

Middlesex University

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Unique reference number 70048
Inspection number 373053
Inspection dates 12–16 March 2012
Lead inspector 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. Middlesex University works in partnership with more than 550 schools and settings, colleges and employers in several London boroughs and neighbouring counties to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualifications to teach in the primary, secondary and further education sectors. LoNoCo has recently merged with the university to provide an employment-based route into teaching for primary and secondary trainees. In the current year there are 321 primary, 225 secondary and 30 further education trainees.
4. The primary programme offers undergraduate, postgraduate and employment-based routes to qualified teacher status (QTS). The secondary programmes provide training leading to QTS through a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) and employment-based routes in a range of subjects and age ranges. The university operates in partnership with Barnet and Southgate College to provide ITE in further education.

A commentary on the provision

5. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
 - highly enthusiastic and dedicated trainees who are reflective learners
 - the trainees' good understanding of strategies to promote equality and diversity within their teaching
 - highly competent and experienced tutors who provide high quality personal support for trainees
 - the effective use of resources by all those involved in leading and managing provision
 - the effectiveness of leadership in tackling national priorities and contextual challenges through creative and innovative approaches.
6. There are particularly strong features in some programmes that could be applied to other programmes or aspects of the provision:
 - the sharing of best practice in the primary, secondary and employment-based phases in the use of virtual learning environments and digital learning systems to support trainees' learning and communication between tutors and trainees in the FE phase.
7. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:
 - improve the rigour of quality assurance to eliminate inconsistencies in school-based provision
 - systematically gather and analyse data related to the progress of all trainees to inform self-evaluation and improve trainee outcomes further.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

8. The partnership offers four routes to qualified teacher status. Two are through the BA programme, one with a focus on the primary age range and another on the early years, and two are through the postgraduate (PGCE) provision, also with one for the primary age range and another for the early years. The partnership involves schools and settings located in several London boroughs and in Essex and Hertfordshire in a range of urban, suburban and rural settings. At the time of the inspection, there were in total 56 trainees on the third year of the BA courses and 116 on the postgraduate certificate programmes.

Key strengths

9. The key strengths are:
- the highly coherent training programme, with strong links between centre- and school-based training, that is very well informed by national priorities
 - personalised pastoral care provided for trainees by programme leaders and other staff at all levels
 - motivated, reflective, proactive trainees who are keen to develop their knowledge and skills and show a very good understanding of equality and diversity
 - effective leadership of initiatives to address national priorities and implement change successfully
 - innovative use of information and communication technology to support trainees' development.

Recommendations

10. In order to strengthen provision across the partnership to sustain high-quality outcomes, the provider should:
- improve the consistency of the support and training provided for trainees when placed in schools.
11. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- make greater strategic use of a range of data on trainees' progress in order to identify trends and developments in the performance of cohorts and groups of trainees, and to inform actions to secure further improvement in achievement and to assist in checking their impact.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

12. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing and sustaining high-quality outcomes for trainees is good. Attainment is good and improving and most trainees make good or better progress. Trainees show secure subject knowledge, particularly of teaching early reading and phonics, and plan well-considered sequences of lessons that develop pupils' skills and knowledge systematically. Their strategies for managing pupils' behaviour are developing well and trainees demonstrate a good understanding of approaches to teaching pupils with special educational needs. They are highly reflective, readily take responsibility for their own professional development and act on advice given. Trainees are less secure in using a range of approaches to assessment to plan and provide activities for all pupils in their classes, particularly the most able.
13. Arrangements for recruitment and selection are good. The proportion of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average; the provider has been successful in recruiting more male trainees than previously and the proportion is now above the national average. The percentage of those with disabilities is in line with national figures. Interview procedures have been improved, with mentors from partnership schools now routinely involved. Following a pilot, a judgement of potential at interview was introduced in 2011 but this is not yet embedded in assisting the checking of progress through the programmes. Where appropriate, some trainees are provided with additional support to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of English or mathematics, often involving the use of the virtual learning environment (VLE). While better trainees receive reading lists and suggested activities, the scope for individualised pre-course activities for these more competent trainees, and for those who have significant, relevant prior experience, is not being fully exploited.
14. Most trainees make at least good progress as a result of the good training provided in the university and in the good range of placement schools. University-based training is highly regarded by trainees, who particularly value practical sessions where ideas can be put into practice when on school placements. Sessions on core subjects, professional studies and preparation for school experience were among those singled out for particular praise by trainees interviewed. Training is organised well to ensure a good balance between central and school-based activities and these are integrated effectively, for example through assignments, day link visits and reviews before, at the mid point and after the end of placements. Centre-based sessions led by practitioners from local schools and other outside experts are a good feature of the training and are appreciated by trainees.
15. There has been particular success in addressing the national priorities of teaching early reading and phonics, teaching pupils with special educational needs and the maintenance of good behaviour in lessons. From September 2011, trainees have been asked to reflect on their confidence and competence

in these areas at the start of placements, at the mid point and at the end when mentors make an assessment of their skills. Link tutors also focus on these three areas. The new approach is having a very positive impact on trainees' developing skills. Very effective training sessions on phonics and on managing behaviour were observed by inspectors.

