

# Stoke-on-Trent GTP Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	70243
<b>Inspection number</b>	388044
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–29 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Eileen Mulgrew HMI

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## Introduction

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

## Key to inspection grades

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

## Explanation of terms used in this report

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

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

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

## The provider

3. The Stoke-on-Trent graduate teacher programme (GTP) partnership consists of Stoke-on-Trent local authority, Manchester Metropolitan University and local schools. Stoke-on-Trent is an urban area with a diverse population. It has a growing number of immigrants, refugees and people with varying levels of spoken English. The GTP was set up in 2001 to recruit and retain quality teachers for the city of Stoke-on-Trent and this aim is encapsulated in its mission statement.
4. The provider attracts increasing numbers of applicants for the primary and secondary programmes. Secondary shortage and non-shortage subjects include English, history, mathematics, science, physical education, design technology, and information and communication technology. There are currently 27 trainees including 16 primary trainees and 11 secondary trainees.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
  - the highly motivated trainees who systematically evaluate their own practice
  - trainees' commitment to their own professional development and their engagement in the life of the school
  - the strong support from all members of the partnership which enables trainees to make good progress
  - the good quality recruitment and selection which ensure trainees have the potential to become at least good teachers
  - the effective commitment of all partners to work together so that trainees have high quality training and good opportunities to apply what they have learned.

### Recommendations

6. In order to enhance the quality of trainees' and pupils' learning, the provider should:
  - enhance trainees' use of information and communication technology as a learning tool for their pupils.
7. In order to augment the quality of training across the partnership, the provider should:
  - ensure trainees exploit possibilities to promote pupils' understanding and appreciation of social and cultural diversity.
8. In order to strengthen the quality of the partnership, the provider should:
  - introduce differentiated training to meet the needs of both new and experienced mentors and so support trainees' swifter progress
  - make more effective use of the existing documentation so that all professionals hold the same knowledge of trainees and so aid accelerated progress.
9. In order to enhance the partnership's capacity to improve, it should:
  - ensure all mentors are fully aware of the improvements the partnership is working on and give them more opportunities to shape these improvements.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

10. Since the previous inspection Stoke-on-Trent GTP partnership (the partnership) has improved almost all aspects of its provision so that its overall effectiveness in securing high quality outcomes is good. Trainees make good progress during their time on the programme due to the good training across the partnership and a shared commitment by all trainers to secure the best outcomes for trainees. Inspectors agree with the provider's judgement that trainees' attainment is good. For the previous two years, the majority of trainees were judged at least good. For the current cohort, provisional assessments show a similar picture with a significant improvement in the numbers attaining at the outstanding level.
11. Trainees are highly motivated and, through their systematic reflective practice, they have high expectations of their own and their pupils' learning. Trainees appreciate feeling part of the school communities in which they work and take full advantage of the opportunities to hone their skills as teachers. Trainees have excellent relationships with pupils and adults. They have very good behaviour management strategies and good subject knowledge. Those trainees who have made the most progress use questioning very skilfully to deepen pupils' learning and they successfully take risks to enliven their teaching. All trainees use information and communication technology to engage pupils and present interesting activities. However, there is an opportunity for trainees to use this resource more effectively as an interactive tool to increase pupils' learning.
12. The quality of recruitment and selection has been maintained at a good level so that trainees chosen for the programme have the potential to become at least good teachers and complete the course. Interviews test the applicants' subject knowledge and suitability for training through a range of tasks, providing a good baseline of information which is used in the initial stages of the course and beyond, thereby enabling trainees to make progress from the beginning. Subject expertise from the university adds rigour to the process for auditing secondary applicants' subject knowledge and any necessary enhancements can take place from the start. All primary trainees spoken to say the pre-course tasks are helpful in preparing them for the course. For example, the pre-course task in English is used to stimulate debate about features of children's literature at the first session on early reading.
13. All trainees interviewed say the recruitment, selection and interview process is rigorous and fair. Extensive feedback for unsuccessful applicants is considered helpful in identifying what action they need to take to secure successful re-application. The provider is consistently successful at recruiting primary male trainees, those from minority ethnic groups and mature trainees. Recruitment of trainees with a declared disability is lower, although the provider has taken steps to encourage disclosure. Employment rates are high, with most trainees securing positions in local schools.

