undergraduate programme, a full-time and a part-time primary undergraduate programme, and a full-time and part-time primary postgraduate programme, all

leading to qualified teacher status (QTS). The part-time programmes are known within the provider as 'flexible' routes. The secondary programmes comprise a three-year full-time BA/BSc (Hons) degree with QTS focusing on Key Stage 2/3 Education. A BSc (Hons) Secondary Education with QTS is also offered via a three year full-time or a four year part-time route. The university also offers two postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) routes at levels 6 and 7: one following the standard length of one year, the other a flexible route taking up to three years. For those training to work in the post-compulsory sector, full-time and part-time undergraduate certificates in higher education at levels 4 and 5 are offered. In addition, full-time and part-time courses are offered through the professional graduate certificate in education (at level 6) and the postgraduate certificate in education (at levels 6 and 7). Part-time courses are available for in-service and pre-service trainees, whereas full-time courses are predominantly for pre-service trainees.

## A commentary on the provision

5. Edge Hill University provides its trainees, regardless of their chosen age range, with outstanding training. They make at least good progress in their chosen courses and are supported very well so that they attain outstandingly well. Since the previous inspection, high quality has been maintained and enhanced in the provision for primary trainees. The provision has improved from good to outstanding for secondary and post-compulsory trainees. All three phases benefit from very rigorous recruitment and selection, which support trainees' rapid progress from the outset, and the highly effective focus on the continuous development of trainees' performance through the setting and monitoring of coherent and very clearly defined targets for improvement. The university has a very strong focus on improvement based on robust evaluations of its provision. This is a key factor in ensuring all three phases demonstrate outstanding capacity to improve.

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

- the high quality training that makes excellent contribution to trainees' good and often outstanding progress across all phases
- the very high levels of support and personalised training which are tailored to improving outcomes for all trainees
- the very strong, cohesive and collaborative partnership which promotes and achieves the high expectations set for trainees
- the high level skills trainees display in securing good behaviour in their lessons through careful reflection on the impact of their teaching on the learning of children and young people.

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

In primary:

- the excellent practice in the teaching of early literacy, using synthetic phonics

In post-compulsory:

- the outstanding use of technology to enhance trainees' progress and their own students' learning.

8. The following recommendations should be considered to enhance further the quality of the outcomes for trainees:

- continuing to extend the formal sharing of good practice across all three phases to ensure that the best and most innovative strategies are disseminated to promote further improvements in outcomes for all trainees.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

9. Trainees wishing to undertake training on the primary and Early Years programmes at Edge Hill may do so by following one of a number of routes. There is the three years full-time Early Years undergraduate programme on which there are 166 trainees. There are two primary undergraduate programmes (three years full time, four years part time) with curriculum specialisms in creative and expressive arts; humanities; language, communication and literacy; mathematics; modern foreign languages; physical education; science; and personal, social, health and citizenship education. Eight hundred and twenty eight trainees follow these routes. There are also two primary postgraduate programmes comprising 121 trainees: a one-year full-time course and a flexible course taking up to six terms to complete.

10. Training takes place at Edge Hill and in Shropshire for trainees on the part-time undergraduate programme. The partnership currently comprises 327 schools and settings and operates across the country, including in Shropshire, the West Midlands, the Isle of Man, parts of Wales and North-east Lincolnshire.

### Key strengths

11. The key strengths are:

- the high quality trainees who are well prepared to teach, display excellent professional attributes and go on in high numbers to gain employment
- the high quality support which enables trainees to make at least good progress
- the commitment of partnership schools to high quality training for trainees, which enables them to make at least good progress
- the strong levels of consistency in the quality of the training across the partnership and university
- the provider's constant drive for improvement, for example, the identification of the right priorities by leaders, to ensure high quality training is sustained
- the high quality arrangements for recruitment and selection which ensure the right trainees are placed on the course.

### Recommendations

12. To enhance further the quality of trainees' and pupils' learning, the provider should ensure trainees:

- have experience of working with and managing other adults in the classroom to support pupils' learning

- develop questioning skills that consistently challenge the more-able pupils in their classes.

## Overall effectiveness

## Grade: 1

13. The overall effectiveness of Edge Hill University and its partnership is outstanding in securing high quality outcomes for primary and Early Years trainees.