16. The school placements provide a good range of experience. Support and challenge from mentors is of generally high quality, although there is some inconsistency. Trainees meet weekly with their mentors during school-based training to discuss progress and to review and set targets for improvement which are followed up in subsequent meetings. Observations of trainees by mentors and link tutors result in clear and helpful feedback on progress with appropriate priorities for action. There are good discussions between trainees, mentors and link tutors at mid point assessment when trainees also return to the university to reflect on their progress and targets. Occasionally, mentors' feedback is rather generic, lacking enough subject-specific guidance or precision, and there is insufficient guidance on strategies to address weaknesses. Assessment of trainees' progress is thorough and focused on the mid point of the placements and at the end. Trainees' progress is generally monitored carefully by mentors and by link tutors when they visit trainees in school. The university is quick to recognise occasional difficulties with placements and to provide further support; for example, through additional link tutor visits.
17. Resources are used very effectively and efficiently and the human resources are a major strength of the programmes. The programme leaders, other university staff, link tutors and the large majority of mentors are highly regarded by trainees. Central training is responsive to the identified needs of trainees and resources are carefully husbanded to support development priorities. A particularly good example is the successful attention given to national priorities. Excellent use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support training provision. For example, 'Unihub' is a very highly regarded virtual learning resource that includes easy access to course materials, necessary forms and relevant websites. Furthermore, the innovative use of 'wikis' is a strong feature; for example, the new 'Wikiphonics' that is used by both current trainees and those who are now newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in schools.
18. The quality of training and support across the partnership is good but there are some inconsistencies. Relationships between schools and the university are positive. School staff particularly appreciate that university colleagues are approachable and quick to respond in the event of queries or concerns. However, there are no set arrangements for the university to provide formal feedback to partnership schools on the quality of their provision for trainees. Programme handbooks and documentation are comprehensive and clear. The link tutors are a strong feature of the partnership. These staff are highly regarded and work closely with mentors in order to ensure accurate and consistent assessment. Most observations of trainees teaching are conducted jointly with the mentor as this is now expected by the university, although this is not yet a fully consistent feature. The university goes to considerable trouble

to ensure that placements meet trainees' needs well and it is generally successful. This is occasionally not the case and trainees do not always have the full range of opportunities they need in order to make good progress. The university is quick to identify this and very careful to ensure that subsequent placements provide scope to address any shortfall.

19. Trainees show a very good understanding of what equality means, how to celebrate diversity in school and what an inclusive school might be like. This is promoted through effective training; for example, the highly regarded modules on inclusion. The provider strives hard to make sure trainees have equal opportunities, carefully adjusting subsequent school placements where needed and working effectively to ensure that trainees with any additional needs are very well supported. Trainees are secure in raising any concerns and show great confidence in the university's approach to equality. However, inconsistencies in school based training limit the rate of progress some trainees make.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

20. Programme leaders act effectively and enthusiastically to address identified priorities for improvement, underpinned by a wide range of self-evaluation activities and effective action planning. The provider has good capacity to improve further.
21. The assessment of individual trainees is regular and data are used well to promote their progress. Programme leaders know their trainees very well and identify ways to improve the programmes. For example, they responded well to the Training and Development Agency (TDA) NQT survey of 2011 and seek and listen to the views of current trainees, through gathering evaluation data at various points and conducting exit surveys. Much information is collected about trainees' progress but data are not being fully exploited at a strategic level to explore trends and patterns in the performance of different cohorts of trainees or of different groups. Thus, the information does not have its full impact on identifying priorities for further improvement and checking the impact of actions taken.
22. Action to improve trainees' knowledge, understanding and skills in the national priorities of phonics and the teaching of early reading, teaching pupils with special educational needs and maintaining good behaviour, has been concerted and highly effective. Trainees value the support provided and have also benefited from the contributions of local teachers and other specialists with relevant expertise, as well as from visits to schools to see good practice. The university is well attuned to local needs. For example, the particular needs of refugee children and their families on arrival and over time have been built in to central training and account has been taken of transition approaches commonly found locally in Year 1 classes, where schools adopt an approach similar to that found in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A high proportion of

trainees have been employed locally. The university is highly innovative in its use of ICT to support trainees' progress and the engagement of trainees and mentors in feedback activity.

23. Programme leaders are responsive to external examiners' recommendations and have a good record of responding effectively to areas identified as in need of improvement. Improvement plans are sharply focused with clear priorities that are linked with trainees' attainment, although some partnership members are not always fully aware of improvement priorities. In addition, the use of a range of data on trainees' progress to inform action planning is currently underdeveloped. The effectiveness of this good action planning is yet to be fully realised in a significant and sustained trend of improvement in trainees' outcomes.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

24. The partnership provides training to teach in the 11 to 16 age range in: citizenship, geography, mathematics, science, music and physical education. The university also provides training to teach in the 11 to 18 age range in: art and design, drama, English, ICT and modern foreign languages, as well as in the 14 to 19 age range in business studies. At the time of the inspection, there were 179 trainees on the secondary courses. The university works in partnership with more than 140 secondary schools and colleges in London, Essex, Buckinghamshire, some unitary authorities in Bedfordshire, and Hertfordshire.