14. Trainees consider the programme to be 'demanding but very satisfying'. Trainees link their good progress to the supportive mentors. In particular, they identify the challenging targets by which mentors plot and measure their progress using the performance indicators, meetings with mentors which focus on achievement and challenge, and the support sessions which enable networking and sharing of ideas as being especially beneficial. Visiting university tutors provide immediate oral feedback after lesson observations followed by written feedback which trainees also find invaluable. Inspectors agree with trainees and judge the quality of training and assessment to be good.
15. All trainees consider the training plan is highly personalised to enable them to make progress from the start of the course. As it is reviewed every six weeks it is manageable and relevant and helps to push trainees forward. Weekly reflective diaries and reflective account assignments add intellectual rigour to the programme and enable trainees to link pedagogy to practice. Monitoring of developmental targets is completed as an evidence base where the trainee justifies and rationalises how they have met the targets. As a result, they are reflective of their practice, take action to improve and make good progress.
16. Trainees and mentors consider the elements of the course combine successfully and complement each other. Training in diversity includes teaching pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, so that trainees have good opportunities to differentiate learning for their pupils. The provider responded to the required action from the previous inspection, and the arrangements for the auditing and development of subject knowledge for teaching are good. New paperwork, which includes a revision of the grading criteria so that trainees can plot their route through to outstanding, is seen as a strength by mentors and trainees in supporting trainees' good progress. Consistency of practice between first and second placements includes joint observations by mentors from the first and second schools after the trainee has started at the second school. This results in the trainee losing no time in making good progress in the second school and supports consistency of judgements.
17. Internal and external moderations of assessments are now more robust. Senior management and senior mentors are involved in the process of final review and final moderation. All involved receive training and guidance which support consistency.
18. The good use of resources supports trainees' good progress. The investment in developing trainees' subject knowledge and specific QTS Standards has successfully contributed to improved outcomes for trainees. The investment in the professional development of mentors has successfully led to more consistency and rigour in their role. The provider uses specialist schools to provide expert training across the partnership, for example, in the training of early reading.
19. Almost all partnership schools provide good quality environments for trainees to make progress and the commitment of schools is strong. The provider matches mentors and schools to the needs of the trainees so that trainees receive high

quality training and good opportunities to apply what they have learned, which contribute to trainees' good progress. Trainees appreciate the feedback after subject professionals observe their lessons. Nevertheless, on occasions, this can lead to targets which are not as precisely linked to the development of the trainee as they could be and progress can wane. There is scope for the existing documentation to be shared with all these professionals to avoid this happening. University tutors communicate high expectations to schools and evaluate the quality of school-based training and developmental target setting, which supports consistency and quality across the schools.

20. Mentors consider the training to be good and satisfaction rates have improved over three years. Although the programme leaders and university tutors will readily give individual training and guidance to mentors, especially new ones, there is scope for differentiated training to suit the specific needs of both new and experienced mentors and so support trainees' swifter progress.
21. The provider judges the promotion of equality and diversity as outstanding but inspectors judge this aspect to be good. Trainees are confident in teaching pupils in a diverse society because opportunities are provided to enable them to gain the necessary practical experience. However, trainees could be better prepared in understanding how to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying and victimisation. Policies are in place for ensuring equality and for dealing with harassment. There have been no reported incidents of racism or harassment. The provider identified a discrepancy in the outcomes for male and female trainees and took action to remedy it. As a result, there is now no discernible difference in the achievements of different groups on the programme. Trainees' individual needs are successfully met and reasonable adjustments are made. Trainees feel fully supported and have confidence in their trainers, commenting that they are always available and quickly respond to queries.

