

London Metropolitan 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. London Metropolitan University provides initial teacher education to trainees from a diverse range of backgrounds including a significant number who are mature. Courses are designed to meet the needs of trainees with a wide range of previous professional, social and cultural experience. London Metropolitan provides primary qualified teacher status (QTS) programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Secondary QTS programmes are currently also offered at undergraduate and postgraduate levels but the final undergraduate cohort is completing this year. The provider's partnership consists of approximately 120 primary and 80 secondary schools across London boroughs and occasionally beyond. At the time of the inspection, there were 126 trainees on the primary programmes and 155 on the secondary programmes.
4. The university has been experiencing a period of some financial and organisational turbulence, which has led to reductions in the number of administrative and academic staff working in teacher education.

A commentary on the provision

5. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
 - highly reflective trainees who are very well prepared to teach in a diverse society and who demonstrate strong professional attributes
 - the excellent quality of pastoral care and professional support for trainees
 - the innovative approach of the senior leaders and their teams in maintaining and improving the provision in a rapidly changing financial and organisational context.

6. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:
 - engage partnership schools more fully in the self-evaluation process
 - sharpen improvement planning to focus more clearly on trainee outcomes.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

7. The primary undergraduate programme is a three-year full-time course, leading to a Bachelor of Education degree for those wishing to teach early years pupils (three to seven year olds). Postgraduate programmes leading to a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education are available for those wishing to teach early years pupils or primary pupils (five to eleven year olds). There are currently nine final year trainees on the undergraduate route and these are the first cohort to complete this new course. There are 59 trainees on the postgraduate programme for early years and 58 primary postgraduate trainees.

Key strengths

8. The key strengths are:
 - trainees who are exceptionally well prepared to teach in a diverse, multicultural society, are reflective and demonstrate good professional attributes
 - the excellent levels of pastoral care and professional support from university tutors which enable the vast majority of trainees to complete their programmes and gain QTS
 - the anticipation and preparation for change in response to local and national issues, resulting in trainees who understand well how to

manage behaviour, teach phonics and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

- the commitment and strength of the partnership
- high quality central- and school-based training which ensures good levels of attainment
- the innovative approach of the senior leaders and their teams in maintaining and improving the provision in a rapidly changing financial and organisational context.

Recommendations

9. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
 - engage partnership schools more fully in the self-evaluation process so all in the partnership know how to increase the proportion of trainees attaining at an outstanding level
 - sharpen improvement planning to focus more clearly on trainee outcomes.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

10. In each of the last three years, over three quarters of the trainees attained QTS at a good or outstanding level. Inspection evidence confirms the provider's judgement that most trainees make good progress from their starting points. Completion rates vary from year to year but are average overall. Trainees are strongly committed to teaching in urban areas with diverse populations, and employment rates are high, with many of the trainees securing posts in London schools. Employers report that they are well prepared for their first year in teaching and a good proportion of them subsequently train to be school mentors for London Metropolitan. Given that the trainees are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds and many have to overcome challenging circumstances to complete the course, these good outcomes pay testimony to the excellent levels of personal and academic support they receive from the university and the partner schools.
11. Trainees display highly professional attitudes. They quickly establish positive relationships with the pupils and skilfully use their voices to maintain a good level of engagement. Their subject knowledge is secure and lessons are well planned to ensure that all pupils know what they are going to learn. Trainees confidently use a range of visual techniques for those pupils learning English as an additional language and sensitively reinforce key vocabulary, using a good range of interesting activities. Particular attention is given to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given sufficient support and tasks are carefully planned to help them. Good use is made of information and communication technology, such as electronic whiteboards, to enhance learning and secure pupils' participation.

