

Kingston University

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Introduction

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

Key to inspection grades

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

Explanation of terms used in this report

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

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

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

The provider

3. Kingston University works in partnership with more than 200 schools in boroughs in south-west London and further afield in neighbouring counties to provide initial teacher education leading to qualifications to teach in the primary and secondary sectors. The university is a member of South West London Teacher Education Consortium (SWELTEC) which includes four higher education institutions and involves some common approaches to aspects of secondary training. In the current year, there are 409 primary and 63 secondary trainees.
4. The primary programme offers undergraduate and postgraduate routes to qualified teacher status. A postgraduate route is provided for secondary trainees.

A commentary on the provision

5. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
 - very good arrangements for recruitment and selection that result in motivated trainees who are keen to act on advice and a rising trend in trainees' attainment
 - very positive relationships between university staff and trainees whose welfare is carefully secured
 - university-based training that is highly regarded by trainees and supported by the innovative use of resources.
6. There are particularly strong features in the primary programmes that could be applied to the secondary provision, namely:
 - systematic and rigorous checking of the impact of quality assurance procedures
 - partnerships with schools operating at different levels according to each school's circumstances and priorities.
7. A strong feature of the secondary programmes that could be applied to the primary provision is the use of a record of training that assists trainees in tracking their own progress from week to week.
8. There are no common recommendations to improve the quality of the outcomes of the provision. Such recommendations are phase specific and are therefore indicated in the relevant sections of the report.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

9. The provider works in partnership with a wide range of primary schools at three different levels, according to each school's circumstances and priorities.
10. The primary undergraduate route offers specialisms in English, mathematics, geography and history or science. The postgraduate route provides the opportunity to specialise in areas of the National Curriculum as well as distinct pathways in three modern foreign Languages, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Trainees are prepared to teach pupils aged from 4 to 11. Currently, there are 137 postgraduate trainees and 80 trainees in the final year of the undergraduate course.

Key strengths

11. The key strengths are:

- very good arrangements for recruitment and selection that result in motivated trainees who are reflective, keen to act on advice and take responsibility for their own development
- outstanding university-based training that is well matched to trainees' needs
- the innovative use of resources that contributes to a rising trend in trainees' attainment
- excellent pastoral care and personalised support that promote the good progress of trainees
- a strong partnership with schools resulting in excellent training, supported by high-quality, school-based mentors and university liaison tutors
- innovative projects with partnership schools that enhance trainees' skills in planning for and teaching disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language, as well as in managing pupils' behaviour and teaching them to read
- very effective and committed programme leaders and managers who work as a team to carry out accurate self-evaluation and the rigorous evaluation of the impact of actions taken to ensure continuing improvement in the quality of training, the partnership with schools and the achievement of trainees.

Recommendations

12. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment still further, the provider should:

- strengthen trainees' evaluation and recording of their success with their weekly targets to enable more trainees to make outstanding progress and to facilitate monitoring by school-based mentors and university liaison tutors
- provide appropriate tasks for higher-attaining trainees following their acceptance of a place, for example by asking them to explore how to challenge more-able pupils effectively, so that they can make a more rapid start to their training.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

13. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing and sustaining high-quality outcomes for trainees has improved significantly since the last inspection and is

now outstanding. The overwhelming majority of trainees make good or better progress, the attainment of over half has been graded outstanding in the last three years and there is a clear trend of improvement. Trainees are highly reflective, readily take responsibility for their own professional development and act on advice in order to improve their practice. They show a very good understanding of phonics and the teaching of early reading, teaching disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and of managing behaviour. Trainees plan lessons well and provide varied and engaging learning activities. A professional approach is expected of trainees and they rise to the challenge very well, for example taking the initiative in arranging observations of teachers and other training activities for themselves.

14. Arrangements for recruitment and selection have improved and are now outstanding. These result in motivated trainees who make good progress. There is an above-average proportion of male trainees and of those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Rates of completion and employment are well above average. Recruitment procedures are highly regarded by trainees and include the involvement of staff from partnership schools wherever possible. The qualities needed for teaching are explored and assessed, resulting in a judgement of 'potential for teacher training' that is used well as a starting point for setting expectations and tracking progress. After a place has been offered, the majority of trainees are directed to additional activities to develop their subject knowledge and skills in English and mathematics, or to gain further school experience as appropriate. Although all candidates receive reading lists, there are no individualised activities for those who do not have identified difficulties or needs which might support them in an even more rapid start to the programmes.
15. The overwhelming majority of trainees make at least good progress as a result of the outstanding training provided at the university and in the partnership schools. University-based training is very highly regarded by trainees, particularly in preparing them to teach their specialist subject, and includes sessions led by staff from schools and other outside experts. Trainees particularly value practical sessions where ideas and approaches can be put into practice during school placements, for example sessions in science, phonics and mathematics. The opportunities provided by a wide and growing range of projects developed in partnership with schools are very strong features of the programme and have made a significant contribution to improvement. For example, in partnership with special schools, 20-day placements to explore special educational needs are available for undergraduates and 'alternative placements' are taken up by postgraduates. The impact of this provision is clear and university-based training benefits from the experience of this project. The leading partners in literacy project is now funded by the university and includes opportunities for trainees to visit schools as well as school staff coming to the university to contribute to training. Very good opportunities to observe, plan and deliver phonics sessions, and to have these evaluated by practitioners, are provided by three-day visits to partnership development schools.

