

University of Lancaster: based at Blackpool and The Fylde College

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) inspection report

12–15 November 2012

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and one additional inspector in accordance with the *Handbook for inspecting initial teacher education from September 2012*.

The inspection draws upon evidence from the ITE partnership to make judgements against all parts of the evaluation schedule. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the ITE partnership in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is requires improvement; grade 4 is inadequate

	ITE for FE
Overall effectiveness How well does the partnership secure consistently high quality outcomes for trainees?	2
The outcomes for trainees	2
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	1

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Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the FE in ITE partnership

1. The University of Lancaster validates the provision at Blackpool and The Fylde College; the college serves all of Blackpool and the Fylde region. The college offers a one-year full-time pre-service programme and a two-year part-time in-service programme. Both lead to either a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or a Post-compulsory Certificate in Education (PCE). Both programmes incorporate the requirement of the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS). The college also provides courses for Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) and the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) leading to Awarding Body qualifications. These programmes were not included in the inspection.
2. Many of the trainees on the in-service programme are employed in the college and are employed in a wide range of specialist areas and at all learner levels, including higher-education programmes. Some are employed in the local sixth-form college. Others work in a range of other settings. Pre-service trainees are allocated teaching placements mainly within the college but also in other local training providers. The college only recruits trainees onto the pre-service programme where they are confident they can provide good quality teaching placements. These pre-service trainees also come from a wide range of specialist areas.
3. At the time of the inspection there were 41 trainees on the pre-service route, nine in the first year of the in-service route and 32 in the second year. The in-service numbers are smaller than in previous years. The inspection also included trainees from both courses who completed their training in the previous year.

Information about the FE in ITE inspection

4. Inspectors undertook 17 observations of trainees' teaching, including that of trainees currently in Year 2 and some who have recently completed the in-service programme, and others who had recently completed the pre-service programme. Six of these observations were undertaken jointly with the trainees' mentors. Inspectors also held discussions with individual and groups of trainees and mentors, with course tutors, with senior leaders and managers in the college and with a representative from the validating university. They also looked at trainees' individual learning plans and other documented evidence. An inspector observed parts of two training sessions, taking the opportunity to talk with the group of trainees. During meetings in the college, inspectors discussed a wide range of documented evidence including the

analysis of the outcomes for trainees and for groups of trainees, records of self-assessment and improvement plans.

Inspection Team

James Sage HMI, lead inspector
Shaun Dillon HMI, assistant lead inspector
Karen Lowe, team inspector

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the FE partnership are:

- The outstanding leadership and management of the provision that have led to significant improvements in the quality of training and the outcomes for trainees, so that successful completion rates are now high for both programmes.
- The high quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning that arises from detailed analysis of the outcomes for trainees, including the progress made by individual trainees and groups of trainees. There is a good focus on securing further improvements in these outcomes.
- The coherence between the elements of the course and the attention given to ensuring that individual trainees make at least good progress.
- The expertise and complementary skills of the team of tutors, and their depth of understanding of teacher training and of further education that contribute to the high quality of the training they provide.
- Trainees' breadth of teaching experiences during the training that contributes significantly to their attainment.
- Arrangements for ensuring that all trainees have specialist mentor support so that they receive the feedback and support they need to make good progress.
- The rigorous selection arrangements for the current pre-service programme and the quality of the trainees recruited.

What does the FE partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

- increase the proportion of trainees whose teaching is outstanding and reduce the proportion where teaching requires improvement by supporting trainees better in transferring the lessons learned in training to their teaching, specifically in:

- promoting good attitudes and behaviour for their learners and managing poor behaviour when it occurs
 - teaching learners with disabilities and those with specific learning needs
 - developing learners' skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics
- make explicit the need to evaluate the learners' progress when evaluating the impact and quality of trainees' teaching
 - reduce further the inconsistencies in the quality of mentoring
 - make better use of the networks and support systems that are in place for providers of ITE and training for the further education and skills sector to learn from best practice elsewhere and to share the college's own good practice.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good

5. The proportion of trainees successfully completing both the pre- and in-service programmes is high. Retention is high and all those who complete the course succeed. For the pre-service programme, the success rate has been sustained at a high level for three years. The success rate for the in-service programme has risen significantly to be in line with that for pre-service and is now high. While, to some extent, this is due to providing more suitable programmes for some trainees, this improvement is a direct result of improvements in the quality of training. These success rates are high for all groups of students. In addition to, for example, gender, ethnicity and age, the college analyses success rates for other groups, such as trainees working in vocational areas and those involved in teaching on higher-education programmes. The high success rates show that all trainees are on the programme most suited to their roles, needs and career aspirations. This is helped by the introduction of the separate PTLLS and CTLLS programmes that also provide good progression routes onto the PGCE and PCE courses.
6. Employment rates for pre-service trainees are very high. Many are employed within the college. Because so many in-service trainees are also employed in the college, the positive impact of the training on their future career progression can be determined. Senior leaders and managers in the college also present convincing evidence that this investment in teacher education and training is a key factor in the

marked improvements in college-wide success rates, including on higher-education programmes.