12. The provider's recruitment and selection arrangements are good. Equality, inclusion and diversity by age, ethnicity and gender are promoted extremely well. The recruitment of male and minority ethnic trainees is above average and the university is justifiably proud of its successful programme to recruit men into early years teaching. Procedures for selection enable prospective trainees to share relevant experiences and demonstrate their motivation and professional attitudes. The presence at interviews of teachers from partnership schools adds rigour and ensures that appropriate candidates are selected. Interviews successfully identify candidates' strengths and areas for development, and 'brush up' courses are obligatory for those with weaknesses in key skills. Good communication, including the use of social networking sites, and set tasks keep selected trainees in touch with the university prior to the start of the course.
13. Training is planned well to ensure that central training and school placements complement each other to build trainees' skills, knowledge and understanding. Good examples include central book days, visits by authors and the motivating storytelling drama lectures supporting the planning and teaching of guided reading and writing when trainees are in school. Since the previous inspection, experience in Key Stage 1 for the primary postgraduate trainees has been strengthened by the introduction of an additional week of school experience in this age range.
14. Significant attention is given to national priorities and trainees are well prepared to teach pupils from a range of backgrounds. In schools, trainees build on their central training by observing and closely monitoring a selected group of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and they demonstrate developing strengths in planning for and assessing these pupils. Visiting lecturers from special education and the opportunity for an additional school placement in a special school also deepen trainees' understanding and confidence in this area. Trainees appreciate the strong university focus on the teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language which is woven through all subject sessions. For example, trainees learn how to engage pupils through the use of puppets, strong visual stimuli, rhymes and songs and interactive sessions. Well-received central training in behaviour management includes helpful role play sessions and an emphasis on the clarity of messages.
15. Postgraduate trainees' understanding of the teaching of synthetic phonics, a strength of the course, develops well during central training. The importance of phonics has been emphasised through an increase in taught sessions, regular workshops and participation in the leading literacy schools initiative. Trainees are required to undertake focused tasks during their school placements while phonics audits during the first week of training, and again at the end of the taught provision, facilitate the effective monitoring of trainees' progress. Most postgraduate trainees feel confident about teaching synthetic phonics as a result and this is reflected in their responses in the 2009/10 newly qualified teacher (NQT) survey. Year three undergraduate trainees feel less well prepared, due to a less practical approach to their training. The undergraduate course has recently been significantly revised incorporating a greater focus on phonics in line with the postgraduate course.

16. Assessment systems are robust, accurate, clearly documented and consistently applied across the partnership. Trainees' teaching is observed by class teachers, school mentors and supervising tutors from the university. Moderation procedures are rigorous and lesson observation forms provide detailed evaluative feedback, linked clearly to the Standards. Targets are identified and these are suitably reflected in training activities and individual plans. Trainee assessment generally makes a significant contribution to training but higher-attaining trainees are not always provided with precise enough guidance about how they might raise their attainment from good to outstanding.
17. The provider is highly responsive to trainees' need for resources and ensures that personnel, time and equipment are effectively deployed to support outcomes for trainees. Identified priorities for improvement also drive resource allocations. Trainees have very good access to the tutor and mentor support they need from the university and their placement schools. However, the new electronic tracking and learning tool, piloted this year by the university, has been found to be unwieldy and cumbersome by primary trainees.
18. The provider takes every opportunity to share best practice by drawing on the expertise and diversity of its partner schools and other stakeholders. As a result, it possesses a clear and accurate knowledge of the community it serves and uses this information creatively to provide trainees with a breadth of good quality learning experiences, hence trainees' confidence about teaching in inner-city schools. A significant reduction in the partnership team resulted in some shortcomings in communications between the university and schools but senior leaders are confident that these have now been rectified. School-based trainers have a good understanding of their role and are well trained to support trainees' progress. A new partnership forum is in the early stages of development and has yet to formalise its role in the evaluation and planning of the courses.
19. There are extremely robust policies relating to harassment and bullying. Trainees are confident that prompt and effective action would be taken if any concern was raised. There is no significant difference in progress between groups of trainees. All gain a good breadth of experience and are extremely well prepared to teach in a diverse society. The careful allocation of resources has resulted in the provider being able to support individual trainees with challenging circumstances to succeed in their school-based placements.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

20. Primary course leaders and their teams have successfully managed to minimise the impact on trainees of staff reductions in the university. In fact, the innovative manner in which change has been managed has strengthened the

provider's ethos and ensured a shared commitment across all courses. Key strengths identified at the previous inspection have been retained and there have been a number of new initiatives. For instance, by introducing placements in children's centres during their first year, the provider has ensured that early years undergraduates quickly gain a good understanding of the relationship between different agencies in early childhood development, thus preparing them well for future employment. Paired placements have also been promoted in the postgraduate routes to ensure that trainees experience collaboration with colleagues and working as team members.