Key strengths

25. The key strengths are:
- how well trainees are prepared by the university to teach their specialist subjects
 - the way in which the provision clearly meets local needs, as shown by the high proportion of trainees who secure employment in local schools
 - how well the elements of the training combine to ensure most trainees make at least good progress
 - excellent support for the welfare and personal circumstances of trainees
 - the creative use of resources, drawing on the best practice across the partnership, to support trainees' progress
 - the proactive response to changes at local and national level that strengthens the quality of the training programme.

Recommendations

26. In order to secure further improvements and sustain a marked trend of improvement in trainee outcomes across all secondary subjects the provider should:
- identify specific points from which the partnership can make an assessment of the expected progress and attainment of individual trainees
 - develop a shared understanding across the partnership of what is meant by good progress and how this can be tracked to ensure all trainees make rapid progress against their individual expectations, particularly for their first school placement
 - make more effective use of data related to trainees' progress and achievement, including that collected by partnership schools, to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

27. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good.
28. Trainees' overall attainment has improved over the last three years. In some secondary subjects, including English, mathematics, citizenship, music and modern foreign languages (MFL), there is an improving trend in the proportion of trainees whose attainment is outstanding by the end of the course. The proportion of trainees whose attainment is no better than satisfactory has fallen; however, there remains variation the rate of improvement in trainee performance across some subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT). Successful completion rates and the proportion of trainees going on to secure employment are above national norms. A higher-than-average proportion of trainees remain in teaching after three years. This is not the case for ICT and MFL where non-completion rates are very high.
29. Trainees really enjoy their training and make clear connections between the different components. This is because course content is well planned, marrying the importance of university-based learning and experiential learning in schools. The effective structure of the Middlesex course, which has school experience carefully balanced with periodic central training, is a strength of the training model. Trainees never go more than six weeks without time back in the university. This allows trainees to get good support from their tutors and peers. It also allows them to reflect on and contextualise their school experience. This structure has been particularly successful in allowing trainees to relate their academic assignment work to their school experience. For example, the 'Monitoring and Assessment' research assignment focuses heavily on developing subject-specific teaching and assessment. Trainees find this a

very useful assignment as it focuses them on how the vast range of data available in schools may be used to plan for the progress of individual students.

30. Rigorous procedures in nearly all subjects result in the recruitment of trainees who have the potential to become at least good teachers. Recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above national and London averages. This reflects the university's commitment to ensure positive role models for pupils, which is established in the partnership. Partnership schools are effectively involved in the interview and selection process. In some subjects part of the interview is conducted in partnership schools; this allows mentors and university staff to gain quick insight about trainees' ability to engage with young people. The improved retention rates, coupled with good employment rates, are testament to the provider selecting good quality trainees well suited to the course and the partnership. Retention rates, however, are not consistently high across all subjects.
31. Trainees in all subjects undertake a comprehensive subject knowledge audit. A range of tasks enable the accurate analysis of trainees' strengths and areas for development, leading to pre-course tasks tailored to individual needs. In some cases trainees will undertake subject knowledge enhancement courses before commencing the PGCE course and this impacts positively on their achievement. Information from selection is used well in the early stages of the course to ensure most trainees make at least good progress from the outset. However, opportunities are missed to use the information from the first university-based block of training to ensure all trainees make quick progress from the outset. This is because assessments of the expected progress and attainment for each trainee do not give a clear indication to all partners of each trainee's full potential from well-defined starting points.
32. Assessment procedures support the good achievement of trainees but there are missed opportunities to ensure the formative assessment supports trainee progress against individual expectations. Joint observations with mentors are routinely undertaken, both by the professional coordinating mentor and the university tutor. Criteria for written assignments are clear and well understood by trainees. Extra support is well targeted for those with particular learning needs.
33. All trainees make at least satisfactory progress throughout the course and for many it is good. However, a few do not make consistently good progress to achieve the best possible outcomes. This is because some mentors do not always effectively support these trainees in applying new learning to their own practice from the consistently good, and often excellent, central training. Furthermore, mentor feedback on trainees' lessons and target setting in weekly review meetings is variable in quality. For example, inspectors saw variability in targets set in weekly mentor meetings. The best were sharp, developmental and challenging; however, others were non-specific and not always sharply focused on the particular developmental needs of individual trainees. At times there are too many targets related to tasks for trainees to complete rather than targets for trainees to achieve in their own learning. Such variations lead to inconsistencies in trainee progress.

