

# University of Bedfordshire

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Bedford Campus  
Polhill Avenue  
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Philip Mann HMI

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## Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist inspectors in accordance with the *Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008-11)*.
2. The inspection draws upon evidence from all aspects of the provision to make judgements against all parts of the inspection evaluation schedule in the framework. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the training in supporting high quality outcomes for trainees and the capacity of the partnership to bring about further improvements. A summary of the grades awarded is included at the end of this report.

## Key to inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Explanation of terms used in this report

**Attainment** is defined as the standard reached by a trainee at the end of their training.

**Progress** is judged in terms of how well a trainee has developed professionally from their starting point to the standard reached at the time of the inspection or at a suitable review point.

**Achievement** is judged in terms of the progress made and the standard reached by a trainee at the time of the inspection or at a recent assessment review point.

## The provider

3. The University of Bedfordshire provides pathways to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at both graduate and undergraduate level. Teacher training at the University of Bedfordshire has a long tradition dating from 1882 when primary teacher training began and 1903 when secondary teacher training was established specifically for the training of physical education and dance teachers. It offers initial teacher education (ITE) provision in primary, secondary, employment based routes, post-compulsory education and a dedicated 14-19 applied Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) within the Faculty of Education and Sport. The university led teacher training partnership includes more than 500 schools and ten colleges in several local authorities across the south-east Midlands area and parts of the Eastern Region.
4. The University of Bedfordshire's employment-based route to QTS was judged to be outstanding for both overall effectiveness and capacity to improve in May

2010. Therefore this phase was not included in this inspection and does not form part of the report.

## A commentary on the provision

5. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
  - the good pastoral guidance and support for trainees in all three age phases
  - the contribution of quality assurance tutors to improving consistency of practice across the partnership
  - the effective use of a virtual learning environment to facilitate communication and the sharing of expertise within each age phase and across the partnership.
6. There are particularly strong features in the secondary phase that could be applied to the primary phase to improve the effectiveness of provision. They are:
  - the effective school cluster arrangements which are providing greater levels of coherence and consistency to the quality of trainees' experience in many partner schools
  - the clear delegation of responsibility and accountability which is leading to the resolution of longstanding problems and has accelerated the pace of improvement in outcomes for secondary trainees
  - the rigorous use of data to support accurate self-evaluation and set targets for further improvement.
7. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for all trainees:
  - ensure that the quality of mentor support for trainees is at least good across all age phases
  - improve the rigour in the use of data to identify underachievement and to accelerate trainee progress further.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

8. The university offers initial teacher training provision in the primary phase at undergraduate and postgraduate level. There are just over 430 trainees on the four-year degree programme and 116 trainees on the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).
9. The university works in partnership with around 350 schools in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Luton, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire. In the first year of the undergraduate course, groups of trainees work in clusters of schools for two days each week, with University tutors and mentors working collaboratively to determine relevant learning experiences. In Year 2, trainees undertake paired placements. In Years 3 and 4, trainees' individual placements are supervised and assessed by mentors and partnership quality assurance tutors.

### Key strengths

10. The key strengths are:
  - the enthusiastic and well motivated trainees who quickly build positive relationships with pupils
  - the good personal support provided for trainees by their tutors which results in trainees becoming more reflective practitioners
  - the developing role of the partnership quality assurance tutors in ensuring greater consistency across the partnership.

### Required actions

11. In order to become fully compliant with all of the Secretary of State's Requirements for initial teacher education and to improve the quality of provision, the provider must:
  - ensure the systematic monitoring and evaluation of all of the training to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in provision to further improve outcomes for all groups of trainees
  - ensure that improvement plans are based on systematic and rigorous analysis of all areas of past performance, and pay sufficient attention to identified national priorities, such as the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - improve the use of data to accelerate the pace of improvement to ensure that trainees are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills required to maximise their potential to become outstanding teachers
  - ensure that all trainees experience at least good mentoring
  - make better use of the information gained at selection to set challenging and sharply focused targets which enable all trainees to make rapid progress from the outset of their training

- ensure that all trainees are competent in using systematic synthetic phonics to teach reading by the end of their training.