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

**Grade: 2**

22. The partnership has good capacity to ensure continuous improvement and sustain high quality outcomes for trainees. Leaders and managers are totally committed to the rationale for the programme as a vehicle to improve the life chances of the children and young people in Stoke-on-Trent. The previous inspection report outlined the provider's strengths and gave clear indications of the actions necessary to improve. Leaders and managers responded decisively to these areas and have secured improvement. As a result, trainees' achievement is good and they feel fully prepared to start their careers.
23. Self-evaluation is good. All judgements are now good, which is an improvement from the previous inspection. Inspectors agree with almost all of the provider's self-evaluation grades with the exception of the promotion of equality and diversity and taking action for improvement. Vital systems and processes have been implemented to ensure robust quality assurance and accurate self-

evaluation. All evaluations are collected at the centre to inform these processes. Regular reviews and evaluation of all aspects of the provision are undertaken, for example, trainees evaluate each session delivered by university tutors or local authority personnel. University tutors evaluate the progress of the trainee, the quality of the school setting and the quality of the training provided by the mentor. Mentors evaluate the training they receive. There is scope for the provider to contact former trainees more systematically to obtain their feedback about the value of the programme. A wealth of data is now collected on trainees' progress and analysed to identify any differences in progress. Swift action is taken to remedy emerging issues. For example, in the primary programme issues with class mentors have been tackled through a concerted effort to provide documentation and training to support developmental target setting and writing effective personalised training plans.

24. Members of the management board meet regularly and they monitor and evaluate provision effectively. The quality assurance group meets prior to the management board meetings and has added another layer of rigour to the process of self-evaluation. The involvement of the university has underpinned this improvement and all involved in the partnership know their roles and responsibilities. Because trainee numbers are small, the provider has a very good knowledge of each trainee. The progress of trainees is evaluated and discussed at management board meetings so that any issues of possible underperformance are identified and swift action is taken to maintain good progress. The provider analyses the outcomes for the main groups within the cohort. For example, the provider identified a difference in the attainment of male primary trainees compared with female primary trainees. Action implemented included placing male trainees in schools with male teachers to act as role models; consequently, more male trainees are now attaining at an outstanding level by the end of the programme.
25. Internal and external moderations of assessments are now more robust to ensure accurate judgements. Senior management and senior mentors support the process of final review and final moderation. External moderators and consultants are given precise instructions and the provider acts upon advice and guidance to improve the course.
26. The provider has rationalised the central training to improve the coherence of the programme and to develop a shared understanding of the expectations of the partnership in terms of trainees' outcomes, as acknowledged by trainees and mentors. Communication is good across the partnership, with mentors and trainees commenting on the swift response from the provider if they have any queries.
27. The stronger evaluation and review process has enabled the provider to identify appropriate priorities for improvement. Good-quality improvement plans include more precise measurable success criteria linked to trainees' outcomes, and specified roles and responsibilities by which personnel can be held to account. This process has evolved over time and the provider recognises the need for it to embed further. Support meetings for professional and subject mentors have been held to develop self-evaluation and an understanding of their contribution



to the quality of the provision and the priorities. However, a few mentors have limited knowledge of the provider's priorities for improvement and there is scope for this process to be more firmly embedded so that all members of the partnership feel they contribute to and shape priorities. This is the reason why inspectors judged this aspect to be good rather than outstanding as the provider judged it.

28. Leadership and management at all levels anticipate and make changes which have a positive impact on improving trainees' outcomes and practice. For example, members of the management team seek information on changes and network with other providers to secure best practice. Tutors from the university attend national conferences on topical issues and disseminate the information they obtain. Consequently, training in early reading, phonics, the use of key skills and using behaviour management techniques are now embedded in the course. Trainees have the ability to use a repertoire of skills through a clear understanding of the link between teaching and behaviour. The teaching of reading is good due to the amended programme introduced this year and planned jointly between two lead schools, the university and the programme leaders. Primary trainees' competent teaching of phonics and early reading skills testify to this good programme for the teaching of reading. The provider has plans to use a similar model to improve training for teaching mathematics.

## Summary of inspection grades<sup>1</sup>

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

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

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

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