14. The attainment of trainees is outstanding. Both at the university and in schools, trainees make at least good progress and display very positive professional attributes. These qualities, plus their commitment to their chosen profession, demonstrate why trainees are highly employable with the very large majority gaining teaching posts in schools. Features which make them rightly attractive to schools include their highly effective skills of self-evaluation with a strong focus on the learning of their pupils. They also build good relationships with pupils and adults, make good use of behaviour management strategies, and have exciting and motivational ideas. These ideas engage pupils of all abilities well. For example, a third year trainee engaged fully his Year 1 pupils in considering the feelings of characters from 'Jack and the beanstalk'. The pupils were enthralled as he appeared dressed as the giant and, as a result, they spoke with each other and wrote confidently about why the giant was so angry. Other trainees captured the imagination of boys through pirate and James Bond themes, engaging them well in writing activities. In addition, trainees are well organised. This important skill is seen in their planning and use of resources to enhance their teaching and pupils' learning. For example, trainees assess what pupils can and cannot do well, often making good teaching points out of pupils' misconceptions. They use this information to plan and evaluate sequences of lessons, adapting planning to meet pupils' needs, particularly the less able. Their use of questioning to challenge the more-able pupils in their classes is developing but not consistent. The trainees are not complacent: they have high expectations of learning and behaviour, keep up-to-date with national priorities through their own research, and are most willing to seek advice and act on it.

15. A number of factors contribute to these very positive characteristics. High quality training, assessment and support ensure that trainees make at least good progress against the Standards. Expectations of trainees are high. The information gained through the rigorous arrangements for recruitment and selection is built on throughout the course by tutors and school-based mentors, who know the trainees very well. The result is that targets for trainees in terms of pedagogy, subject knowledge, class and behaviour management and professional attributes, are challenging and individualised from the very beginning of training. The pre-course tasks for successful applicants are regarded by trainees as very helpful in ensuring that they gain the required experience, for example by specifying the minimum number of hours to be spent in the Early Years Foundation Stage even before the course starts. Those who are not successful are supported well too in that the provider identifies clearly what they need to do to improve. Many who re-apply are successful on subsequent occasions.

16. Trainees are highly complimentary about university tutors and school-based mentors. They also appreciate the strong cohesive nature of the training and the way

it allows theory to be put into practice and then reflected on. Assignments support this well. Tutors model well good teaching and how pupils learn. Two examples demonstrate this. First, in preparing information and communication technology (ICT) resources for use on future placements, trainees were constantly reminded by their tutor to have pupils' learning at the heart of all their planning. Second, to encourage her trainees to consider the needs of pupils new to a school and perhaps speaking no English, a tutor caused her trainees a little initial discomfort by addressing them in Welsh. Here, the trainees soon appreciated the challenges they would face and were, as a result, better placed to develop strategies of support. These features result in highly reflective trainees, who place pupils' learning at the heart of planning, teaching and assessment and therefore are able to identify learning opportunities for different groups of pupils.

17. Throughout the training, there is a strong focus on English, mathematics, science and ICT and trainees are very well prepared to teach these subjects. They understand very well key national priorities such as the teaching of synthetic phonics and the importance of reinforcing key skills across the curriculum. Less time is spent on the foundation subjects but trainees demonstrate they have the skills to build on their learning to carry out their own research and to make good contributions to school life through, for example, cross-curricular work in art and music. Trainees are enthusiastic about meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who come from diverse backgrounds; in fact, they have a strong focus on the learning of their pupils regardless of ability or background. In their training, trainees also have the opportunity to work with other adults in the classroom. Most, but not all, use these adults well to support pupils' learning.

18. The effectiveness of the partnership is outstanding with schools strongly committed to it. This high quality is a key feature of not only the consistency in provision but also the trainees' outstanding attainment. Roles and responsibilities are clear and understood by all and this enables trainees to be supported consistently well in each placement. Typical comments from schools include a description of the relationship with the university as '...a true partnership with mutual respect...' for the roles each play in training young people for the future in teaching. Schools provide at least good training opportunities with attractive environments and a whole school commitment to the training of teachers. The assuring of the quality of schools within the partnership is rigorous with inspection reports checked regularly. Levels of communication are excellent, and particularly so for schools new to partnership. The very good training for such schools and all school-based mentors, differentiated to need, ensures trainees receive the most appropriate personal and professional advice and challenge. For example, the quality of verbal and written feedback received from partnership colleagues is at least good with a strong focus on trainees' and pupils' learning and with appropriate targets set. These are revisited in subsequent lesson observations and monitored effectively.

19. The well thought-out deployment of resources is a further contributing factor in trainees' high attainment and progress. Good examples include the investment in ICT so trainees are not only more than competent in its use but explore its potential for teaching and learning. The major and most effective resource at Edge Hill University though is its people, all of whom combine very well to produce a consistent blend of high quality training which is flexible enough to meet different



needs. Value for money and consistency are enhanced by tutors teaching across the courses. In addition, very good use is made of experts to support training. For example, the training centre at Shrewsbury makes use of local authority personnel to provide training in music, art and mathematics. Trainees themselves know where to find a wide range of resources which may be used as tools for teaching and learning, for example via websites, museums and libraries.