## Recommendations

12. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
  - further develop improvement planning at subject level to establish clear lines of accountability and accelerate the pace of change.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 3**

13. The provider's draft self-evaluation for 2010/11 judged its overall effectiveness as good but inspectors assessed this to be satisfactory. The provider's grading of attainment, recruitment, selection and the quality of provision across the partnership as outstanding was overgenerous.
14. Inspectors are unable to corroborate the provider's self-evaluation that attainment is outstanding. Evidence gained during the inspection, together with the provider's own data, which shows that there is much variation between the attainment of different groups of trainees, indicates that overall attainment is satisfactory rather than outstanding or good. Trainees' attainment has fluctuated considerably over the past three years. For example, there is an upward trend in the proportion of undergraduate trainees attaining outstanding grades by the end of their final placement. However, on the postgraduate route, the proportion of trainees attaining at this level dropped by almost 20% in 2010/11. Female postgraduate trainees attain more highly than male trainees. However, attainment is at least satisfactory for all groups of trainees and most complete the programmes successfully to take up teaching posts, mostly in local schools.
15. Recruitment and selection are satisfactory. Trainees are well motivated and most have the personal qualities needed to become successful teachers. The postgraduate route has been successful in recruiting increased numbers of trainees from under-represented groups, including males and applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nevertheless, this success is not reflected in the undergraduate programme, where the number of applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds has fallen, and the number of males has remained largely static. The proportion of postgraduate trainees withdrawing from the programme rose to 13% last year; largely because of personal or financial reasons. Trainees find the interview process challenging but enjoyable. However, individual and groups of trainees' strengths and areas for development identified through selection are not used effectively to help trainees make rapid progress from the outset. This is because they do not receive timely, focused feedback on their mathematics or English tests and they do not have specific subject related tasks to do when they undertake pre-course placements. Some trainees have significant prior experience to bring to teaching but the provider does not always build on the trainees' expertise to maximise their rates of progress.

16. Overall, trainees make satisfactory progress from their starting points. They build positive working relationships with their pupils quickly and most make confident use of information communication technology (ICT). Tutors provide effective levels of individualised support for trainees. Centre-based training ensures that trainees acquire at least satisfactory subject and pedagogical knowledge. However, trainees' understanding of differentiation to promote pupils' learning in mixed ability groups in their lessons is sometimes limited. Trainees draw upon appropriate strategies to promote behaviour for learning in their lessons.
17. Special educational needs and/or disabilities and behaviour management in undergraduate and postgraduate courses are now being addressed appropriately in both centre-and school-based training through some effective use of partnership expertise. Tasks and assignments establish appropriate links between theory and practice. Many trainees report interesting and helpful school experiences, particularly in working with pupils with physical disabilities. There are good opportunities to share these experiences with others in centre-based tutorials.
18. The preparation of trainees to teach systematic synthetic phonics, early reading and comprehension is satisfactory overall, but progress to achieve this has been too slow. Outcomes from the Training and Development Agency (TDA) survey of the university's NQTs have indicated low levels of satisfaction in relation to this aspect for the last three years. Inspectors' evidence from observations of trainees' teaching confirms that trainees are now growing in confidence and beginning to improve their competence in this area of their practice. However, there are missed opportunities to address the teaching of phonics through the use of specific designated pre-course tasks.
19. In addition, insufficient use is made of literacy specific feedback and the setting of clear and effective targets to inform the next steps in trainees' development. Not all trainers are sufficiently rigorous in identifying clearly the specific actions trainees need to take to bring about more rapid improvement in their practice. For instance, in the sample of trainees observed by inspectors, a few trainees made errors in English grammar and spelling. This was not always addressed in trainers' feedback.
20. The allocation of resources is satisfactory. The university library and resources for school placements are used well by trainees to support their academic studies and their teaching. Trainees have easy access to the virtual learning environment (VLE) and they make good use of this as part of their professional development towards the QTS standards. The VLE provides useful opportunities for storing, sharing and tracking of trainees' achievements and reflective journals.
21. Mentoring, an area for action at the last inspection, is still not consistently enabling trainees to make rapid progress. This is because not all school-based mentors make best use of opportunities to set sharply focused targets from the outset. Although mentor training is held annually and quality assurance tutors provide support in schools, inspection evidence indicates a lower level of confidence in this aspect amongst new mentors. Nevertheless, the provider's use



of partnership quality assurance tutors is beginning to develop greater consistency across the partnership.

