

Liverpool Hope 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. Liverpool Hope University is a well established provider of initial teacher education, working in partnership with over 500 schools in Liverpool and in the surrounding local authorities. As an ecumenical provider, the university works with both faith and non faith schools. Five of the schools in the partnership are training schools. The provision is housed in both traditional buildings and a new, purpose built base on the Hope Park campus in Liverpool. Training is provided for those wishing to teach in primary or secondary schools through a range of routes, including some flexible part-time provision, and covers all age ranges from Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 5. These courses comprise a primary undergraduate course and primary and secondary postgraduate courses, both full-time and part-time, all of which lead to qualified teacher status (QTS). The part-time programmes are known as distance-learning courses.

A commentary on the provision

4. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
 - the trainees' strong view that teaching is a vocation which enables them to see each school's context as a starting point for success, provides them with the determination to succeed, and instils in them a deeply held sense of responsibility to the children they teach and the communities they serve
 - the excellent recruitment processes which ensure that trainees have the necessary academic qualifications to meet the rigours of the course, but also the personal attributes to develop into the trainee described above and be perceived as the 'Hope Graduate'
 - the high degree of personalised support that trainees receive and the excellent relationships across the strong partnership, where all have high levels of commitment to the Hope vision.
5. The provision demonstrates particularly strong features in some programmes that could be applied to other programmes or aspects of the provision:
 - the training in modern foreign languages that covers both primary and secondary phases heightens trainees' ability to understand issues relating to transition and strengthens their understanding of how pupils develop their language skills.
6. The following recommendation should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:
 - in order to build upon the strengths of the cross-phase provision in modern foreign languages, the provider should explore the potential of translating this success into other subject areas.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

7. Liverpool Hope University is a large provider of teachers prepared to teach in the primary age range. In 2010/11, there were approximately 900 trainees in total on the three routes leading to qualified teacher status. Of these routes, one, for undergraduates, leads (on the successful completion of a four-year course) to the award of a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with Honours (Hons). Two routes lead, on successful completion, to the award of the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE): one a full-time course over one year; the other a distance-learning course taking two years to complete.

Key strengths

8. The key strengths are:
 - the resilience and resourcefulness the trainees display in their training and through their commitment to their chosen profession
 - the highly personalised support based on excellent relationships
 - the strong leadership of the primary provision which ensures that the right actions to secure improvement are made
 - the strong commitment and common sense of purpose of partnership schools
 - the innovative 'Widening Perspectives' module on the BA course
 - the very well-organised procedures for recruitment and selection which prepare trainees well for the rigours of the course.

Recommendations

9. In order to strengthen the trainees' potential to be at least good teachers, the provider and partnership should ensure that trainees, in their planning, teaching and assessment, more consistently:
 - use the information they gain about misconceptions pupils have to inform the next steps of learning
 - plan for the learning of different ability groups in their classes rather than just identify what different groups are going to do
 - make clear in their assessments of learning what it is that pupils can and cannot do, again to identify what steps are needed to help pupils improve.
10. In order to ensure that the systems of tracking progress challenge all trainees to make at least good progress, the provider and partnership should ensure that all trainers consistently:

- set targets which make clear the rationale for the action to be taken and focus on outcomes for trainees
 - follow up how successfully targets set in one lesson, review or experience were achieved by the next
 - use opportunities presented by the personal profiles of professional development (PPPD) to comment regularly on trainees' own assessments and the progress they are making
 - when setting targets for more able trainees, ensure that they are sufficiently challenging.
11. To strengthen further the quality of training, assessment and overall provision, the provider should ensure that all of its plans for improvement follow the example set by its best to make clear what is to be achieved by the actions taken and measure the success of these, where possible, in terms of outcomes for trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