20. The extent to which the provision promotes equality of opportunity, values diversity and eliminates harassment and unlawful discrimination is outstanding. Placements are planned very carefully to ensure trainees gain a wide experience of different schools and their pupils. The opportunities for trainees to work with pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are limited, but the learning they undertake at the university provides them with at least good opportunities to consider their pupils as individuals, regardless of background or need. This is because of the strong focus on pupils' learning. The individual needs of trainees are met very well and, if necessary, reasonable adjustments made. Trainees and schools report the support for the well-being and welfare of individual and groups of trainees is very strong. Equalities are given an appropriately high profile throughout the training, with policies and procedures scrutinised regularly. When trainees experience difficulties, intervention is swift to ensure they are not disadvantaged. For example, trainees who defer are provided with a range of opportunities, including mini-placements to ensure they get back on track. As a result, when they do return they make at least good progress.

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

21. This is a provider that knows its strengths and areas for development very well. It is not complacent, though. Its constant drive for improvement, for example, the identification of the right priorities by leaders to ensure high quality training is sustained, demonstrates why its capacity to improve is outstanding. It is outstanding for two main reasons. First, the provider evaluates all its work rigorously and involves its partners in doing so. From these evaluations clear plans are produced that focus very well on improvements in outcomes for trainees and on enhancing the quality of training. Second, the provider responds very well to local, regional and national priorities. This means that not only is training up-to-date but trainees are too. These features are interdependent. Their success ensures there is strong consistency between all routes and the two main centres at Ormskirk and Shrewsbury.

22. 'They evaluate everything!' This view of the provider was typical of trainees. A wide range of stakeholder evaluations are sought and acted on. The introduction of the key link tutor role, giving an additional level of support and quality assurance, particularly in the more remote school placements, is such an example. The result of this robust monitoring and evaluation is that the provider has clear plans designed very well for actions and their impact to be checked. Plans are shared widely across the partnership and all members are clear about their roles. Most importantly, the plans are successful, as the sustaining of high quality training and outcomes for trainees testify.

23. Also outstanding is the provider's anticipation of change and response to local, regional and national needs and priorities. For example, in response to the national focus on the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics, all trainees benefit from access to expertise from a Leading Partners in Literacy school. This, coupled with the university being one of a small number of providers leading from the front in this area, is ensuring that not only are trainees increasingly confident in teaching phonics, but the provider is also successful in ensuring those who need to make judgements about how well trainees are teaching have the skills to do so. The result is that trainees plan learning in phonics well, teach effectively, assess carefully and set their pupils appropriate targets for improvement. Another example is the way the recommendations of the Williams review in teaching mathematics, including oracy in mathematics, have been fully embedded in that subject's modules. A further example still is how training at the university and in schools has been combined well to ensure trainees develop the most effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour, including non-verbal methods, and ensure the focus is always on pupils' learning.

24. This provider is equally proactive at the regional level. As a result of previous surveys, in which newly qualified teachers did not always reflect positively on their training to support pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties, the provider engaged successfully with the Training and Development Agency to bring about key and rapid improvements. As a consequence of developing tutors' expertise and providing training in specialist settings, trainees demonstrate at least good knowledge and skills in identifying pupils' needs, planning for them and teaching accordingly. Further enhancements to the training include the development of an optional special needs placement, something that trainees are very positive about. The provider also puts the information it gains from evaluations to very good use locally. For example, a local ICT project was set up with a small group of schools, mentors and trainees to train them in using animation and to provide them with the technical tools to teach this to pupils effectively. Its success was measured in terms of pupils' learning and by the improved subject knowledge it gave trainees and school-based mentors.

25. A further success, demonstrating the provider's and partnership's very strong ethos of evaluation, is the efforts in terms of recruitment and selection to meet regional and local needs. Over the last three years, there has been a sharp rise in the proportion of males on the courses; recruitment from minority ethnic groups is also rising. While recruitment of this latter group remains low, the provider is proactive in seeking to address this through targeting schools and colleges in a range of areas for taster sessions and producing publicity materials in different languages. In addition, its flexible pathways are widening participation well with trainees on these courses – parents of young children for example - reporting that any other sort of training would be difficult. A further feature demonstrating how the provider is widening participation very well is the valuing of trainees who enter via access routes. This is proving particularly beneficial to trainees based at Shrewsbury who, for example, combine successfully their work as teaching assistants in schools with their training programme.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Context

26. The secondary training partnership offers undergraduate and postgraduate routes to QTS in a range of subject areas. It also offers Key Stage 2/3 courses and a flexible route to PGCE which can last up to three years. The undergraduate Key Stage 2/3 course leads to either BA or BSc Honours in education with QTS. Subject specialisms available are creative art, design technology, English, ICT, mathematics, modern foreign language specialism in either French or Spanish, religious education and science. The undergraduate secondary course also leads to either BA or BSc Honours in education with QTS and can be taken as a three year full-time or four year part-time course; subject specialisms available are design technology, ICT, mathematics and science. The secondary standard route PGCE course is available in business, administration and finance, business education, creative and media, design technology, English, geography, history, ICT, mathematics, modern foreign languages (French, German, Mandarin, Spanish and Urdu), music, physical education, psychology, religious education and science.