22. The partnership is well established and communications with partners are generally good. The introduction of four geographically located training 'hubs' is having a positive impact on the quality of training and trainee outcomes in these areas. However, all schools are yet to be involved in this initiative. The steering group provides clear direction for the organisation and management of these clusters and the quality of provision is now beginning to be more closely monitored by key stakeholders. The partnership steering group actively participates in the evaluation and monitoring processes to support improvements in provision. Planning in the partnership is now more strategic. For example, the partnership steering group has reviewed data and made suggestions as to how recruitment can be improved in the future. Appropriate structures are in place to support further improvements in provision but this has yet to impact sufficiently rapidly on outcomes for all trainees.
23. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The attainment and review boards for both primary programmes meet regularly to track individual needs. The course team is sensitive and responsive to trainees experiencing difficulties in their personal lives. Flexible working groups of trainees promote effective peer support through the sharing of ideas and expertise. The concept of a diverse society, addressing issues such as inclusion and English as an additional language underpins practice in both centre-based training and in schools.

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

**Grade: 4**

24. The overall capacity for further improvement is inadequate. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have yet to be fully addressed. There has been slow progress in key priority areas identified in feedback from the newly qualified teacher (NQT) surveys for the past three years. Actions have been taken to begin to bring about improvement in the course programmes, but these have yet to impact sufficiently on outcomes for all trainees.
25. Self-evaluation is insufficiently robust. The provider does not have an accurate and comprehensive analysis of its own strengths and areas for development. As a result, the provider's draft self-evaluation yet to be ratified by the Partnership Steering Group presents an overly positive view of its effectiveness and capacity for further improvement. Self-evaluation takes limited account of the reasons for the differences in outcomes for groups of trainees over time. Consequently inspectors judge that the provider is not meeting all of the Secretary of State's Requirements for initial teacher training, namely R3.6 that require providers to ensure that 'they monitor and evaluate all aspects of the provision and demonstrate how these contribute to securing improvements in quality'.

26. The provider gathers data from a range of sources, including feedback from mentors and trainees to plan improvements. A more systematic approach to tracking the progress of PGCE trainees has been introduced recently. This data is used to identify trainees causing concern at regular review meetings and to plan appropriate interventions accordingly. However, a similar tracking process is yet to be introduced to monitor the performance of trainees following the BEd course. Data is analysed to identify trends, but there is insufficient systematic monitoring and evaluation across all aspects of the training and of its impact on improving outcomes for all trainees.
27. Course leaders are in the process of adjusting programmes to take account of recent developments in education and to respond to local and national initiatives. However, because of limited intervention and the slow pace of improvement, this has yet to make a significant positive impact on the outcomes for trainees. The provider is responding to the TDA monitoring of its training in systematic synthetic phonics, early reading and comprehension by strengthening and consolidating centre-based training, and by introducing better recording documentation to help trainees reflect on their confidence and competence in their practical teaching of systematic phonics. Nevertheless, final year undergraduates who spoke to inspectors report varying levels of competence in teaching early reading using systematic synthetic phonics. The provider acknowledges this is still 'work in progress'. For example, a focused observation of trainees' teaching using systematic synthetic phonics is in the early stages of implementation.
28. The provider's preparation for trainees to teach pupils with special educational needs has been rated poorly for the past three years by former trainees in the NQT survey. The programme leader acknowledges that work is ongoing with this aspect of training. However, the response to this national initiative has also been slow.
29. Although programme improvement plans now identify clear success criteria related to outcomes for all trainees, the plans are not informed by sufficiently systematic and rigorous analysis of all areas of past performance including all identified national priorities. As a result, the latest draft improvement plans have yet to have a significant impact on trainees' outcomes. The course team has produced and is implementing a detailed improvement plan to address early reading, systematic synthetic phonics and comprehension across both programmes. Insufficient attention to improvement planning and the lack of clear accountability at subject level constrains the pace of improvement.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Context