12. Liverpool Hope University successfully ensures that those who train to be teachers in the primary age range are prepared well for the rigours and demands of the career they have chosen to undertake. It is particularly successful in providing teachers to teach in faith schools.
13. Inspectors agree with the provider that its trainees are reciprocal, resourceful, resilient and reflective. Strong attributes of trainees exemplifying these qualities include their displaying of high levels of confidence and the ways in which they thoughtfully and critically reflect on their own training and their own teaching strategies in order to engage their learners. Trainees show initiative very well, for example through their seeking of opportunities to develop their pupils' learning across the curriculum. They form very good relationships with pupils and model their expectations of positive behaviour well. Also developing well is their ability to identify misconceptions their pupils may have in their learning.
14. The result of these attributes is that primary trainees, in common with their secondary peers, hold strongly to the view that teaching is a vocation. This view enables them to see each school's context, no matter how challenging, as a starting point for success rather than an excuse for underachievement. It also provides the trainees with the determination to succeed, and instils in them a deeply held sense of responsibility to the children they teach and the communities they serve, regardless of whether they have difficulties of their own.
15. While the above features are strong, a small number of elements in trainees' planning, teaching and assessment are not consistent. While trainees are skilled at identifying misconceptions their pupils have, including in lessons currently being taught, they are not consistently using this information to inform the next steps of learning – a step, for example, which may necessitate

the changing of a planned activity. Also, in their assessments of what pupils can and cannot do, trainees vary in their ability to summarise their findings. While some are succinct, statements such as 'good progress' and 'struggled' do not assist trainees in identifying the next steps of learning for their pupils. These aspects lead to trainees being inconsistent in how well they plan for the different ability groups within their classes. Some are correctly focused on learning; others miss these opportunities and focus instead on pupils doing different activities. Where trainees adopt the former approach, the progress their pupils make is stronger than those who adopt the latter. Nevertheless, despite these inconsistencies, the attainment of trainees is good and improving.

16. Trainees benefit from good training opportunities both at the university and in schools. Particularly successful has been the provider's work, in conjunction with a national training and development body, in improving trainees' confidence in teaching phonics. The trainees have valued the highly practical sessions at the university, which often make use of serving teachers, children and technologies. School-based tasks reinforce trainees' understanding of phonics very well. However, the opportunity to put this learning into practice in school is, on a few occasions, hindered by the timing of placements or the trainee not being in a Key Stage 1 class. Nonetheless, trainees very confidently articulate their views of the effectiveness of the teaching of phonics and, as a result of their keen, reflective thinking, recognise that one size does not fit all.
17. Trainees are also prepared well to teach pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All first year BA trainees have, for example, a placement in a special school. Trainees report that seminars, such as those for behaviour management, safeguarding and the primary curriculum, are practical and full of ideas. Trainees are also prepared, through seminars led by guest professionals, to teach those pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or those with English as an additional language. Such opportunities enable trainees to recognise that all pupils have needs and to diagnose misconceptions. These opportunities also demonstrate why inspectors have judged as outstanding the extent to which available resources are used effectively and efficiently. This is especially so when considered alongside the wide range of schools in the partnership and the ability afforded by the virtual learning environment for both trainees and trainers to access a wide range of materials and to identify gaps in trainees' understanding.
18. Assignments and school-based tasks ground trainees' learning into practice very well. They provide excellent opportunities for trainees to reflect further on their own learning and their teaching. There is, though, some inconsistency in the quality of training and assessment, particularly in terms of feedback and target setting in the developing PPPD and in school settings. Much feedback, where it is given, is very helpful and is more pupil and subject focused than at the time of the previous inspection. However, it is not always so by school based and university-based trainers. For example, opportunities are not consistently taken to comment on trainees' own evaluations, explain the rationale behind targets set, or make clear how targets will benefit the trainees' progress. While there are some good examples of feedback and targets to challenge more able trainees, others were unclear or could have applied to any

trainee. Also inconsistent is the way targets are followed through, for example from one lesson, review or placement to the next. These inconsistencies explain why the extent to which the provision promotes equality of opportunity, values diversity and eliminates harassment and unlawful discrimination is good, as the provider itself correctly evaluates, rather than outstanding. Nevertheless, there are stronger features of this work which benefit trainees very well.