27. The University works with 224 schools in the partnership, predominantly in the north-west but with additional training locations across the country, including North-east Lincolnshire, Shropshire, the West Midlands and the Isle of Man. At the time of the inspection, 544 trainees were studying on the undergraduate course and 577 on the postgraduate courses.

### Key strengths

28. The key strengths are:

- the success of recruitment and selection procedures in ensuring that trainees have the qualities needed to become self-motivated, successful teachers
- the reflective and proactive nature of trainees in identifying their strengths and what needs to be done to bring about their further progress
- the personalised training that is both responsive and proactive in relation to individual need because of innovative and well targeted resourcing that promotes trainees' progress
- the pivotal role of central subject tutors in fostering trainees' specific skills in developing best practice in their subject teaching
- the quality and coherence of target setting that secures trainees' progress
- the excellent collaboration and communication across the partnership which ensures all partners are involved in the drive for improvement in trainee outcomes.

## Recommendations

29. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:

- promote equality of opportunity further by
  - widening the range of strategies used to promote the recruitment of minority ethnic trainees across all courses
  - ensuring strengths within the partnership are fully utilised to provide increased opportunities for trainees to put the promotion of equalities into practice and to increase further their confidence to teach learners with diverse needs.
  
- refine the use of data in developing timely actions for improvement to promote even better outcomes for all groups of trainees.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

30. Trainees attain at an outstanding level, having made at least good and often outstanding progress from their starting points. The strong promotion of equality of opportunity is evident in the fact that discrepancies in attainment between subjects, and by groups of trainees, are being narrowed over time. In 2010, 92% of trainees attained at a good or outstanding level. Employment rates are also high. Course retention rates are good overall and, where they have been lower, they are now rising as a result of well-targeted interventions.

31. Applicants are very well prepared to apply for the courses; they are able to check out their qualifications against course requirements and boost their subject knowledge as needed prior to application. Access to booster courses is highly valued by trainees and take-up is extensive. Selection procedures test rigorously trainees' personal and professional characteristics as well as their subject knowledge. The focus on individual needs from the point of recruitment onwards, the exceptional way that course leaders use the information gained to get trainees off to a good start, the sharing of information with schools and the accurate identification of cohort strengths and weaknesses, are all strong features which ensure equality of opportunity. In addition, they accelerate trainees' progress and help to develop their understanding of collaborative and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning. School staff appreciate the opportunities for them to contribute to recruitment and selection procedures and rightly believe they add value, currency and rigour to the whole process. A relatively weaker aspect is that minority ethnic recruitment is below national benchmarks for university based secondary programmes. However, there are some excellent examples of links with community organisations that are building capacity for increasing the proportions of such trainees, especially in the north-east of Lancashire, initially through the development of the religious education course.

32. The removal of barriers to learning and the wide range for courses, pathways and subjects meet trainees' needs particularly well and secure good access to ITE

opportunities. Trainees benefit from very high levels of personalised support and coherent training throughout their time at Edge Hill. Alongside these goes a high level of challenge so that even those who attain well right from the start are stretched further. The high quality of placements and the exceptional commitment of subject leaders underpin trainees' good or better progress. All university-based tutors know the schools well and work collaboratively with school-based trainers to ensure trainees' individual and emerging needs are particularly well met. Subject leaders from the university are highly skilled in developing trainees' understanding and practice of excellent subject pedagogy so that learners in schools benefit from trainees' clear explanations, awareness of potential misconceptions, the wide range of teaching and learning styles used and their emphasis on key subject vocabulary.

33. The systematic focus on training translates into strong enthusiasm and high aspiration demonstrated by trainees. They say they want to be the best and are enabled to facilitate their own development. The whole training is driven by targets which are demanding, well phrased, pertinent and accurate, and by high-quality feedback following observations of trainees' teaching. The discussion underpinning feedback and target-setting ensures trainees know what their next steps should be to achieve them week by week. Assignments are very well designed to support training and are valued by trainees in terms of developing their understanding of the links between theory and practice. Feedback on assignments is strong; in the best practice, development points identified in assignments lead into targets for trainees' classroom practice.

34. Reflective practice is promoted relentlessly and for many trainees this is facilitated through the use of the virtual learning environment. Trainees have immediate access to course materials and can share perceptions and resources with their tutors and other trainees. This collaborative approach leads to trainees planning a range of paired and group activities and encouraging discussions between learners. For example, a geography trainee took risks in her lesson planning by inviting learners to sing along to music well chosen to promote cultural awareness and to help learners understand the locational context in a lesson about tourism. The range of tasks met learners' different needs well and enabled them to discuss sustainable approaches.