7. Trainees begin the programmes with a range of different starting points, experiences and expertise. Their knowledge, understanding and skills in their specialist area are checked carefully at the beginning of the course. The very large majority make good progress and attain at least at a good level by the end of the training. This is helped by the breadth of teaching experiences trainees have during the training, particularly those on the pre-service programme. Many teach learners from, for example, level 1 to higher-education courses. The teaching of the large majority of trainees is consistently good, with a small number of trainees teaching at an outstanding level. However, the teaching of a minority of trainees still requires improvement.
8. Trainees' teaching demonstrates a range of strong features. They develop very good relationships with their learners to create a good working environment. Their planning is thorough and detailed and generally takes account of the needs of individual learners and identifies opportunities to develop learners' skills in literacy and/or numeracy. Most lessons are sequentially structured with clear steps in learning and a good flow through the planned learning activities. Trainees demonstrate good specialist knowledge and skills and apply these very effectively and, consequently, gain the confidence of the learners. Some make imaginative use of learning technologies; others cope admirably when the technology does not work. In good lessons, effective use is made of questioning to keep learners engaged, questions are specifically directed and trainees build on learners' responses to develop teaching points. Trainees show good skills in critical reflection and this is encouraged and fully supported by trainers.
9. The areas where trainees' teaching is not as strong generally relate to the transfer of good planning into good lessons. These include: meeting the needs of all learners, particularly those with disabilities or particular learning needs; recognising where learners' skills in literacy and/or numeracy are a barrier to learning and developing these skills within the teaching of the specialist subjects; and missed opportunities for promoting learners' understanding of equality and diversity. A small number of trainees find it difficult to translate the good training they receive in managing difficult behaviour to their teaching by making work more interesting and matched better to learners' needs and abilities.
10. Where teaching is good, but not outstanding, the pace of learning and the level of work are insufficiently challenging for individual learners. These lessons are often also characterised by too much teacher talk and insufficient development of independent learning skills.

The quality of training across the partnership is good

11. The training that prepares trainees to teach in the further education and skills sector is good, and some aspects are outstanding. Improvements in the quality of training have led to marked improvements in the outcomes for trainees. While the training has significant strengths, a small number of areas need to have more impact on improving trainees' teaching.
12. Within the college, there is a high-quality team of tutors who are specialists in teacher training but who also have a good understanding of further education and the breadth of the sector. Trainees are extremely positive about the quality of the central training and the application to their teaching. Their views are supported by the high levels of attendance for evening training sessions and by inspectors' own observations. The training covers essential theory, but this is firmly rooted in its application to teaching. Within the sessions, trainees are required to think about and discuss how they will apply what they have learned to teaching in their specialist area. In this, they draw upon their own experiences and those of their peers, from those with the same or a related specialism and more widely. They also draw upon the extensive observations they make of experienced practitioners, again not just within their own area. Assignments also link theory to practice successfully and the impact can be seen in improvements, for example, in trainees' planning through the course. Prior to each lesson observation by a tutor or by the mentor, trainees are required to produce a rationale for the lesson. These clearly demonstrate how trainees link theory and practice and apply what they have learned from the training sessions. As a result the different components of the training come together very effectively to support the good progress made by trainees. Ensuring that trainees have a wide breadth of teaching experiences is also part of this good coherence. Where there is variability in the impact of training, it is in how well trainees are supported in the workplace or on placement in applying what they have learned to their teaching.
13. A key strength of the provision is how successfully the training is focused on meeting the needs of individual trainees. This process begins with the initial assessment that identifies any specific support needs. The arrangements for evaluating and developing each individual trainee's teaching and monitoring progress against individual expectations and targets is outstanding. The first diagnostic observation of teaching accurately identifies individual strengths and priorities for development, leading to good long-term developmental targets. This analysis is further refined at the second observation and through evaluations from the mentor. The developmental targets are refined and focused through the remaining four observations undertaken by the

tutor, the two formal observations undertaken by the mentor, the trainee's own critical reflection and self-evaluation, meetings with the mentor and thorough individual tutorials. Mentors often attend the one-to-one tutorials, and always attend when there are any concerns. Progress against the targets is reviewed frequently and thoroughly and leads to trainees making good progress. The individual learning plan works very effectively in bringing together evidence to give a clear view of each trainee's progress and to set and monitor the long-term developmental targets.