19. The stronger elements include highly personalised programmes of support based on excellent relationships which particularly allow those trainees who have additional or temporary needs to succeed. Examples of this support include allowing a part-time distance learning PGCE trainee access to the full-time course for the period of an overseas placement so that key course components were not missed, and providing specific library support for trainees with dyslexia. Each trainee is valued as an individual and their diverse needs are viewed holistically. Indeed, this holistic approach to the 'Hope Graduate' begins at the recruitment and selection stage, the arrangements for which are organised well and prepare trainees equally well for the rigours of the course. The whole process is valued greatly by trainees who report how the university looks for their 'spark' through a range of high quality tasks and exercises whether the trainee has had limited experience and minimum grades or has a first class honours degree. From these wide ranging starting points trainees go on to make at least good progress. This is because information gained at interview feeds into the programme straight away. The success of these arrangements is demonstrated by decreasing drop-out rates and high employment rates.
20. The strong commitment and common sense of purpose of partnership schools makes the partnership outstanding. All have high expectations of what is expected from them and this understanding is reciprocated. 'We know what to expect from Hope trainees' was a typical comment from schools expressing their great confidence in the partnership; indeed schools are proud to be partners. Any issues and concerns, which are few in number, are identified at a very early stage and dealt with promptly and effectively. Schools report that training for mentors is of high quality and an increasing number are seeing its value not just in training trainees but in enhancing whole-school improvement.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

21. A key feature of the provider's outstanding capacity to improve is the strong leadership of the primary provision which ensures that the right actions to secure improvement are made. This leadership has ensured a highly collegiate approach in which colleagues share not only ideas, expertise and research, but also teaching across all the programmes. Provider colleagues were fulsome in their praise of this leadership.
22. The provider successfully seeks, values and gains the views of its stakeholders. It also acts upon them. A number of examples demonstrate this. First, following

previous concerns about male trainees attaining less well than female trainees a focus group made up of male trainees has been established on the BA course. Second, trainees cited a system of meetings in which they were able to raise concerns, issues and actively instigate changes in the course and use of the new buildings. Third, mentors in school report they are able to communicate with provider colleagues in a range of ways and at any time, including via the virtual learning environment, and that they receive prompt responses and solutions. These examples highlight the openness and transparency of the provider, which in turn demonstrates the highly collegiate culture that has been fostered. Strong relationships mean that discussions between stakeholders are robust and honest. The overall result is that this is a provider which knows its strengths and areas for development very well.

23. Also outstanding is the provider's anticipation of change and its response to local and national needs and priorities. The national priorities of special educational needs and behaviour have been addressed and trainees are increasingly confident about these areas. Following less favourable feedback over the last few years from trainees about their preparedness to teach systematic synthetic phonics, the provider has worked with a national training and development body to seek improvements in this area. It has been successful with trainees. They not only report (via internal evaluations conducted in 2010/11) that they are more confident teaching phonics discretely, but are increasingly confident in doing so across the curriculum, finding letter strings in plant parts in science lessons, for example. Local needs are met well, too, in the training of teachers who are able to teach in the range of schools in this area. While not a focus on this inspection, the links between the church certificates and the training for QTS are strong and prepare very well trainees who wish to teach in faith schools.
24. Three further features make the provider's anticipation and responding outstanding. First, trainees on the BA programme benefit greatly from their participation in the 'Widening Perspectives' module. This distinctive and compulsory module has enhanced undergraduate trainees' understanding of the global dimension to learning very well. Activities are wide ranging and include project managing the planning and construction of an outdoor classroom, overseas placements and children's ambassador work. The impact of this module has seen trainees develop key leadership and management skills, enhance their subject knowledge and capture the pupil voice. The key impact though is the trainees' sharpened understanding of the importance of the context their pupils find themselves in, while at the same time not accepting this as any excuse for potential underachievement. Second, all primary trainees at Liverpool Hope undergo subject knowledge training in a modern language - a real enhancement of their already good characteristics. Third, in a time when the primary curriculum is subject to much debate, the trainees' ability to make meaningful links across the curriculum is enhanced by the provider's strong focus on subject knowledge and practical ways of teaching the foundation subjects.
25. The provider's planning and taking action for improvement is good. This report has identified that there are positive and strong features to this aspect of the

provider's work, not least its determination to make changes to improve and enhance its provision. Its focus on subject knowledge in the primary curriculum, its promotion of modern foreign languages and its work in 'Widening Perspectives' are other strong examples. Its plans to secure the most appropriate improvements are clear in what actions need to be taken. However, as the provider itself acknowledges, its ability to set sharp success criteria – what it hopes to achieve as a result of these actions – despite improvements since the previous inspection are not always clear. There are, however, some good examples. The English improvement plan, for example, not only has some sharply focused criteria for success but it has also sought to measure these in terms of outcomes for trainees.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

26. The secondary provision comprises a one year full-time course and a flexible part-time course leading to the award of the PGCE in 10 subjects. These are English, mathematics, science (physics, chemistry and biology), information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages, history, geography, music, performing arts, religious education and religious education with philosophy. At the time of the inspection there were 295 secondary trainees.