21. Data collection is more sophisticated than at the time of the previous inspection and is based on a range of national and local benchmarks, including external examiners' reports. Mentor training now highlights the importance of trainees receiving subject-specific feedback following lesson observations. A greater emphasis has been placed on supervising tutors to ensure that trainees receive consistently high quality feedback. This monitoring has ensured that schools not meeting expectations are deselected from the partnership. The content and structure of course programmes are continually evaluated to ensure that they fully reflect the needs of trainees in early years settings and in primary schools.
22. Self-evaluation is accurate because the university rigorously monitors and evaluates the training. The progress of individuals and groups, such as the growing number of male trainees, is monitored well to identify trends, and appropriate strategies are put into place to improve outcomes. Supervising tutors ensure that school placements provide a good breadth of experience and this quality is successfully maintained through regular visits to schools, joint lesson observations, detailed scrutiny of trainees' files and discussions with staff. Evaluations from tutors, schools and trainees are actively sought and responses to issues raised are rapid. For example, the timings of assignment submissions in relation to the start of school placements were reconsidered following feedback from trainees. National performance data are carefully compared with the provider's own evaluations to benchmark provision. Results of trainee exit surveys measure the impact of actions taken to secure improvements and meet the needs of the trainees. While the university seeks evaluations from schools to inform future planning, it does not involve them enough in reflecting on the evaluations or formulating strategies for improvement. As a result, there is an incomplete understanding of the key challenges facing the partnership and the schools' part in overcoming them. For example, schools are not sufficiently aware of the need to maximise trainees' potential and raise the attainment of a higher proportion from good to outstanding.
23. Course tutors also engage in research and other scholarly activities. These include practical ways to support pupils who speak English as an additional language, early childhood studies and storytelling across the primary curriculum, all of which are used well to improve trainee outcomes. For example, trainees know how storytelling techniques can be used to motivate and engage pupils. Close links with schools in neighbouring local authorities mean that the provider has a clear understanding of local needs and the training itself is highly effective in ensuring that trainees have a good

knowledge and understanding of national initiatives. The rapid incorporation of the recently published report, *The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning*, into the early years undergraduate course is impressive and has ensured that the trainees are up to date with current thinking and well prepared for future changes in their specialism.

24. Improvement planning is linked closely to accurate self-evaluation and review. Responsibilities for programme improvement are effectively delegated to all staff. There is a willingness to engage in constructive dialogue, and course leaders are continually analysing ways in which aspects of provision can be fully assessed. Since the previous inspection, there is clear evidence of the positive impact of action planning on the outcomes for trainees. For example, a carefully devised tracking system has been introduced to monitor trainees' progress throughout their course. This includes records of individual attendance and is used to highlight concerns and provide support where it is required. Improvement plans show clear indications of priorities and the rationale for actions to be taken. However, plans do not relate actions to measurable improvements in outcomes for trainees, for example in the proportion of trainees who attain at an outstanding level.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

25. London Metropolitan University offers courses in citizenship, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and science for those wishing to teach 11 to 16 year olds. Undergraduate secondary provision, a two-year full-time course in music leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree with QTS, is in its final year. Postgraduate programmes lead to a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

Key strengths

26. The key strengths are:
- extremely reflective trainees from a diverse range of backgrounds, with strong professional attributes, who are good role models in the classroom
 - trainees' very good preparation for teaching in a diverse society
 - high-quality mentoring and target setting, particularly in the second school placement
 - exemplary pastoral care and support for trainees
 - the effective work of inspirational subject leaders and partnership schools in enhancing trainees' subject knowledge and developing their ability to teach their subjects

- the innovative work of course leaders and their teams in maintaining and improving provision in a rapidly changing financial and organisational context.