30. The university offers a number of routes into secondary teaching that reflect the local context and the needs of the region. Postgraduate training leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) leads to either a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) or a Professional Graduate Certificate of Education (PgCE). There are 295 trainees following one of the routes offered. For 2010/11 these include training for 11-16 in dance, English, mathematics, modern languages, physical education and science; in 14-19 applied courses in information and communication technology (ICT), business, health and social care, leisure and tourism and a 7-14 age range course, where trainees specialise in either English, mathematics or science. The four-year undergraduate course in physical education, leading to QTS attracts candidates from a wide geographical area.
31. The partnership with schools and colleges is based on five PGCE clusters led by cluster managers. These extend across Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and Peterborough. A minority of trainees are placed in schools outside the clusters in Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire

### Key strengths

32. The key strengths are the:
  - high-quality mentoring that provides trainees with good feedback and focused developmental targets to enable them to make good progress
  - recruitment and selection of trainees with the attributes and potential to become good teachers
  - effective auditing of subject knowledge and development leading to marked improvements in the subject expertise of trainees
  - consistency and quality of school-based training that ensures trainees' develop a secure understanding of the relationship between theory and practice
  - effective quality assurance systems within the clusters that maximise the use of resources to secure rapid improvements in provision across the partnership.

### Recommendations

33. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
  - develop further self-evaluation and action planning at subject level to match the quality at programme level
  - implement earlier in the training a deeper understanding of issues relating to equality and diversity to ensure that all trainees gain a better understanding of the contexts in which they are about to teach
  - rigorously analyse individual trainee and group strengths and areas for development to personalise further the training programme for trainees.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

34. Trainees' good attainment has been sustained over the past three years. Approximately 80% of those completing in 2011 achieved good or better levels of attainment by the end of their training. Most trainees make good progress throughout the course as a direct result of supportive and personalised interventions. Rates of successful completion of the courses in 2010 were high.
35. Secondary training routes are effective in recruiting a wide range of trainees into teaching who are matched effectively to the needs of local schools. Recruitment and selection procedures are good, leading to high quality trainees that have the potential to become good or outstanding teachers. Selection procedures provide good opportunities to assess subject knowledge and the wider professional attributes needed to be successful in completing the course. Interview records are kept but lack detail. The provider is aware of this and the need to gather sharper initial information to personalise individual and group training. Subject knowledge enhancement courses are used judiciously to enable trainees from non-traditional degree backgrounds or who lack the necessary subject knowledge to access training in mathematics and chemistry.
36. Trainees form good professional relationships with staff and pupils in placement schools. They treat pupils with respect, respond to them as individuals and quickly become confident classroom teachers. Mentors spoke with appreciation about the high quality of trainees and how they are able to apply their good subject knowledge to their teaching and the changing demands of the school curriculum.
37. The partnership makes imaginative use of human resources, for example where some central staff are seconded and work in schools and/or consultancy roles. This enables them to engage trainees with the most recent pedagogy and practice. Central training sessions model effective teaching. Trainees particularly value a tutor's ability to draw on very recent examples from their own teaching, for example in the 7-14 mathematics programme. Trainees display good questioning skills with the best using open and closed questioning techniques. Some effective speaking and listening activities were observed by inspectors across a number of subjects and trainees are good at promoting literacy, including discussing subject specific vocabulary. Trainees demonstrate an ability to be reflective about their practice within their e-portfolio commentaries.
38. Partnership cluster managers are tasked with the role of developing and managing the 'principles, values and perspectives' programme. In partnership with subject leaders they quality assure all aspects of the student experience in schools. Cluster-based training supports central training well to provide a localised context for developing trainees' understanding of how to relate theory to practice. Good attendance at the most recent mentor training demonstrates the high commitment of schools in the development of the programme. Mentors

are supported well through the partnership structures and feel a strong sense of ownership in contributing to programme development. They provide high quality feedback to trainees about their teaching. Targets are well chosen and contribute effectively to the good progress of trainees.