14. The quality of feedback on trainees' teaching and target-setting overall is good. Trainees are set a good balance of short-term targets arising from observations of their teaching, combined with the longer-term developmental targets. Targets are refined; for example, a target from a first diagnostic observation – 'engage your learners better' – became 'use direct questioning more to involve all learners in discussions'. However, there is some variation in the quality of these targets, with some trainees being given actions to complete rather than targets to improve teaching. Some targets lack precision and challenge. Tutors and college leaders know this and support is given where targets need to improve.
15. Trainees generally receive good support in the workplace or on placement. Placements for pre-service trainees are selected carefully. The previous inspection report highlighted inconsistencies in the quality of mentoring. Mentoring is now much more consistent and of a good quality; some is outstanding. However, despite these improvements some inconsistencies remain. The college is fully aware of this and actions are being taken to improve the consistency further.
16. All trainees have a mentor who is a specialist in their area or one that is closely aligned. All mentors are trained in the role and fully understand the procedures. Very good attention is given to those mentors not working in the college. The college lead mentor, who is very highly regarded by all mentors and trainees, checks carefully that mentors have been trained in lesson observation and in giving developmental feedback. The role of the lead mentor, who is also a tutor, is extremely useful in providing mentor training and support, often one-to-one. Mentors' lesson observation records are checked regularly, and feedback and targeted support are always provided when there are any concerns.
17. Assessments of trainees, including the quality of their teaching, are accurate. Extensive standardisation of assessments of teaching is achieved through joint lesson observations. The grade descriptions for judging the quality of trainees' teaching have good features. While not explicit, these criteria closely relate to the *Professional Standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the further education sector*. The descriptions themselves are brief and sharp, but further detail is

provided through the prompts in the lesson observation record. There is clear progression between levels, a good focus on the integration of theory and practice and the criteria usefully include reference to developing learners' functional skills. However, while the criteria include an evaluation of learner engagement, there is too little explicit focus on evaluating the quality of learning before assessing the quality of teaching. The lesson observation report, used by both tutors and mentors, also does not have an 'up-front' evaluation of learning. While most summary evaluative comments make good links between learning and teaching, some do not do this effectively. This does not model good practice for trainees.

18. Tutors' training sessions include good training in promoting good attitudes and behaviour in learners. Trainees are very positive about this training. However, a small number, and particularly some of those working with challenging groups of learners, need more support in putting this into practice. The training also includes sessions on meeting the individual needs of learners; this permeates much of the training. However, again, some trainees need more support in putting this into practice. Many also require training in teaching learners with disabilities and those who have particular, and often complex, learning needs. Not differentiating sufficiently for the needs of individual learners prevents some good teaching from being outstanding and is why a small amount requires improvement. Training now gives more attention to how trainees can identify learners' reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills and develop these through their teaching. Strengthening support for trainees in applying this training to their teaching is identified in the quality-improvement plan. Trainees sometimes miss opportunities in their lessons even when they are identified in their planning.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding across the partnership

19. Outstanding leadership and management lead to the improvements in the quality of training that have resulted in marked improvements in the outcomes for trainees. The provider has outstanding capacity to improve further. Well-structured leadership at all levels ensures good communication and decision making. From the college principal through all levels of leadership to the team of tutors there is an absolute commitment to striving for excellence and continuous improvement in the outcomes for trainees. This is based on a deep and accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved. High aspirations and expectations are shared across the team. Underpinning these is the drive to improve experiences, outcomes and life chances for learners across the college and within all partners and stakeholders. In this, the programmes, together with others in the

college, meet local and regional needs extremely successfully as demonstrated by, for example, marked improvements in success rates and learners' achievements within the college, and through the impact of partnerships with local high schools and other education and training providers.

20. Improvement planning is based on the rigorous, accurate and systematic analysis of internal and externally validated data, thorough self-evaluation and a wide range of evaluative feedback involving all stakeholders. This includes regular evaluation by the university through the external examiner and the course consultant as well as regular programme reviews. The performance of trainees and groups of trainees is monitored extremely rigorously from the start of the course to final assessment to ensure that most become at least good teachers by the end of their training. A particular strength is the analysis of information about how well individual trainees progress against individual expectations to support the analysis of data about the outcomes for all groups of trainees. All self-evaluation and improvement planning are firmly rooted in the analysis of outcomes and all actions are planned to improve these outcomes further.
21. Rigorous quality-assurance systems ensure that there is consistently high-quality provision and that developments and improvements are embedded in practice. There is high-quality and sharply-focused professional development to ensure that mentors carry out their role effectively and this has led to marked improvements in the quality of mentoring. Programme and senior leaders are fully aware that there is still work to be done but they know exactly where and what is required. As a result the quality of training across the partnership is consistently good and improving, and some aspects are outstanding.
22. Procedures to ensure that all trainees are on the most appropriate course are thorough and successful. Great care is taken to ensure that the trainees taken onto the in-service programme have the skills required as well as suitable depth of expertise in their specialist area. Improvements in selection for pre-service mean that the procedures are now extremely rigorous and have led to the recruitment of a very strong cohort of trainees. The college could recruit more trainees onto this programme but will only take on those where they can guarantee high-quality placements.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership with the university is based in one college:

Blackpool and The Fylde College

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70168
Inspection number	398726
Inspection dates	12-15 November 2012
Lead inspector	James Sage HMI
Type of ITE partnership	HEI-validated provision based in an FE and HE college
Phases provided	FE and skills
Date of previous inspection	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70168
Previous inspection report	
Provider address	University House Bailrigg Lancaster LA1 4YW