35. Trainees develop a good awareness of how to teach learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities and learners from a diversity of backgrounds. This awareness is generally well applied in the classroom to provide support for learners. The impact of trainees' understanding, in terms of raising their learners' awareness of diversity and of using a range of differentiation strategies to increase challenge for the most able, is more inconsistent. Trainees also show a good awareness of learners' literacy needs. They correct spellings appropriately, emphasise key technical words, such as in mathematics and geography, and understand the importance of phonics in promoting learners' reading skills and fluency in modern foreign languages. Behaviour management is a significant strength – trainees understand that good teaching and learning are linked to good behaviour management. They are confident in their practice because they have been trained to develop a repertoire of effective strategies to tackle poor behaviour and to promote good behaviour in different circumstances. A physical education trainee, for example, draw well on previous employment experience to manage behaviour. A

business studies trainee, at the start of a lesson, set high expectations for behaviour by referring to school rules, the need to respect one another and the benefits of good behaviour to the quality of learning for all. This enabled the lesson to proceed at a quick pace and resulted in good progress for learners.

36. The partnership is outstandingly effective in promoting high quality outcomes for trainees. A very clear ethos of collaboration, high expectation and continuous improvement through the sharing of best practice is evident across the partnership. It engenders high levels of consistency that support trainees' rapid progress. Involvement of partners in course development and quality assurance is strong: partners have very good representation through management and review boards. Schools have a voice and so feel empowered, for example, to improve the consistency of mentoring which resulted in the development of the on-line mentoring package. Partnership priorities are communicated well to schools through link tutor visits which help school-based trainers to understand their role in supporting improvement. Communication is a strength: partners feel valued and well supported by the university. The dialogue between the university and its partners is professional and open. Schools feel proud to be part of the partnership.

37. Trainees are exceptionally positive about their training experience. They feel very safe and well cared for at Edge Hill. They report that they can trust their tutors and mentors and feel able to discuss any difficulties they may face. They value highly the use of personal tutors. Recent initiatives to counter the relatively negative perceptions of previous cohorts of trainees about how well prepared they felt to teach learners from diverse backgrounds, or those learners who do not have English as their first language, have raised confidence levels significantly among current trainees. Occasionally, placements could be better chosen to widen trainees' opportunities to put understanding into practice and the responsibilities of partnership schools in this respect could be made clearer.

38. The positive outcomes for trainees, the strengths of training and the successes achieved in promoting improvement result from the highly focused, well prioritised and proportionately deployed allocation of resources. Partnership staff are of high quality and well experienced. Much of this is attributable to funds being used particularly well to focus continuous professional development. The development of ICT resources for learning, teaching and communication has had clear benefits for trainees and schools. The good number and quality of visits from different tutors is a very strong aspect of the training, valued by all. Funding is exceptionally well targeted to meet the needs of a specific school or trainee. Trainees with declared disability are well supported; all trainees are enabled to pursue areas of specific interest to promote their progress and new partners receive additional visits and personalised procedures to ensure there is no disadvantage for trainees. Resources needed are quickly accessible to maximise learning opportunities.

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

**Grade: 1**

39. Leadership and management at all levels have outstanding capacity to secure further improvement. The success of self-evaluation and improvement planning by leaders and managers is illustrated by significant improvements in performance since the previous inspection. There is greater consistency in the monitoring of school-based provision. Trainees' outcomes are now also consistently monitored to identify trends and anomalies in outcomes for groups of trainees. Elevated importance is given to the process of self-evaluation. Improvement in its rigour is evident at subject leader level because the introduced framework for self-evaluation secures higher levels of consistency. Subject leaders peer assess each other's subject self-evaluation and this helps to ensure the focus on outcomes for trainees. Evaluation of performance has led to the accurate identification of specific strengths and areas for improvement across a wide range of aspects on all courses; analysis is highly detailed and informs action planning. Significant improvement in the access to and use of data to inform analysis and evaluation at subject and pathway levels strengthens the process of review and evaluation. Subject leaders rightly see this as an improvement since the last inspection. A good range of benchmarking strategies informs the accuracy of self-evaluation further, including leaders' roles as external examiners and inspectors.

40. The cycle of monitoring, evaluation, action planning and review is securely embedded: systems are clearly understood and involve all partners. Procedures to gather their views are strong and partners participate widely because they can see that their views are not only valued but are used to direct action. However, there is lost opportunity to involve professional tutors more formally in the self-evaluation and the improvement of the quality of training in their schools. Trainees are confident that their views are well heard, and acted upon, through their representatives and their involvement on management review bodies.