34. The partnership shows a strong commitment to supporting the secondary training programme. Schools are very loyal towards the university in an area with many different providers and training routes. School-based trainers praise university staff and value the quality and frequency of the communication with the secondary team. Attendance at mentor training is variable; however, university tutors ensure all mentors are given clear guidance, through extra visits to schools, if any are unable to attend training.
35. Human and material resourcing is well managed and responsive to trainee and partnership need. The link tutor role ensures that any issues that do arise are dealt with quickly.
36. University tutors know the partnership well and are able to use expertise available within the partnership to enhance aspects of the central training. For example, mathematics trainees go into a partnership school to look at how ICT is used to support effective learning in mathematics.
37. ICT is used well by most trainees in their teaching, although trainees do not always get the opportunity or have the confidence to use the range of ICT available to enhance learning. For example, geography trainees are shown how to use geographical information systems to enhance teaching and learning as part of their central training, but do not all seek opportunities to apply this in their practice.
38. For some trainees the first school experience, while providing a well-managed transition to teaching, does not allow them to make as much progress through the course as they might. Some do not get access to the full age range for the subject in which they are being trained on this placement; for example in citizenship. Expectations are not set against a thorough assessment of the individual trainee's potential; progress is therefore not routinely tracked against clearly established individual expectations, and not all trainers have a clear understanding of what constitutes good progress for trainees.
39. The provider promotes equality and diversity well. Trainees are well prepared to teach in a diverse society and have regular exposure to teaching many different pupil groups in at least one of their placement settings. Trainees are able to talk confidently about supporting individual learners such as using seating plans, paired work about the use of visual images to support learning. Training in the support of learners for whom English is an additional language is good. However, the impact of this training is not yet fully evident in all trainees' teaching or explanations. For instance, some are not able to talk in detail about the different stages of learning for pupils with English as an additional language.
40. University tutors and school-based trainers give high-quality support for the personal well-being of trainees. Great sensitivity is shown in the way individual cases are handled and the actions that are taken. Trainees are encouraged to disclose specific learning needs so that support can be offered. There is,

however, some difference in outcomes between different subject groups, particularly in completion rates.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 2**

41. The provider's overall capacity for further improvement is good. There have been clear trends of improvement in the outcomes for trainees since the last inspection. Retention and completion rates have improved to above sector norms. There has been an improvement in the proportion of trainees whose attainment is at least good, although less of a trend towards outstanding attainment. The provider expects this to be higher this year. Trainees' attainment in all subjects is now at least securely good; it is outstanding in English, geography, drama and music. The provider has been effective in targeting those groups of trainees where improvement is required; for example, in reducing the proportion whose attainment is no better than satisfactory at the end of the course. Good use of internal and external moderation procedures ensures the accuracy of the final assessment of trainees.
42. Each subject undertakes self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision; this feeds into the overall secondary self-evaluation well. Evidence comes from a range of feedback across the partnership, including external examiners' reports and the TDA survey of newly qualified teachers. Course leaders have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and areas requiring improvement. This leads to regular review and changes to the course structure and delivery, as exemplified by the changes made to the professional studies programme. Not all subject leaders, however, evaluate provision and outcomes to the same degree; some have a much more detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject provision than others. Data on the outcomes for trainees are included in all self-evaluation but data on trainees' progress, including that collected by partnership schools, are not routinely used in self-evaluation to systematically identify trends and patterns in performance, or to inform improvement planning.
43. Partner schools respond to questionnaires and evaluations from the provider; the outcomes from these are fed back through the link tutor, although professional coordinating mentors are not always clear on the overarching themes emerging from this process. There is no systematic way or requirement for partner schools to evaluate the impact of their own provision on trainee outcomes. Consequently, partner schools are not all routinely involved in identifying priorities for improvement through the self-evaluation and improvement planning cycle.
44. The provider demonstrates outstanding capacity to anticipate change at a local and national level and to respond to the national priorities for initial teacher training. Central subject and professional training is up to date and reviewed regularly to respond to changes and to meet trainees' needs. Trainees are, as a

result, well informed. In response to the NQT survey there has been a focus in central training sessions on preparing trainees to teach disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is enhanced with a school-based personalised training task which bridges both school experience placements. This training has had a positive impact on trainees' practice. Trainees report feeling well prepared as a result of this input. The best trainees are making the link between behaviour and engagement in learning. For example, one trainee recognised the link between poor behaviour and low levels of literacy in one class; she adjusted her teaching and behaviour has improved accordingly.

45. Leaders have established a regular cycle of evaluation and action planning. Areas requiring improvement or further development are identified accurately. Action planning at an overarching strategic level is very good and anticipates the potential impact on the course of government proposals for changes to initial teacher education. Reports from external examiners correctly identify areas for development on most of the different routes, although the quality of the reports is variable and not all reports focus on outcomes for trainees with sufficient rigour.
46. The best subject action plans are detailed and consider a wide range of data: evaluations from trainees and school-based trainers, exit surveys, attainment data, external examiner reports, changes to the curriculum at a national level and information from subject associations. The best set high expectations for trainee outcomes. However, this is not evident in all subject areas and consequently action planning overall is less effective in ensuring all trainees achieve the best possible outcomes.

Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

Context

47. The employment-based provision at Middlesex University offers routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teachers in the primary and secondary age ranges. Trainees in the primary phase train to teach pupils in two consecutive key stages. Secondary trainees nearly all train to teach in the 11–16 age range. Successful trainees are awarded a postgraduate certificate (PGCE). At the time of the inspection there were 138 primary trainees and 49 secondary trainees on the programme, of which 59 primary and 23 secondary trainees are due to complete in July 2012. Provision is flexible, lasting one year, and trainees can start in either January or September.
48. In December 2011 there was a merger of provision between the university and London North Consortium. The Consortium was a partnership, led by the university, in a joint venture with local authorities in North London. The systems, structures and management of the Consortium have been maintained and the provider continues to respond to requests from schools to train their employees. The organisation is one of the five largest providers of the

Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) in the country. Numbers of primary trainees have increased by a hundred per cent over three years.

Key strengths

49. The key strengths are:

- enthusiastic and reflective trainees who take full responsibility for their training and relish sharing expertise with their peers
- programme leaders' ability to find creative and innovative approaches to training, particularly in relation to national priorities and subject knowledge, ensuring strong coherence between the elements of the programme
- the very effective deployment of resources by all partners
- the trainees' preparedness to teach in a diverse society
- the very good personal support for trainees from all trainers, based on a thorough knowledge of the trainees' needs.
- the recruitment procedures which ensure schools are at the heart of the selection process and which meet local needs very well.

Recommendations

50. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:

- ensure that all training plans are sufficiently detailed and personalised to ensure high-quality training and facilitate progress right from the start
- improve the consistency of weekly target setting by mentors so that there is a good balance between skill development and tasks
- improve the rigour of the central recording of trainees' progress throughout the programme to support the identification of emerging trends.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

51. Trainees' attainment is good and there has been an improvement in the proportion of secondary trainees attaining the highest levels. The attainment of primary trainees is a less consistent picture, although it is still good. Completion rates are high and the equally high employment rates are a good indication that the provider is meeting local needs very well. The provision ensures that

most trainees make good progress towards challenging targets. There are no significant differences in the outcomes of different groups of trainees.

52. Trainees are enthusiastic and fully committed to the programme. They are proactive, taking responsibility for their training and identifying well what they need to learn. For example, while their subject knowledge is generally good, they are committed to improving it. They demonstrate good subject knowledge in the teaching of phonics because of effective training at the university and in schools. They make excellent use of the study groups on training days and of the VLE, to share practice with, and support, each other. They have positive relationships with their learners. They plan effectively and use a wide range of strategies to support learners with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. They are developing a good range of behaviour management strategies for use in class. They reflect well on what they have taught but their written self-evaluation does not focus consistently on what children, pupils and students have learned.
53. Schools, as the employers, are at the heart of the recruitment and selection process but the provider has the final say in ensuring that only trainees who are well suited to an employment-based route are recruited. This ensures a strong partnership from the onset. The selection process is inclusive and caters for trainees from a range of academic backgrounds. The provider recruits very well from under-represented groups; such as, men in primary and those from minority ethnic groups. Trainees' prior experience is effectively assessed to determine their starting points. The manner in which secondary trainees' subject knowledge is probed at selection has become more rigorous recently and is linked to higher expectations of subject knowledge development during the programme. The level of detail on the generic elements of the training plan is good but some training plans are not sufficiently personalised to facilitate early and rapid progress.
54. The elements of the training combine well to form a coherent package. The detailed pre- and post-session tasks, which flank the central training, strengthen the coherence between school and university. There has been an emphatic emphasis on national priorities in the training and especially the teaching of phonics. For example, the work of several leading schools has enhanced central training considerably in preparing trainees to teach literacy and numeracy skills effectively. As well as having the opportunity to see work on phonics, mathematics and provision for pupils with English as an additional language in context, trainees develop an insight into what is good practice in schools other than their own. Assignments exploit and develop themes in the training well and encourage a good level of reflection.
55. Trainees receive regular feedback on their teaching. Lesson feedback is detailed and evaluative. It links well to the QTS Standards and teachers set targets that focus clearly on the teaching skills observed in the lessons. This regular feedback and the reviews and reports from tutors ensure that trainees know how well they are doing in relation to the Standards. Some trainees, but not all, are making good use of the assessment criteria to analyse exactly what they need to do to improve. Trainees are fully supported by their mentors.

They meet regularly and mentor records indicate that these meetings comprise a good balance of review, training and forward planning. There is some inconsistency in the manner in which mentors pull all the strands together and set specific targets to move the trainees forward. In some records there is an overemphasis on tasks to be completed and an insufficient focus on targets to show trainees how they might develop their teaching skills and concentrate on their pupils' learning.