Recommendations

27. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- accelerate trainees' progress in their first school placement and improve transition arrangements into their second placement to help ensure they can reach their full potential
 - enhance quality assurance and self-evaluation in the partnership by fully involving schools in the improvement of provision and outcomes for trainees
 - improve improvement planning to focus clearly on trainee outcomes.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

28. Trainees' levels of attainment have been steadily rising over the past three years. Over 81% of those completing in 2010 achieved good or better levels of attainment by the end of their training.
29. Equality and diversity are core principles for the provider and the university works very hard to attract and retain trainees from a wide range of backgrounds. The secondary course has children's rights and teachers' professional responsibilities at its heart. As a result, the most notable strengths of trainees are their professionalism and their ability to reflect on their own practice in relation to the learners in their classes. With the strong support of mentors and subject leaders, who have high expectations of their trainees, most become resilient and very good at self-improvement. NQTs from London Metropolitan University said this approach was central to their ongoing development as teachers and were very glad to have had it embedded early in their careers. With their strong professional attributes and diverse experience, trainees become good role models in the London schools where they are largely employed.
30. The selection process is rigorous, with trainees from an extremely wide range of cultures and backgrounds carefully assessed for their potential as teachers. Interview tasks are well designed to identify suitable trainees and are carefully matched to the requirements of the different subjects. Subject knowledge courses in science and mathematics and the two-year undergraduate music course have allowed trainees from non-traditional backgrounds, for example professional musicians, to enter teaching. Fluctuations in course completion rates from year to year, and between subjects, identified at the time of the last inspection, still persist. However, the provider has worked hard to identify

those at risk during the course and to target support, including counselling, towards these trainees. These efforts have seen overall retention rise to above the London average so that it is now in line with that found nationally. Withdrawals that do occur are monitored very carefully and reasons are often found to be related to unforeseen changes in trainees' personal circumstances. The provider is aware that there is scope to make better use of information gathered at interview to help mentors support trainees more effectively on their first school placement.

31. Central training in the teaching of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, while school placements with a diverse range of learners, together with strong contextual training in schools, ensure that trainees are well prepared for teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Higher attaining trainees apply this preparation very well in their lessons to differentiate for the full range of ability; others are more confident supporting students with learning difficulties than challenging the gifted and talented. Behaviour management training, including well-received sessions from a national expert, are part of the core professional studies training at the university. Constructive training and feedback on the use of school behaviour policies by mentors enhance, over time, trainees' ability to manage behaviour in school. Trainees also receive good central training in teaching students who speak English as an additional language so that by the time they finish, most feel completely confident teaching students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Training in key skills such as literacy is embedded in central training but trainees' application of good practice in this area in their lessons is of inconsistent quality.
32. Trainees receive very effective subject training at the university. Subject leaders are described as 'inspirational' by trainees and NQTs. The subject journey for a minority of trainees starts with long subject enhancement courses in the year before their postgraduate year. These increase knowledge dramatically and underpin very effective training in approaches to teaching the subject. Coherence in subject training is provided by effective tracking of trainees' subject auditing by subject leaders. School-based mentors also help trainees to teach their subject, and subject-specific feedback to trainees is always at least good and occasionally outstanding.
33. University resources are good and are well utilised to support trainees' progress. Some subjects have excellent central facilities for subject training, for example the science centre. A comprehensive library provides access to the latest research and subject-related material and there are extensive on-line resources and discussion forums. Partnership schools are well resourced and trainees have access to all that they need for their professional development. Supervising tutors are well deployed to support training.
34. Assessment procedures are comprehensive and well understood and the professional development journal is used effectively to track trainees' progress towards the Standards. The journal has been carefully planned and structured over time to reflect feedback from trainers and trainees. It suggests suitable training activities on a weekly basis and brings a good structure to school-

based training. Progress in the journal can be tracked electronically by subject leaders. Feedback to trainees following lesson observations is precise and well-focused on the Standards. Mentoring and targets for trainees' development are of a high, or very high, quality during the second school placement and trainees make rapid progress as a result. Records show that targets are less sharp during the first placement, however, and that mentoring is not always as good as it should be. This means that postgraduate trainees' progress is generally slower in the first term. The transition between their two school placements is supported by a first placement report and target setting with university tutors. Placement reports are good on the whole but there is some variability in the quality and accuracy of information passed on so that new mentors are not always able to build rapidly on trainees' prior experience but instead establish their own benchmarks. This can lead to a short-term dip in trainees' performance at the start of the second placement.