41. Improvement plans are well designed with clear actions, responsibilities, resource implications and associated monitoring requirements. Success criteria are strongly rooted in promoting outcomes for trainees. Analysis of data, about trainees' attainment of particular aspects of the Standards and other outcomes, is being used increasingly well to identify future priorities for action. Occasionally, data collation and presentation lack clarity, resulting in trends being more difficult to determine. Although formal and informal reviews are frequent and rigorous, the slower pace with which the outcomes are formalised into action plans has the potential to delay their impact for current trainees. Nevertheless, the drive for continuous improvement is clear and successful. Actions taken have developed high and increasing levels of attainment for trainees over time. Improvement priorities are communicated effectively to schools. Additional resources, such as link tutor visits, are allocated to promote consistency in implementation and to ensure equality of opportunity for trainees. There is a clear sense of ownership of improvement priorities among those with leadership and management responsibilities and they understand how each plays a part in the development of the whole secondary partnership.

42. The range of courses offered by Edge Hill is testimony to the provider's commitment to national and local ITE training needs and success is evident through the particularly strong employability of trainees. In order to keep at the forefront of new initiatives and best practice in teacher training, leaders and managers are well represented at national conferences and actively involved in a range of subject and teacher education networks. A major focus on safeguarding, in response to its strong national profile, has ensured that trainees are very well informed about their legal responsibilities as teachers.

43. The partnership has been exceptionally successful in recruiting a wide range of highly regarded specialists, including those from partnership schools and local authorities, to enrich training in response to local and national initiatives such as behaviour management, supporting learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities, vocational learning and the promotion of learners' literacy skills. National priorities are strongly addressed in central training and their importance is well communicated to schools to the benefit of learners. For example, trainees are already applying phonics strategies in their teaching and the range of courses has been extended and adapted to address changes to the 14-19 curriculum.

44. New schools approach the partnership because they value the way involvement supports high quality teaching and learning in their schools and promotes continuous professional development. The careful checks made on their suitability to provide training placements ensure that individualised support mechanisms promote their successful engagement as full partners. All schools are asked to complete a proforma indicating their areas of strength and expertise and current areas of focus so that trainees across the partnership can capitalise on these aspects during their training.

45. Creative use of resources enables innovative strategies to support the needs and interests of prospective and current trainees, for example, to facilitate placements to promote strong progress in particular Standards, and opportunities to develop specific subject expertise in more diverse aspects of modern foreign languages and design technology.



## Initial teacher education for the further education system

### Context

46. The university operates in partnership with four further education colleges and two off-site delivery partners to provide full-time and part-time pre-service and in-service training for teachers and trainers across the further education sector. Courses lead to the diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector. They meet the statutory requirements and are endorsed by Standards Verification UK. At the time of the inspection, 279 trainees followed these courses, of whom 9% were from minority ethnic backgrounds and 59% were female.

### Key strengths

47. The key strengths are:

- the excellent progress made by the very large majority of trainees, including those with additional learning and personal support needs
- the nurturing of very confident and articulate trainees who apply educational theory very effectively in their practice
- the very detailed and constructive feedback on trainees' lessons and assignments which secures significant improvements in their teaching practice and academic writing
- the very strong emphasis given to trainees' self evaluation and reflection, which contributes to the considerable improvement in their skills
- very effective partnership working which engenders high levels of consistency, cohesion and collaboration
- the very effective promotion of equality and diversity which underpins curriculum delivery by trainers and trainees
- highly enthusiastic trainers, tutors and mentors, who work closely together to drive improvements in trainees' personalised learning
- the very effective targeting of resources to ensure improvements in mentoring, e-learning, staff development and research and financial support for further studies.

### Recommendations

48. In order to improve trainees' recruitment and selection, the partnership should:

- ensure that trainees receive full information regarding accreditation of prior experiential learning and skills for life provision before starting their course.

49. In order to improve the quality of the provision, the partnership should:
- reduce the risk of multiple trainees being allocated to one mentor.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

50. The overall effectiveness of the partnership in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. Trainees' attainment has improved significantly in the last three years and is outstanding. The very high quality of provision and training and assessment ensures that trainees make excellent progress and achieve very high standards in their academic work and in their teaching and learning practice. Tutors know their trainees' strengths and areas for improvement thoroughly. They have an accurate view of their progress. Observation reports and progress against precise and demanding targets show that interim grades are accurate and estimated grades are realistic. Trainees make very good progression into employment and, subsequently, onto promoted posts, such as subject learning coaches, curriculum managers and heads of department. Other former trainees have gained national awards; they attribute much of their success to the confidence they gained through their teacher training course. Retention, pass and success rates declined slightly in 2009/10 compared with 2008/09 while the numbers of trainees increased significantly. Approximately one in eight trainees expected to complete their studies successfully in 2009/10 did not do so.