56. The provider makes outstandingly effective use of resources. Human resources are well deployed and the programme leaders play to trainers' strengths. Strategic decisions on the deployment of resourcing are very carefully considered and focused on what will lead to the best outcomes for trainees. The programme leaders have made particularly good use of additional external funding which has been used, for example, to support the 'leading literacy schools' project. A notable strength of the provision is the VLE, 'Stargate'. This easily negotiated but sophisticated online facility is having a significant impact on trainees and trainers by supporting communication and facilitating access to programme documentation and resources. It is extremely well used by trainees and its use is very effectively monitored by the programme director.
57. All partners are strongly committed to the programme and schools have confidence that the programme leaders will provide good quality guidance and support with problems if needed. Mentor training is of good quality, is well attended and comprises a good balance between information giving and training. It is a bonus that the accreditation of mentoring is now an option and a number of mentors have taken advantage of this. The programme leaders assure the quality of the schools as training venues on a regular basis and know the schools well. The visiting tutors play a key role, both in the training and the quality assurance of the training that takes place in schools. They are an experienced group of professionals who bring expertise from a range of different settings of initial teacher education. Relationships between tutors and the school-based trainers are strong
58. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding and a strength of the graduate teacher programme. There is a breadth to the selection process which recognises the value of a range of academic entry points; for example, a number of trainees took a foundation degree prior to starting the programme. As employees, trainees are highly aware of policies relating to discrimination in their schools and are confident that any issue would be promptly dealt with. Trainees are extremely well prepared to teach in a diverse society. For example, the leading schools' training on how to teach learners who speak English as an additional language is very good and trainees are immediately able to apply what they have learned with their classes. The provider ensures that the contrasting experience in a second setting meets the needs of the diverse group of trainees very well and the process is highly personalised. The support for trainees is excellent and leads to consistently high completion rates. The analysis of progress at individual level is good and, where necessary, leads to intervention. Where a particular need is identified, support programmes are put into place to ensure trainees achieve their potential.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

59. The overall capacity to improve is good. There have been significant trends of improvement in attainment for secondary trainees but, as is recognised by the programme leaders, the attainment profile of primary trainees is not yet as strong. The manner in which the programme leaders anticipate change and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives, however, is outstanding. The programme director and programme leaders have shown an innovative approach to the training on national initiatives by exploiting the strengths within the partnership and developing schools as leading schools. They have subsequently had a high national profile, for example at national conferences on leading literacy schools. Planning for change is securely founded on research.
60. The greatly increased numbers of primary trainees over the last academic year have been effectively absorbed into the programme. Leaders have maintained a good number of schools as quality placements and there have been creative approaches to the central training for the primary programme which have ensured it has remained of good quality. Significantly, the merger between the former consortium and the university has been very well managed. Schools have commented on the 'seamless' transition and feel that they have been barely touched by the changes. The programme director has worked closely with the steering group on the transition and allayed any concerns that partners might have had.
61. The senior leaders know the programme well and have accurately and clearly identified strengths and areas for development. Good use is made of the views of users. There is a detailed analysis of both the TDA NQT survey and the programme's own exit surveys. The provider is also very responsive to verbal feedback, be it from current trainees, past trainees or schools. It is possible to track feedback and see how this has led to improvements in the provision. Recruitment data are also carefully analysed, leading to changes in the process, for example, the increased focus on the subject element in secondary interviews. Moderation is effective and the moderator's reports indicate a good and long-standing knowledge of the programme.
62. The provider is starting to analyse in increasingly greater detail the attainment of trainees against the Standards with the aim of assessing how improvements may be made to the training. End-of-programme attainment and completion data are well analysed to provide information about outcomes for groups of trainees. All trainers monitor the on-going progress of individual trainees regularly against the Standards. Tutors generate a wide range of detailed assessment information at each half-termly visit. Less effective is the way in which leaders record that progress data centrally and use the data, including that on the progress of different groups of trainees, to identify trends during the course of the programme to bring about change.

63. Improvement plans are well structured and, although the merger is very recent, the plans for the graduate teacher programme are consistent with those of the other training routes. Points for development are totally appropriate. A range of evaluative evidence is used well to establish development planning priorities and these priorities are shared effectively with partners.

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Context

64. Middlesex University operates in partnership with Barnet and Southgate College to provide in-service and pre-service training for teachers and trainers who are teaching, or intend to teach, in settings across the further education sector. Following the merger of Barnet and Southgate colleges during 2011 to form Barnet and Southgate College (the college), the college now has legacy ITE provision operating at both the Southgate and Barnet sites. This inspection focused only on the ITE courses based at the Southgate site and offered in partnership with Middlesex University.
65. The college provides training under a validated, funded programme arrangement whereby the college is responsible for all aspects of course delivery, including resources and staffing, while the university retains responsibility only for academic standards and the quality assurance of the provision.
66. Trainees register with the university for the one-year Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLTS), or for the two-year Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) course. Both qualifications are endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK) and satisfy the Secretary of State's requirements for further education teachers. The CTLTS course is embedded in the first year of the DTLLS course, as is the Preparation to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector award, separately validated by NCFE and also endorsed by SVUK. Integrated within Year One certificate assignments are appropriate assessments to ensure trainees' abilities in language, literacy, numeracy and ICT. At the time of inspection, 17 trainees were on the DTLLS course, and 13 trainees were enrolled on CTLTS course.

Key strengths

67. The key strengths are:
- trainees' swift development of reflective skills and professional attributes
 - outstanding training and assessment leading to significantly improved outcomes for trainees
 - excellent tutor, mentor and subject-specific link support for trainees

- the highly effective actions taken to improve provision and trainees' outcomes since the previous inspection.