39. Training in the national priorities of behaviour management and special educational needs and/or disability is appropriately placed at the start of the training. This is then developed further within the clusters to ensure trainees become knowledgeable about the latest teaching strategies. As a result, trainees are able to apply this knowledge to their planning and teaching in the early stages of the training. In contrast, less attention is given to equality and diversity early in the course and, as a result, trainees are less secure in their understanding of how to promote equalities and diversity in their classrooms. However, from discussions with NQTs this is developed over time and so, by the end of the training, most trainees display good levels of understanding and apply this effectively to teaching.
40. Tutors know their trainees particularly well on the undergraduate physical education (PE) programme. Here, high levels of personal and pastoral support lead to the vast majority of trainees remaining on the course to become effective teachers of PE. Trainees understand the need to differentiate in their planning and teaching, for example trainees use different types of apparatus to accommodate the different levels of ability when teaching the cartwheel in gymnastics. However, a minority of trainees do not sufficiently stretch and challenge more-able pupils.
41. On-line resources and the effective use of the web and e-portfolios on the VLE are making a significant contribution in capturing the qualities of trainees' progress during the course. This tool is enhancing communication across the partnership and ensuring that all stakeholders have a significant voice in developing creative, critical trainees who have the values and aspirations to become good teachers.
42. Communication across the partnership is effective and ensures that stakeholders are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. The work of cluster managers in developing effective quality assurance procedures has significantly enhanced the quality and consistency of the work of mentors. In addition it has enhanced their understanding of the importance of their role in helping trainees' to meet their potential. There are no reported examples of harassment or discrimination and trainees are very aware of the importance of these policies in schools and the procedures for implementing them should the occasion arise. Equally, trainees are confident that should any form of discrimination arise in the university, then rapid action would follow and the issue would be resolved.

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

**Grade: 2**

43. The leadership team has driven forward improvements in course programmes that have led to better outcomes for trainees. Overall, completion rates have improved with more trainees attaining at the higher levels. The involvement of all stakeholders is good because they are fully included in the strategic development of the partnership. Clear lines of communication and very positive relationships between the provider and partner schools ensure that trainees make good progress. Much has been achieved in a short period of time across the partnership and capacity for further improvement is good.
44. The cycle of self-evaluation at programme level is fully informed by an increasing attention to detail in analysing data about outcomes for trainees. The provider demonstrates a clear understanding of what works well and what is working less well. It is committed to continuous improvement, drawing on the views of all stakeholders including the views of current trainees. External examiner reports, although variable in quality, fully inform the review process. The best reports provide a critical commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of provision. This gives leaders a good understanding of priorities for development. However, self-evaluation and action planning is less well developed at subject level and therefore an area for further improvement.
45. Anticipating change is a key feature of the self-evaluation process. Senior leaders are fully aware of national developments and actively engage with academies, teaching schools, a university technical college and a local free school to meet both national and local needs. This ensures that trainees are kept fully informed about national and local initiatives related to the changing nature of schools. Furthermore, the provider has been quick to anticipate changes to the funding mechanisms and organisational structure of initial teacher education in the future. Consequently it is well placed to cope with and respond to new policies as they emerge.
46. The provider is a key sponsor for a local academy within a dynamic relationship that has brought about significant benefits across the partnership. Examples include, visits by trainees to lessons in ICT and business studies. Other trainees gain valuable experience working with large groups of pupils in mathematics. In these sessions, whole cohorts of trainees are able to plan and implement lessons, receive feedback and develop resources for the mutual benefit of the academy and the trainees. Furthermore, the provider has supported the involvement of the academy with a nationally recognised sports trust by involving it in the teaching of sessions on inclusion and pastoral care. These developments are at a relatively early stage of development and are yet to have a significant impact on trainee outcomes.
47. Improvement planning is effectively informed by good self-evaluation and is focused on key priorities. These are, in turn, evaluated for their impact. The

success of this process is exemplified by many of the required actions at the time of the previous inspection becoming key strengths. Additionally, most of the priorities identified in the self-evaluation document for 2009/10 have also now become strengths. This includes a refocused professional studies programme that responds much more directly to trainees needs.

48. There is greater attention to trainees' prior knowledge than at the time of the previous inspection. This helps to shape course content and enables the provider to respond more readily to trainees' individual training needs. Improved self evaluation processes have led to a good understanding of the programmes' strengths and weaknesses. A good example is the early identification of trainees 'at risk' and the support structures and well defined targets that lead to these trainees making rapid progress.