35. Professional development opportunities for mentors are generally well regarded but sessions are not always well attended. However, many school-based trainers have received mentor accreditation through London Providers. Communication across the partnership is good, with school-based trainers clear about their points of contact with tutors and subject leaders. Regular visits to schools by supervising tutors help to strengthen relationships across the partnership. Joint observations of trainees by supervising tutors and mentors moderate judgements and ensure that assessments are accurate. Following the last inspection, the roles and responsibilities of professional tutors were carefully defined and published in handbooks. This has resulted in an increased consistency of approach, with all now providing good support to trainees.
36. There are no discernible differences between the outcomes for different groups of trainees. This is because the university has worked hard to ensure resources are very well used to support equality and diversity. Trainees, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, were keen to stress the high levels of pastoral care and support they receive both from the university and in schools.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

37. Secondary course leaders and their teams have managed staff reductions well and have seen the changes as an opportunity to remodel their approach; provision and outcomes have been maintained, or even enhanced, with reduced resources. Innovative plans are underway to form closer links with a smaller number of partner schools by placing a member of academic staff in the school for one day a fortnight to enhance quality assurance and facilitate professional development. In return, a small number of schools have agreed to take more trainees. This has the potential to concentrate provision and reduce inconsistencies in its quality.

38. The self-evaluation process involves a range of stakeholders. Assessment of the courses' performance is based upon a range of formal and informal evidence. Informal feedback is facilitated by effective communications and the good relationships between trainees, supervising tutors, schools and subject leaders that exist across the partnership. A termly newsletter is much valued by school-based trainers. Supervising tutors visit trainees five times a year and their quality assurance work with mentors, including joint observation, provides regular information about the quality of training across the partnership. More formal mechanisms include the careful scrutiny of trainees' views on the quality of provision from NQT and exit surveys which are benchmarked against national figures. Where there are significant disparities, results are analysed to formulate intelligent hypotheses and actions taken. The provider recognises that there is scope to increase the numbers responding to their exit survey and to align exit questions more closely with those of the NQT survey. Views of school-based trainers are gathered during school visits and when they attend training events. This is not systematic and school-based trainers are often unaware of the university's priorities for improvement and their part in delivering them. For example, the university's target to increase the proportion of trainees with outstanding attainment by the end of their training had not been communicated to schools.
39. The secondary leadership team has a good understanding of current strengths and areas in need of further development and carefully collects, collates and evaluates data about trainees' outcomes and the impact of initiatives and pilot projects. However, course leaders are aware that data on trainee employment is incomplete and are working to rectify the situation. External examiners' subject reports record strengths and areas of relative weakness; the team is required to respond to weaknesses and does so robustly. However, the format of external examiners' reports does not allow for a judgement on the impact of identified strengths or weaknesses on trainee outcomes. External reports attest to, and inspection evidence supports, the accuracy of assessment systems and the consistency of their implementation.
40. The provider responds well to national and local priorities. Course leaders have introduced improved training in the teaching of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, improved provision for literacy and effective behaviour management training. Revision of subject programmes in a number of areas to reflect national subject initiatives has been facilitated by the expertise of subject leaders in their fields. For example, the programme leader for citizenship took a leading role in developing the national assessment criteria for his subject.
41. Plans for improvement and related actions based on accurate self-evaluation are leading to a gradual rise in the attainment of trainees. Progress has been made in relation to the points for action and consideration in the previous inspection report. For example, the introduction of an assignment on assessment has improved trainees' abilities to use formative and summative assessment techniques, with the best trainees demonstrating considerable skill. The quality assurance role of professional tutors has been more closely defined, and, although improved, there remains some inconsistency of

approach across the partnership. Action plans clearly target key areas for improvement and identify time lines and monitoring. However, improvement plans are not sharply enough focused on the expected impact on trainee outcomes.

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?	1	1

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.

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