Recommendations

68. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- improve the virtual learning environment (VLE) so that it is appealing, accessible and better able to support interactive and online learning for all trainees
 - increase the formal face-to-face and online opportunities for external and internal mentors to meet, reflect and share good practice at the end of each programme year.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

69. The overall effectiveness of the partnership in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees is good.
70. Trainees' attainment is now good across CTLLS and DTLLS programmes. At the previous inspection, course structures meant that trainees had to register for the full DTLLS award even if they required only a certificate to satisfy the demands of their teaching role. As a consequence, many trainees left before completing the full award. Restructuring of the programmes following the previous inspection has led to significantly improved completion and success rates. In 2010/11, the success rate for CTLLS was 86% and for DTLLS, 90%. In the current year, retention is good at 90%. Trainers have very good knowledge of their trainees' needs and work very effectively to meet these. Despite the fact that many trainees enter the courses with little or no experience of teaching, or with relatively little prior experience of study beyond Level 3, nearly all make swift and sustained progress. Achievement is at least good for the overwhelming majority of current trainees. It is outstanding for a quarter of the current cohort. Trainers' accounts of their trainees' skills and abilities are accurate, detailed and balanced, and inspectors agree with the trainers' comprehensive assessments of case study trainees. Careful analysis of the progress and attainment of trainees from different social and cultural backgrounds demonstrates no significant achievement gaps. A good proportion of recent trainees have remained in employment in the lifelong learning sector.
71. Most trainees engage in detailed lesson planning to take good account of their students' individual needs. In these lesson plans trainees also show a good understanding of theories taught on the programmes and their application to classroom practice. The vast majority of lesson plans link carefully to schemes of work, and these are well communicated to students. However, a very small number of trainees' lesson objectives and learning goals lack clarity or are not

sufficiently measurable and specific. Furthermore, trainees' clear consideration of safeguarding and health and safety had not been made sufficiently explicit to students through lesson plans and objectives in a very small number of cases.

72. In all observed classes, trainees demonstrate effective strategies to manage and promote good behaviour. They quickly establish a culture of respect, with a clear focus on learning. Acting on the good modelling they observe in their trainers' teaching, trainees work successfully to draw on students' experiences and backgrounds to contextualise their teaching. Trainees act very effectively upon targets for improvement set in tutorial discussions and recorded in individual learning plans (ILPs), and all demonstrate swift acquisition of professional attributes and reflection.
73. Recruitment and selection are good. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection when these were inadequate. All trainees, including those within any identifiable minority groups, consistently make good progress to achieve challenging targets. Improvements to programme structures and the opportunity for trainees to register for CTLLS and DTLLS separately have had a significant beneficial impact on completion rates, and on trainees' satisfaction with the programme offer. Trainees undergo a constructive and suitably rigorous interview process to ensure they enrol on the right programme.
74. Initial assessment is effective in identifying any support needs and in directing trainees towards the appropriate specialist support for literacy, numeracy or language needs. At their induction, trainees have good contact with learning support staff who deal rapidly with support needs. Specialist learning support staff have direct input to courses, providing sessions on minimum core expectations. Furthermore, these specialist staff also teach trainees effectively about ways to meet ICT and literacy or numeracy needs amongst their students. Trainees are encouraged to observe the support staff teaching, so that they themselves can further develop their own skills.
75. Training and assessment are outstanding in meeting the needs of the overwhelming majority of individual trainees and groups of trainees. Trainers have high expectations of trainees based upon the careful initial assessment of needs and diligent monitoring of progress. Trainees appreciate the high expectations of them and rise to meet these successfully and rapidly. The excellent quality training provides many very useful occasions when trainers model best practice in teaching and learning, so that trainees can reflect upon and use these in their own teaching. ILPs are well regarded by trainees and used very constructively. They use these effectively to engage in impressive levels of professional reflection and self-analysis. Both trainers' and mentors' comments are well recorded by trainees and used conscientiously to improve their practice. Feedback on written assignments and on draft assignments is impressively clear, comprehensive and constructive. Furthermore, trainers monitor trainees' subsequent learning and classroom activity to ensure that points made in written feedback have been absorbed fully and correctly applied.