16. Trainees' subject knowledge in the core subjects is thoroughly audited and revisited during the postgraduate year and across the undergraduate programme for trainees to evaluate their progress and identify further areas to address as appropriate. Data from the audits are used to adjust university-based training as well as to check the impact of trainees' additional activities. The impact of training for university liaison tutors and school-based mentors in providing subject-specific feedback has been carefully checked and has made a positive contribution to trainees' growing subject knowledge.
17. The school placements provide a good range of school experience where support and challenge from mentors is of generally very high quality. The partnership between schools and the university is very strong and school staff particularly appreciate that university colleagues are approachable and quick to respond in the event of queries or concerns. The university operates three different levels of partnership, reflecting a very good knowledge of partnership schools' circumstances and what these schools can offer trainees. The nature and extent of the university's direct involvement in schools in checking the progress of trainees and the quality of training is adjusted very effectively according to the partnership level. Schools have many opportunities to contribute ideas and views to the university through a wide range of channels, for example through liaison tutors, the annual partner school survey and representation on the partnership committee, as well as through the engagement of many in the wide range of projects developed jointly by the university and schools.
18. The assessment of trainees is very thorough and involves university liaison tutors and school-based mentors, supported by sampling by external and internal examiners. Classroom observations and discussions provide weekly targets for improvement and support assessments at the end of placements that provide good summaries of performance against clusters of Standards and targets to work on next. The trainees interviewed were clear that their weekly targets are helpful, but there is no documented summary of their progress in addressing these, carried forward from week to week, to provide additional support for trainees in tracking their own progress and for liaison tutors and other staff in monitoring.
19. Resources are used very effectively. The human resources are a major strength of the programmes and the programme leaders and other university staff, liaison tutors and the large majority of mentors are very highly regarded by trainees. Resources are carefully directed to support planned improvements, especially in relation to national priorities. University funding has been secured to maintain and develop highly effective projects, for example placements abroad for postgraduates with a specialism in a modern foreign language, and to establish others, such as the Model United Nations General Assembly (MUNGA) and humanities projects with local museums. The virtual learning environment, Study Space, is a very highly-regarded resource and the learning resource centre is excellent in providing professional books, children's literature and learning resources that can be borrowed for classroom use.

20. Trainees show a very good understanding of diversity and of what an inclusive school is like, supported by some very good training, for example in working with pupils who speak English as an additional language. The provider offers places to trainees from a wide range of backgrounds, such as those who have undertaken access courses on the BA programme, and monitors the progress of trainee groups very closely to ensure equality of opportunity. There is very good support and high levels of attention for trainees with additional needs. Trainees are confident that they know where, and with whom, to raise any concerns they may have and incidents of harassment are very rare and dealt with effectively and sensitively.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

21. The evaluation of trainees' progress and the use of data at an individual, group and cohort level are very strong and ensure the provider is highly effective in assessing its own performance. As well as monitoring associated with university liaison tutor visits, formal scrutiny meetings take place twice a year for each programme and any concerns about trainees' progress, for example raised by personal tutors, year leaders in the undergraduate programme or the postgraduate programme leader, are identified and appropriate action planned and followed up. The analysis of data to raise questions to help in identifying any possible issues with the programme, and further scrutiny to check the impact of actions taken, are significant strengths. For example, the progress made by male trainees has been very carefully monitored as data raised questions last year. Action taken included raising staff awareness and adjusting approaches to grouping in training sessions and a further, exhaustive analysis of data indicates that there is no issue for current trainees. Programme leaders clearly know their trainees and the partnership schools very well. They listen to trainees and responded very well to the 2011 newly qualified teacher survey, taking effective action to improve trainees' knowledge and skills in working with support staff and communicating with parents. Partnership schools are involved effectively in self-evaluation, for example through the partnership committee and through the extensive range of projects with a wide range of schools. There are very good links between schools and the university liaison tutors and this provides a further channel for schools' involvement in evaluating the programmes. External examiners' reports are used well to inform future improvement. Internal moderation activities include school-based mentors as well as liaison tutors.
22. Anticipating change and preparing for, and responding to, national and local initiatives are exceptional aspects of the provision. Resources have been secured to continue prized initiatives and to develop them further to meet local needs, for example providing trainees with expertise in modern foreign languages and a developing understanding of the role of subject leader, as well as working with schools to provide professional development for serving teachers.