Key strengths

27. The key strengths are:
- the excellent systems for recruiting trainees who will be able to cope with the rigours of the academic work and have the personal qualities to develop into the provider's vision of the 'Hope Graduate'
 - the multiple audits which feed into detailed training plans and result in trainees making rapid progress from the outset
 - the excellent personalised training and formative assessment which sustains that progress
 - the high levels of consistency across the partnership and between subjects based on excellent relationships at all levels and excellent channels of communication in order to share information and good practice
 - the rapid progress that trainees make in their careers and their outstanding contribution to the quality of education in partnership schools.

Recommendations

28. In order to strengthen trainees' ability to promote equality and diversity, the provider/partnership should:
- seek additional opportunities for all trainees to practise and hone their skills in teaching pupils from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
29. In order to sustain the high quality of the provision, the provider/partnership should:
- refine the use made of data on trainees' outcomes in order to sharpen the focus in development planning on the impact of its actions.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

30. Trainees make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points and their attainment by the end of the course is outstanding. Attainment across subjects and between different groups of trainees is consistent and in 2010, 95% of trainees were graded good or better. Many trainees make rapid progress in their careers and are eagerly sought by headteachers, who are confident about the quality of Hope graduates. The number of trainees going into employment immediately after the course is above national and local averages. Few trainees withdraw before the end of their course and effective action is taken should any increase occur in numbers not completing. Trainees use their good subject knowledge to plan effective lessons, with appropriate levels of challenge, especially for more able pupils. They make good use of resources and have particularly strong behaviour management strategies, which creates a strong ethos of inclusion. Trainees develop as highly reflective practitioners and the high quality of their self review develops through the course from a lesson-by-lesson evaluation to a more holistic notion of a review of the progression of the whole child. Trainees demonstrate a strong moral purpose. They are very good practitioners technically and demonstrate the strong sense of vocation embodied in the provider's vision for the 'Hope Graduate'.
31. Recruitment and selection processes are excellent. The interviews contain demanding activities which make explicit the level of academic challenge and the wider expectations of the programme. A high emphasis is placed on the level of the applicant's subject knowledge and the audit which is conducted during the process is carefully monitored throughout the course. Additional audits enhance the process. In addition, interviews ensure that successful applicants also have the potential to develop key attributes such as resilience. Above all, the selection process seeks out those trainees who view teaching as a vocation. Although the proportion of trainees recruited from minority ethnic groups is not notably greater than the average nationally, it is representative of the context in which the provider works. It is also rising slowly as a result of the wide range of initiatives to address this issue. The provider understands the local context very well and the provision makes an exceptional contribution to local needs. Some departments in schools in the partnership are staffed entirely by former trainees from the provider. A very large number of trainees become mentors, regarding the position as equivalent to promotion. Partnership schools make a strong and growing contribution to the process, thus addressing a recommendation from the previous inspection well.
32. The processes for training and assessment are excellent and include many features which stand out as examples of innovative and highly effective practice. Strong and sometimes outstanding mentoring and very effective guidance at review points during the training support trainees' progress well. The targets which mentors and subject tutors set for trainees are highly developmental and then tracked and reviewed rigorously. Evaluative reflection is encouraged throughout the course and at some stages it is a compulsory part of the process of assessment, for example in the action plans which

trainees are required to develop with their tutors for the next stage of their training. Additional interventions are readily available where necessary to support trainees who are encountering difficulties. The training programme is highly coherent. Detailed information on trainees is shared when they move between placements, thus ensuring progress does not falter. Professional topics in the initial development programme are finely tuned to link with subject studies and reinforced by both the provider and the schools. Paired placements are used imaginatively to support trainees personally but also to offer a different perspective. For example, trainees take turns to act as a teaching assistant while the other teaches as part of one overall timetable. The training is personalised in a detailed and flexible way to ensure that it is highly responsive to the needs of individual trainees. A range of imaginative projects is undertaken to enhance the provision and there is convincing evidence of the positive impact on pupils' outcomes in schools. Examples include the work on globalisation and its impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the saturation programme in mathematics and its impact on examination results in schools, the Fair Trade project in geography, and the use made of museums and other settings to enhance the training especially for more able trainees. Of particular value is the cross-phase training in modern foreign languages which allows trainees to develop a very strong understanding of issues relating to transition from primary to secondary. Pupils from partnership schools are involved in key aspects of the training, for example in music where they improve their keyboard skills at extra-curricular classes alongside trainees. This also exposes the trainees to working with gifted and talented youngsters. Assignments are used well, the topics are well chosen and there is scope for trainees to personalise the tasks as the course progresses.