## **Initial teacher education for the further education system**

### **Context**

49. The University of Bedfordshire offers an In-Service Certificate/Professional Graduate Certificate through a Post-Compulsory Education programme at the University and ten partner colleges. At the time of the inspection, some 510 trainees were enrolled on courses leading to the University-validated Professional Graduate Certificate in Education or the Certificate in Education. Both qualifications were endorsed by Standards Verification UK and satisfy the Secretary of State's requirements for further education teachers.

### **Key strengths**

50. The key strengths are:
- the effective recruitment and selection procedures that identify trainees with the potential to be good teachers
  - the successful combination of all training elements to secure strong personal and professional development
  - the strong and responsive support for all trainees which contributes to trainees' progress and well being
  - the commitment and determination of the partners working together which benefits trainees' development
  - the effective embedding of equality and diversity throughout the programme which helps trainees to promote equality and value diversity in their own practice.

### **Required actions**

51. In order to improve the quality of provision, the provider must:
- ensure greater consistency in the partnership arrangements for monitoring the quality of mentors.

### **Recommendations**

52. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- achieve greater levels of consistency in trainees' professional practice in developing the literacy, language, numeracy and ICT skills of their learners
  - ensure the individual progress of trainees is monitored systematically
  - plan well focused partnership activities which support trainees in their subject specialist areas.



## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

53. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees is good. Overall success rates for the Certificate in Education/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education have risen by 5% in a three year period; Certificate in Education rates have risen by 8% over the same period. At four centres, Certificate in Education success rates have increased significantly. The provider has been successful in closing the gap between Certificate in Education and PGCE success rates significantly from 19% to 6%.
54. Trainees develop their professional skills in specialist teaching areas effectively and demonstrate good and sometimes outstanding levels of subject knowledge. Good trainees demonstrate effective planning, including planning for differentiation to meet individual learning needs. They confidently use a varied range of teaching and learning methods, demonstrate a good rapport with their learners and assess individual learners' progress systematically. Trainees use information and learning technology confidently. Course work demonstrates the growth of trainees' skills in academic research. Writing and assignment work is closely related to their teaching contexts. Trainees demonstrate the ability to reflect on their practice effectively and make clear links with theory. However, some of their reflections are not sufficiently detailed and evaluative. Trainees demonstrate insight into, and understanding of, how theory and practice combine, which strengthens the trainees' planning and delivery of teaching. Trainees promote positive behaviour well. Stronger trainees demonstrate a well developed understanding of equal opportunities, diversity and safeguarding and apply this within classroom and workshop settings. However, some trainees provide insufficient opportunities for learners to fully develop their literacy, language, numeracy and ICT skills.
55. Recruitment and selection are good. Centres follow rigorous University recruitment procedures including those for interviewing and initial assessment. Tutors check for additional and study skills needs. This informs the individual learning planner and ensures minimum core learning needs are identified. There is good pre-course support and access to specialist support on the programmes. Advice and guidance for trainees are good. In some centres, the involvement of human resources and professional development staff in recruitment has had a significant positive impact on success rates. However, centres vary too much in the extent to which they attempt to promote the programmes to underrepresented groups.
56. Training and assessment are good. Most trainees make good progress. Mentor feedback is good, giving advice on what might be improved and very clear, precise targets to work towards. Trainees praise highly the support given by mentors. Mentors also value highly the training they are given by the partnership. However, there is some variability in the monitoring of the quality of mentoring across the partnership. For instance, joint observations between

mentors and tutors are not yet routinely undertaken in all instances to provide feedback to all mentors about their own performance.