23. The university works closely with schools to move forward on the basis of its own self-evaluation as well as taking opportunities afforded by national developments. The university is very well placed in responding to current developments as it is working closely with a wide range of schools. Trainees value, in particular, the support they have had with the national priorities of phonics, behaviour management and special educational needs. University staff are increasingly active in schools, including involvement in the development of the new training schools. The university has maintained its emphasis on specialist subject expertise and has positioned itself very well to maintain valued approaches and to respond to the outcomes of the review of the National Curriculum.
24. Programme leaders and managers are highly reflective, work effectively as a team and are constructively self-critical. Clear plans for improvement are developed and implemented in conjunction with partner schools with the impact of actions evaluated thoroughly. The response to identified areas for improvement has been highly effective and, as a result, there is a clear, improving trend in trainees' attainment.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

25. The university provides postgraduate courses in the teaching of modern foreign languages and science to students aged 11 to 18 and of mathematics to those aged 11 to 16, leading to qualified teacher status. There were 63 trainees enrolled on programmes at the time of inspection.

Key strengths

26. The key strengths are:
- trainees' access to high-quality, university-based training that includes national priority areas and is delivered by expert practitioners from partnership schools
 - the recruitment of trainees, including from under-represented groups, with the potential to be good teachers, the majority of whom gain employment in local schools
 - the high level of support for trainees by university tutors that results in the good progress of most trainees
 - the well-qualified and highly-committed central team and its members' extensive subject knowledge which makes an excellent contribution to the development of trainees' own subject pedagogy
 - the quality and clarity of short-term target setting that gives trainees a clear understanding of how to improve
 - the very effective role of professional tutors and mentors in assessment.

Recommendations

27. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- increase the rigour of monitoring to ensure that systems are consistently applied so that all trainees receive high-quality school experiences
 - ensure that subject-level improvement planning is more sharply focused on promoting improved outcomes for trainees
 - involve all partners more effectively in evaluation and improvement to increase the impact of improvements in partner schools.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

28. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good and it has some outstanding aspects. Trainees' attainment has improved significantly over the last two years as a result of improved resources, better management and monitoring, and improved provision for subject knowledge. Trainees' attainment is good overall. Most trainees apply their subject knowledge well and have a strong understanding of the associated pedagogy. They plan lessons in detail and incorporate a range of interesting activities to help maintain good pace and good levels of student engagement. Trainees show a good understanding of behaviour management, teaching disabled students and those with special educational needs and promoting basic literacy and phonics.
29. The excellent recruitment procedures, together with a requirement for high entry qualifications, make a very positive contribution to the improving attainment of trainees and the consistently good, and often outstanding, progress made by most trainees. Recruitment procedures have improved since the last inspection, with more focus on group discussion to assess trainees' potential for teacher training. The provider is recruiting strongly from under-represented groups. The requirement to spend time in school prior to interview makes it possible to assess candidates' ability to reflect on that experience at interview. Although the number of applications now exceeds the places available, the provider adopts an inclusive approach and very extensive use is made of a range of enhancement and top-up courses, brokered by the university, especially in mathematics and science. For example, some mathematics trainees attended a full-time, subject-knowledge enhancement course for six months prior to the start of the course. The second language enhancement for trainees in modern foreign languages is very effective.
30. The training across the partnership is good and has many outstanding features. At its heart is the role played by the university subject tutor. Subject tutors understand trainees' needs and their rigorous and coherent monitoring of trainees' performance tracks their progress very well against the Standards. School-based training is usually of high quality with generally very effective mentoring across the partnership. For example, improvements in trainees' classroom management show the impact of the target setting, monitoring and review process. The quality of training is well regarded in the local area. As a

result, trainees are sought by schools, both for training placements and for employment. For example, from a group of six mathematics trainees, at the time of the inspection four had already secured employment in one of their placement schools. Surveys of newly qualified teachers show that overall satisfaction with the provision is significantly and consistently above the national average. Former trainees spoke passionately about the high quality of the combination of school- and university-based training.