76. Support provided by mentors and subject-specialists tutors is excellent, and contributes significantly improved outcomes for all trainees. Tutors provide excellent support to all trainees, and have supported a number of trainees through periods of considerable crisis or difficulty, enabling them to make progress and eventually succeed. Mentors and subject specialist links have very frequent contact with trainees, and the outcomes of their discussions are well recorded and reflected upon by trainees to improve their professional practice. Links between external mentors and the training team are very good, ensuring that trainees who work at a distance from the college are not disadvantaged. All mentors are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities because they receive either formal training or a useful briefing from the ITE team. However, opportunities are missed to involve mentors at the close of each year to share good practice and discuss strategies to further enhance trainees' outcomes.
77. Course structure and suitability for trainees' needs have improved considerably since the previous inspection. The college has re-positioned the training function to beneficially group ITE and staff development to form the college professional development centre (PDC). This provides good links between the human resources team, senior curriculum leaders and quality managers. PDC trainers are increasingly involved in interviews and selection of new college teaching staff.
78. Provision of resources to support training is good. Trainees benefit from good library and e-book holdings within the college, and recently the university has made a number of additional e-learning resources available to trainees. Training rooms are good, and offer trainees plentiful opportunities to experiment and develop confidence in the use of up-to-date teaching and learning technologies. Human resources are excellent, with a highly dedicated and responsive training team working successfully to ensure that all trainees achieve their potential. However, the interactive learning potential of the VLE is under-developed because it is mainly used as a repository for course and other textual materials rather than providing appealing, accessible and interactive online learning for all trainees.
79. Trainees are confident in the promotion of equality and diversity in their classrooms. They have a good understanding of recent equalities legislation and plan well to develop their students' understandings of equalities matters. During observed classes, trainees were confident and constructive in their treatment of equality and diversity. The partnership's approach to recruitment remains highly inclusive, and its measures to analyse recruitment patterns, for example, by ethnicity, has improved significantly. There are no evident differences between the outcomes of trainees from different ethnic backgrounds. Trainees continue to benefit from the diversity of backgrounds represented on the course and, as at the previous inspection, a culture of mutual respect and interest in others' experiences permeates the course.
80. Partnership working between the university and college is good. The university has supported the college in making positive changes to programme structures, and the university link tutor appointment, though relatively recent, is already

proving beneficial to the ITE team. External examiner and annual monitoring reports assist in sustaining quality improvements.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality **Grade: 2**

81. The partnership demonstrates good capacity to sustain high-quality outcomes. The provider has recognised and acted upon the urgent imperatives identified at the previous inspection to raise standards by ensuring that completion rates improve and that all trainees who complete the full teaching role qualification have the capacity to be good or better teachers. Overall, significant improvements have been made to the provision and trainees' outcomes have improved accordingly.
82. Quality assurance procedures, including the programme annual monitoring reports prepared for the university, participation in the university boards of study, the arrangements for external examining and for internal verification, are good overall. The PDC team demonstrates a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and its staff are able to articulate a clear vision for continued quality improvement. Senior managers at Barnet and Southgate College and at the university display a shared vision of quality improvement and ability to enhance the trainees' experiences and outcomes. The progress of both individuals and groups within the provision is subject to good levels of analysis through data on enrolments, progress and success. However, the lack of an overarching self-assessment document for the ITE programmes at partnership level restricts the ability of the PDC team, college and university senior managers to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the provision in ways that may be beneficial to the programmes in future.
83. Trainees continue to report that their views are valued and listened to regularly. Trainee feedback is gathered at the end of each module and at the end of each year of the courses. This is carefully analysed and interim improvements are made wherever practicable. Course representative roles are well established. The PDC team and university managers respond decisively to comment from course representatives at boards of study. Trainee comments are carefully analysed and any possible developments in the programmes which will bring about improvements to outcomes are swiftly made.
84. The partnership's response to local and national initiatives is outstanding at college level, with good support from the university. Senior managers at the college have acted decisively and very effectively upon the outcomes of the previous inspection. All requirements and recommendations for improvement from the previous inspection have been closely analysed and the PDC team takes action in ways well suited to the trainee cohorts. As a result, retention and success rates have risen sharply.
85. Systematic and effective solutions have been found to long-standing problems and barriers to improvement in course structure, recruitment practices and

measurements of progress. The current team have acted swiftly to enhance outcomes for CTLLS and DTLLS trainees, and to develop referral routes for candidates who do not meet the criteria for CTLLS at interview. Careful negotiations have resulted in the offer of an accredited 'PTLLS-plus' route to provide all applicants with a route to an externally accredited qualification, as well as strengthening programme retention and success rates.

86. A new and dynamic training team is in place. Furthermore, the work of the PDC is now given a clear, positive and high profile by college senior managers. Training now takes place within a wider context of college quality enhancement and improvement, and trainees benefit from the extended remit and influence of the PDC team. The partnership continues to respond well to the requirement for teachers from across the lifelong learning sector to acquire teaching qualifications. The proportion of trainees work outside the college is increasing; for example, in private training organisations, the public sector or community and voluntary groups. There is now good strategic planning at college level to respond to a changing external environment and provide a coherent offer of training to suit applicants from a range of backgrounds.
87. The programme is far more flexible than at the time of the last inspection. It is now well suited to those trainees who may not wish to commit themselves to a two-year programme, or may wish to embark on a shorter course before committing themselves to a teaching career, as well as those who want to qualify for full teacher status. A relentless focus on trainees' experiences and outcomes has been placed at the heart of programme development. Data are now carefully monitored and the analysis of trainees' outcomes focuses programme development for the future.

Annex: Partnership colleges

88. The partnership includes the following colleges:

Barnet and Southgate College

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	Employment-based routes	ITE for FE
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		2	2	2	2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	2	2	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment/selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	2	2	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	2	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	1	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2	2	2	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	2	2	1	2

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Primary	Secondary	Employment-based routes	ITE for FE
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	2	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		2	2	2	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	1	1	1
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		2	2	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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