51. Trainees make very good progress compared with their starting points and demonstrate very well-developed teaching skills. Trainees are confident and articulate. Of particular note is how they use excellent rationales to demonstrate very clear links between theory and practice. Trainees understand and apply the principles of learning and teaching very well. They facilitate learning very effectively and have well-developed strategies to check learning has taken place. Trainees know how well they are progressing and they produce sharply-focused action plans on their areas for development.

52. Trainees plan the structure of their lessons to cater for the diverse range of learners' abilities in great detail and with considerable care. They are often animated and their enthusiasm for teaching is infectious. Trainees have very creative information learning technology (ILT) skills which they use very effectively to help their learners understand new topics. Their high levels of challenge and expectation motivate their learners. Trainees develop very good classroom and behaviour management skills. They demonstrate good subject knowledge. Trainees encourage their learners to develop vocational and life skills and to use safe working practices. They make very good use of assessment for learning strategies.

53. Recruitment and selection procedures are outstanding. They are transparent, helpful and highly effective in preparing trainees extremely well for the demands of the course. Pre-interview support and guidance are very helpful. Outcomes from the interview process inform trainees' individual development plans appropriately. The whole process facilitates the diagnosis of learning support needs and trainees receive such support promptly. Managers have refined the process to ensure that trainees become more aware of the likely demands of working in the lifelong

learning sector. Interviews are arranged at times and places which facilitate the involvement of mentors and suit the requirements of applicants. Managers analyse recruitment data for different groups of applicants to ensure that none is disadvantaged. They recruit trainees with integrity and ensure that child protection arrangements are robust. Applicants do not, as a matter of course, receive full information about the accreditation of prior experiential learning or of training for skills for life prior to joining the course.

54. Training and assessment are outstanding. Trainees benefit considerably from very high quality, accurate feedback on their planning and delivery of learning. Feedback from tutors and mentors on lesson observations, and from tutors on assignments, is very constructive. This supports trainees in securing significant improvements to their teaching practice and to their academic writing. Occasionally, mentors' written feedback does not correlate with the grade awarded for the lesson observed. Tutors mark trainees' assignments promptly and meticulously with careful and appropriate attention to spelling and sentence construction. Trainees enjoy frequent and very constructive meetings with their subject-specialist mentors. The high quality support from mentors has a significantly positive impact on trainees' classroom management strategies and subject pedagogy. Communication between trainees and mentors is very effective, but tripartite meetings between trainee, tutor and mentor to share each trainee's progress and targets are infrequent.

55. The standard of training by teacher trainers is very high. Trainers are skilful, well qualified and take good account of current learning theories and research and use ILT innovatively to enliven training sessions. Trainers routinely model good practice, which inspires trainees to take risks in their own lessons and to use more learner-centred approaches.

56. Tutors manage and monitor trainees' development very thoroughly through their clear focus on specific individual targets and support. The initial assessment in trainees' portfolios is comprehensive and allows the setting of realistic but challenging targets early in the course. Trainees are skilled at self-analysis of their progress and achievement against the four characteristics, which they use very effectively at interim and summative reviews.

57. The outstanding learning and teaching resources enable trainers to demonstrate best practice in the use of resources to aid learning. Trainees have access to very extensive resources in their own lessons and they adapt them to very good effect. Tutors and trainees use the virtual learning environment very effectively. This provides much information, advice and guidance about module content, but especially about current and important issues affecting the lifelong learning sector, such as safeguarding, equality and diversity and the Wolf report. Much documentation is available electronically, but the provision of subject-specific books is insufficient for a minority of trainees.

58. The quality of provision across the partnership is outstanding. Trainers, mentors and tutors show very high levels of commitment to ensure that trainees enjoy a high quality training experience and attain extremely well. Link tutors work closely with partner staff and mentors to encourage, motivate, share good practice and raise standards. Quality improvement procedures across the partnership are

robust and managers implement them rigorously to ensure consistently high standards are attained by each partner. All partners use reliable tracking systems to indicate if trainees are at risk and they take prompt actions to address any areas of concern. Mentors have very good training and support which enables them to provide consistently high quality advice and guidance to their trainees. They improve their lesson observation skills through joint observations with tutors. However, conflicts of interest arise when a mentor is also the line manager of an employed trainee. In one provider, managers are aware of the risk associated with a single mentor having many trainees.

59. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Trainers, tutors and mentors are highly committed to ensuring that all trainees achieve their potential. Trainers embed equality and diversity thoroughly through the course. Trainees talk confidently and coherently about how they incorporate equality and diversity into their lessons. They know how to deal with incidents of harassment, unlawful discrimination and bullying, including cyber and homophobic bullying. Through their course work and industry experience, most in-service trainees are aware of the wider dimensions of cultural and socio-political diversity. Trainees feel well prepared to teach in the very diverse lifelong learning sector, but a small minority of pre-service trainees lack awareness of working with a wide range of learners across a broad spectrum of levels and courses. The partnership promotes educational and social inclusion very effectively. Managers market the provision to groups under-represented in teacher education, such as Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers, older males and women from certain backgrounds. Trainees have a good understanding of their learners' needs, such as literacy, numeracy, dyslexia and learning difficulties and how best to support them.

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

**Grade: 1**

60. The partnership's capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to secure further improvements is outstanding. Managers, tutors, trainers, mentors, trainees, former trainees and partners are very involved in the self-evaluation process and are committed to improve provision. The self-evaluation document and quality improvement plan are comprehensive, rigorous and accurate. Each contains issues raised by trainees, mentors, external examiners and partners. Managers use these two documents to deploy resource allocations to areas of greatest need with the purpose of improving facilities for trainees. They draw appropriately on quantitative and qualitative evidence from a wide variety of sources. The graded judgements on the key inspection questions are accurate. Partners' self-assessment reports are evaluative and highlight appropriate strengths and areas for improvement. Managers elicit and act on trainees' views but do not always communicate subsequent interventions or their impact. University staff meet trainees on partners' premises and obtain their views about the quality of the provision. The self-evaluation process takes full account of matters relating to equality and diversity. Managers use the self-assessment process to raise issues of concern, which they address through the improvement plan. These processes of accurate self-evaluation and subsequent robust action planning have led to continuous

improvement in provision, which has secured high quality provision and higher outcomes for trainees.

61. The partnership's capacity to anticipate change and to prepare for, and respond to, national regional and local initiatives is outstanding. Managers review the provision frequently and thoroughly to ensure that the curriculum is responsive to the needs of local communities and under-represented groups. The partnership works innovatively with a national organisation to develop specific staff development opportunities which can be accredited for professional formation purposes. The range of current development activities, including research and publication, is wide. Many of these activities link closely to national and local initiatives and enthuse and inspire trainees. Tutors keep themselves up-to-date with current initiatives and communicate them enthusiastically to their trainees. Managers are aware that future changes may well have a negative impact on recruitment and take a proactive approach to enable under-represented people to access teacher training for the lifelong learning sector. Leaders at all levels, and in each partner organisation, are very proactive in promoting the use of emerging technologies such as mobile learning and e-portfolios. This is clearly demonstrated through tutors' and trainees' innovative use of Pebble Pad, Blackboard, online mentoring and a wide range of e-learning systems. This has a very positive impact on trainees' teaching and learning strategies. Leaders respond with flexibility to instigate and to resource change. They work with partners and their communities to amend the provision to meet the needs of a wide range of partners and attendance patterns. Managers place a very definite emphasis on using the respective strengths of their partners to disseminate good practice and to encourage improvements. The senior leadership team considers any proposed initiative, judges the implications for the partnership and ensures that relevant quality assurance systems follow the introduction of any new process. Staff involve trainees in anticipating and responding to change and through their own research activities. Trainees appreciate their involvement in such projects.

62. The effectiveness of the partnership in planning and taking action for improvement is outstanding. Managers have taken effective action to address areas of concern across the partnership and to improve trainees' outcomes. They were aware that mentoring was an area for improvement and invested heavily in improving mentor training and in monitoring the quality of mentoring. Mentors are very aware of good practice and provide an excellent service for their mentees. Managers are aware that certain groups of people do not normally obtain teacher training qualifications for the lifelong learning sector and have addressed this issue proactively with well-resourced actions to target communities and potential trainees. They have taken very effective actions to improve the areas for attention from the previous inspection. Managers plan for and take actions to improve the quality of provision, based on trainees' views. They communicate very well and all concerned understand their roles and responsibilities in the partnership. Managers deploy their resources in a well-planned and systematic way to facilitate improvements in practice. The self-evaluation document informs the post-compulsory education and training improvement plan. This is approved by the programme board and includes key area priorities, each of which has relevant actions. Managers prioritise these targets to ensure that they are challenging, but realistic, manageable and measurable. All stakeholders, including mentors are involved in planning for improvement. The partnership identifies successfully the main areas for

improvement, especially those which impact on trainees. Managers support improvement planning by providing very good opportunities for staff development so that staff can implement changes to best effect.

## **Annex: Partnership providers**

The partnership includes the following providers:

Knowsley Community College  
Hopwood Hall College  
Manchester Communications Academy  
Merseyside Police  
Preston College  
Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology.

## 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	ITE for FE
<b>How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	1	1	1
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1	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	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1	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	1	1

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

		Primary	Secondary	ITE for FE
<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>	<b>1</b>
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1	1	1
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	1	1
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		1	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 July 2008; Reference no: 080128.

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