31. The university tutors are highly effective in developing trainees' subject knowledge for teaching and the university-based training delivered by expert practitioners from partnership schools has a very strong emphasis on the national priorities of behaviour management, special educational needs, basic literacy and phonics. The impact of this was seen by inspectors in schools. Training, particularly in schools, is highly personalised and enables trainees to develop a range of teaching approaches. Occasionally, the desire to meet trainees' preferences results in placements that are not best suited to help trainees make progress. Tutors in school and university tutors give trainees high-quality feedback which helps them to identify their needs clearly and the resources to address them. The outcomes of weekly meetings between mentors and trainees are carefully recorded and the feedback from observations is summarised and documented effectively. Targets set are sharply focused and support the progress of trainees well, giving them a clear direction for improvement. In the rare instances when there is a concern about a trainee, the channels of communication between schools and university tutors are very effective, resulting in a swift response and a rapidly arranged visit to the school.
32. Despite the generally high quality of the training, in a few instances there are some weaknesses. School-based trainers sometimes fail to share good practice in aspects of teaching, such as in the use of the target language in modern languages, or to ensure that outstanding trainees fulfil their potential. For example, trainees' post-16 experience is not carefully tracked and some trainees get only minimal experience. Within schools, the quality assurance of mentors is informal and based on trust. Whilst in many cases this is effective enough, lack of formal systems means that not all trainees make the progress that they should.
33. Staff resources at the university are exceptionally well deployed to support trainees. The university's pastoral support is outstanding and has made a significant difference to trainees' achievements in a number of partner schools. For example, one particular trainee received extra support and visits, telephone contact, support via email and texts and group meetings in neutral settings during teaching placements. All trainees have high-quality opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills in an educational context. Trainees speak very positively about the library facilities and inspectors found excellent support for trainees within the learning resource centre and the comprehensive virtual learning environment.
34. The partnership with schools is generally strong and cohesive, with trainers exhibiting a clear commitment to achieving the best outcomes for all trainees.

The university's documentation is clear and expectations are well understood by schools. The assessment of trainees is good. School-based professional tutors and university subject tutors take on a quality assurance role and have helped to secure the accuracy of the evaluation of trainees' performance. Careful attention is given to the moderation of final grades. School-based trainers, mentors and university tutors meet regularly to discuss trainees' progress, share good practice and review the provision. Contact through meetings and with university tutors is highly valued across the partnership. A few schools do not fully engage in the partnership arrangements. Where inspection evidence has identified an occasional problem with placements, the situation has been known to university tutors but action has not always been sufficiently robust to ensure that the issue is quickly resolved.

35. The quality of mentoring across the partnership is generally good at supporting trainees and setting appropriate targets to enable trainees to make good progress. For example, some mentors are using the partnership's 'good to outstanding' sheet to help trainees to identify what they need to do next. Sometimes mentors miss the chance to conduct joint observations during visits by university tutors and opportunities for subject-focused debate are reduced. As a result, subject-specific issues, such as differentiation, are not covered equally well by all mentors. Trainees' profiles give information that is valuable in ensuring smooth transfers between first and second placement schools, although sometimes this information is not transferred quickly enough.
36. Trainees are very well prepared for teaching in a culturally diverse society and have a well-developed understanding of issues. For example, science trainees are aware of some key considerations when teaching their subject, including sensitivity to students' cultural and religious beliefs and personal choices and how these need to be considered during lessons and planning. There is excellent training for supporting students who speak English as an additional language. Placements promote trainees' understanding of a diverse society and trainees have a good understanding of the local context.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

37. Although the provider's self-evaluation is sometimes a little over generous, priorities for action to bring about further improvement are clear and draw on a detailed analysis of information about the outcomes for trainees. Views expressed by trainees on the training they receive are sought at regular intervals throughout the year and are generally acted upon. Occasionally, feedback from trainees highlights areas in need of attention that do not feature in subject improvement plans, such as some trainees calling for more opportunities to gain experience in Key Stages 4 and 5. The long-standing relationship with schools and mentors is usually effective in ensuring good-quality training, but it has led to a lack of formality. For example, the involvement of subject mentors in evaluation is informal and it is not clear how their views are systematically incorporated into planning for improvement.

38. The provider has responded well to challenges. For example, following Ofsted inspection feedback to other providers in SWELTEC, the grading arrangements for the first placement have been revised. Similarly, when the provider found that the completion rate for science trainees was lower than for other subjects a careful investigation was carried out. It was concluded that there was no common feature amongst the non-completing trainees, beyond characteristics indicating good potential, such as high degree classifications and positive performance at interview.
39. Most mentors from schools attend SWELTEC conferences where they help refine policies and develop responses to changing policies, such as revisions to professional standards. The national priorities are given a suitably high profile in the training. There is some variation in the quality of subject-level improvement planning and in the use of success criteria.
40. Good attention has been paid to most of the areas identified in the last inspection report as requiring improvement. The quality of feedback and target setting has improved and is now consistently good. University-based training has improved significantly and specialists from partner schools have been brought in to support the programme, resulting, for trainees and centre-based trainers alike, in a greater awareness of current educational initiatives and an appreciation of outstanding practice. Involving all partners in evaluation and planning to improve trainees' outcomes remains a priority.

Summary of inspection grades¹

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

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

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Primary	Secondary
To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?		1	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		1	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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