57. Tutors model good teaching effectively. They are enthusiastic and teach well prepared sessions which are closely aligned to learners' needs. There is good, responsive tutorial support. Assignments enable trainees to link theory to teaching and feedback on them is constructive and developmental. The feed-forward sheet however, contains a series of pre-selected prompts which are not customised for individual needs. The 'learning contract' encourages trainees to set targets but these are not always specific and there is often no timescale or tutor review of these. This limits the rate of progress some trainees make. Peer observation by trainees provides useful practice evaluation and is of particular value when trainees are teaching different curriculum areas or different groups of learners. Study days contribute well to trainees' development by exposing them to national experts. Many trainees benefit from the opportunity to work in subject specialist groups to improve their own expertise. However, the 'resource design task' between study days is not always effective in developing trainees' skills in their specialist subject areas. The assessment of trainees is accurate, thorough and supportive of their development.
58. Human resources relating to teaching, tutoring and mentor feedback are good. Physical resources, such as rooms, equipment and teaching resources are of a high standard at centres and are used effectively by tutors and trainees to enhance teaching and learning. The programme handbook is valued and used effectively by trainees and mentors as a key resource. Tutors are well qualified. The partnership offers good opportunities for continuing professional development and for the sharing of good practice. All benefit from the redesigned VLE which is highly effective in providing electronic information and as a networking site. Tutors model the use of information and learning technology well in their teaching and other effective uses of technology include the use of synchronous e-tutorials. Trainees appreciated the e-accessibility of resources and they benefit from learning resource centres, a good range of resources and access to librarians.
59. Provision across the partnership is good. Managers, teachers and trainees find membership of the partnership valuable and beneficial. For example, network meetings are good opportunities for the sharing of good practice. Procedures for the moderation of the observation of practical teaching, which include co-observations from paired centres are effective, enabling tutors to make accurate and consistent assessment judgements.
60. Trainees are actively encouraged to embed equality and diversity in their planning and this practice is often demonstrated in teaching sessions. For example, two learners from a local school on a link course who speak English as an additional language, were assigned English speaking learners to support them. Furthermore, in a painting and decorating session, a learner with literacy needs was given a book with pictures in of all the tools used with their names underneath. This reference book ensured that he was able to access the written part of the session. Equality and diversity is promoted well through the programme curriculum and is modelled well by tutors. Trainees are, for example,

required to research a specific disability and share their knowledge with others. The programme enables trainees to personalise their learning through, for example, the assignment submission process and the learning itinerary. Most trainees are competent and confident to teach learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

**Grade: 2**

61. The capacity for further improvement is good. Improvements in success rates have been maintained over a 3 year period. The gap between Cert Ed and PGCE success rates has declined significantly. The processes of integrating QTS and QTLS have brought about an increasing uniformity of improvement planning and the draft PCE University Journal for 2011/12 is more detailed and structured than previous improvement plans.
62. The partnership has sustained the strengths identified in the last inspection in 2010. It has taken clear steps to address required actions and recommendations, including actions to improve the consistency of arrangements for monitoring the quality of mentoring, developing e-learning and the VLE, and piloting improved documentation to track trainee's overall development. Inspectors found good examples of trainees embedding equality and diversity within their planning for teaching and learning.
63. A wide range of quantitative and qualitative measures of most aspects of the provision contribute to the effective monitoring of performance with the exception of the monitoring of mentors' contributions. The recently submitted draft self-evaluation document for 2010-11 is more evaluative than its predecessor and uses data and other evidence well to support its judgements. The partnership is developing additional ways in which centres' own self-evaluation procedures can more effectively inform the provider's self-evaluation. Tutors across the partnership feel involved in the self-evaluation process. Trainees contribute routinely to self-evaluation and are informed of the outcomes. They contribute satisfactorily to effecting change. However, mentors are not sufficiently involved in programme evaluation.
64. Partners appreciate the strong sense of partnership across the consortium which impacts positively on trainees' outcomes. The positive discussions at network meetings often relate to continuing professional development and colleagues ensure that partners are well supported by the university. There is open sharing of information with partners feeling fully informed about policy and practice, and national sector issues. The university has clear strategic aims with regard to partnership and post-compulsory education partnership is an important dimension of this, particularly with regard to widening participation. This is mirrored at university department level with clear efforts made to integrate QTS with qualified teacher learning and skills status (QTLS) provision.

## **Annex: Partnership colleges**

The partnership includes the following colleges:

- Barnfield College
- Bedford College
- South Nottinghamshire College
- Central Bedfordshire College
- Grantham College
- Leicester College
- North Hertfordshire College
- Oxford and Cherwell Valley College
- Tresham College of Further and Higher Education
- Milton Keynes College

## 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>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	3	2	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	3	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?	3	2	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	3	2	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	3	2	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	3	2	2

### 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>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		4	2	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		4	2	2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		4	2	2

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

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