33. The partnership is a truly collaborative undertaking with the provider making excellent use of resources from schools to enhance the training and schools actively seek professional development opportunities from the university. Inspectors found strong evidence of balanced decisions across the provision to ensure that resources are appropriately distributed. The rationale for funding is clearly understood across the partnership and the very carefully planned use of additional funding allows the provider to be innovative. Regular joint observations ensure that the quality of mentoring is maintained.
34. Trainees demonstrate a high level of understanding of the issues for teaching in a diverse society but there are limited opportunities for all trainees to put the theory into practice because of the context of the provision. In addition, there is some variability across subjects in the amount of input on the topic, but where it is strong it is very good. Training for teaching pupils with English as an additional language or with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very effective and trainees show that they can put the training into practice well. The university provides a very high level of personal support when a trainee has particular needs, for example in providing child care and travel costs. The global and faith elements of the training are especially strong in some subjects.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

35. The pattern of high quality and improving outcomes is evidence of the provider's outstanding capacity to continue to develop the provision. Procedures to ensure the continuing high quality of the provision and manage any necessary changes are rigorous and well understood across the partnership. The process for self-evaluation involves the views of all partners, including past and present trainees and is supported by excellent relationships and regular and open communication.
36. Trainees' outcomes inform further decisions on developments to the training and take account of aspects from other phases. The cross-phase provision in modern foreign languages is particularly beneficial in this respect. All analysis is done by groups and by subjects and leads to the clear identification of priorities for improvement, which are shared across the partnership very effectively. The well organised virtual learning environment supports this and other aspects of the provision. A minor weakness is in the external reports on subjects that are on a rolling programme and only focus on the assignments. In addition, the external examiner report of the course as a whole does not provide a particularly detailed evaluation to support subject planning. An external adviser further supports self-evaluation and moderates judgements on outcomes. Collaborative learning is modelled at all levels and there are examples of strong collaborative provision, for example in the mentor training which is delivered in schools.
37. Subject leaders and course directors are at the forefront of work in their subjects. Subject leaders work exceptionally well as a team and share ideas and good practice, resulting in consistency in trainees' outcomes across subjects. They confirm that the recent restructuring of management and subject teams has a strong potential to enhance and support this collaboration. The provider responds exceptionally well to national and local initiatives and to requests from schools and makes careful choices about the projects with which to become involved. The partnership is very strong and schools are proud to be Hope schools. There is a genuine two-way process of development and support. Schools feel empowered to approach the provider for help with developing their staff and creative solutions are found to enable projects to proceed in a climate of shrinking funding. Leadership is highly effective in identifying potential difficulties in the future and then planning for multiple eventualities. An example of this is seen in the restructuring of the partnership to prepare for imminent developments in schools and in initial teacher education. All members of the partnership are committed to the ethos of teaching as a vocation but cannot always put into words what they feel is so special about the courses. There is scope for developing their ability to articulate what it means to be a Hope Graduate in order to strengthen further the already strong allegiances.

38. The provider accepts that the analysis of data, while good, is not outstanding and could be sharpened to strengthen improvement planning, which is not explicitly linked to trainees' outcomes. Plans focus on appropriate priorities for improvement and timescales are identified. The course development plan dovetails with the university development plan and regular checking and reforming ensures that the priorities remain appropriate. The provider is starting to make use of improved analysis, for example in determining which subjects are most effective in which particular standards. Improvement planning is variable across subjects with examples of both very good and satisfactory practice. The priorities for improvement are shared across the partnership and fully understood by all.

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

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

| | | Primary | Secondary |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------|-----------|
| To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes? | | 1 | 1 |
| How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality? | | 1 | 1 |
| How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives? | | 1 | 1 |
| How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement? | | 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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