

Teesside University

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) inspection report

28-31 January 2013

This inspection was carried out by three 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 within 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?	3
The outcomes for trainees	3
The quality of training across the partnership	2
The quality of leadership and management across the partnership	3

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Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the Further Education (FE) in ITE partnership

1. Teesside University works with six partner colleges to offer one-year full-time pre-service and two-year part-time pre-service and in-service programmes. All lead to either a Certificate in Education or a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education, and incorporate the requirements of the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector. There are a number of pathways to the qualifications: generic pathways in a wide range of specialist areas and a Skills for Life pathway in English (English for speakers of other languages/literacy) and Mathematics (numeracy).
2. The university and colleges also provide Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector and Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector courses leading to awarding body qualifications. These programmes were not included in the inspection.
3. Trainees on the in-service programme are employed in a wide range of settings and specialist areas and teach at all learner levels, including higher-education programmes. Many of these trainees are employed in the partner colleges; others work in a range of learning and skills settings.
4. Pre-service full-time trainees are allocated teaching placements in a partner college and in other local training providers in a range of settings. The university only recruits trainees onto the part-time programmes where trainees can provide an appropriate teaching placement. In some instances, these placements are obtained by trainees working on a voluntary basis for a training provider. The pre-service and in-service trainees come from a wide range of specialist areas.
5. At the time of the inspection there were 75 trainees on the full-time route, 122 in the first year of the part-time route and 155 in the second year of the part-time route. Of these, 41 trainees were being trained in the university with the remainder spread among the partners. The number of trainees on generic routes was 313 and on Skills for Life programmes was 39. The in-service numbers are slightly smaller than in the previous year.
6. The inspection also included trainees from both pre-service and in-service programmes who completed their training in the previous year.

Information about the FE in ITE inspection

7. Inspectors undertook 22 observations of trainees' teaching. This sample included trainees from all routes and from all partners. Current trainees and others who have recently completed their training programme were observed. Twelve of these observations were undertaken jointly with the trainee's mentor. Inspectors also held discussions with individual trainees and with five groups of trainees. They looked at trainees' individual learning plans and other documented evidence.
8. Inspectors held discussions with mentors, course tutors, senior leaders and managers in the university and from the partner colleges.
9. During meetings in the university and with partners, inspectors reviewed and discussed a wide range of documented evidence including the analysis of the outcomes for trainees and for groups of trainees, records of self-evaluation and improvement plans.

Inspection Team

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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 3

The key strengths of the FE partnership are:

- The expertise and skills of tutors and their depth of knowledge and understanding of education, teaching and the FE sector, which contribute to the good quality of the training they provide.
- The strong and effective focus placed by the teaching team on preparing trainees to manage behaviour in the classroom.
- The high level of trainees' commitment and subject specialist knowledge and skills which they apply in their teaching to make learning more motivating and relevant for learners, and to promote learners' achievements.
- The strong personal support provided by tutors and mentors which contributes to the individual progress of trainees and brings about growth in their personal confidence and professionalism.

What does the partnership need to do to improve further?

The partnership should:

- Increase the proportion of trainees, particularly on part-time programmes, who are retained on the programme and who subsequently achieve the professional standards by analysing and using data more effectively to evaluate all aspects of the performance of individuals and groups, and to identify and plan clear actions and targets for improvement.
- Develop the management and monitoring of mentoring arrangements in order to improve further the quality and consistency of the support and feedback provided by mentors to help maximise trainees' progress.
- Build on the individual strengths of partnership members and on their high level of commitment and willingness to work together in order to shape, implement and evaluate agreed actions for improvement consistently across all teacher training programmes.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees require improvement

10. The proportion of trainees successfully completing programmes requires improvement, particularly on part-time programmes. While the retention of trainees on full-time programmes is good and success rates for trainees have improved steadily over the last three years, retention on part-time programmes is low and success rates for trainees on part-time programmes have declined significantly over the last three years.
11. The training on programmes, particularly on full-time programmes, has a strong focus on developing trainees' skills, understanding and professional qualities in order to enhance their employability. Employment rates for full-time pre-service trainees are good, and many former trainees are employed in the partner colleges or with other local employers. Successful trainees on in-service programmes often broaden their roles within their institutions and take on additional curriculum responsibilities.
12. The attainment of those trainees who successfully complete is good, and by the end of their programme trainees' teaching is good or, in some instances, outstanding. The partnership recognises that the proportion of trainees on all routes judged to be outstanding is low at around 14% on full-time routes and 4% on part-time routes.
13. Trainees' teaching demonstrates a good understanding of the professional requirements of teachers within the learning and skills

sector. Trainees' planning for teaching and learning across a wide range of learners from different backgrounds and at different levels is good. Trainees are very effective in using a good range of teaching approaches and resources which motivate learners and help them to progress. They use a range of assessment methods routinely and effectively to identify individual learners' progress. Trainees provide good support for the development of learners' skills in literacy and numeracy, and respond effectively to learners with additional learning needs.

14. Trainees' teaching shows a range of positive features, as identified in the previous inspection report. Trainees carefully build positive and constructive relationships with their students, and quickly establish a good rapport with their learners. Trainees maintain a positive and supportive environment for learning, often demonstrating a confident and relaxed approach in the classroom with the effective use of humour. Trainees know their learners well and they establish clear ground rules for good classroom behaviour which helps learners to progress. Trainees use very effective planning strategies and varied classroom approaches to engage learners fully and maintain good behaviour, particularly with more challenging learners.
15. Trainees' lessons show thorough and detailed planning with clearly differentiated learning objectives which take into account the varied needs of learners in their sessions. Lessons are appropriately structured with carefully sequenced activities which maintain learners' interest and help them to make progress. In planning their activities carefully, a few trainees do not always focus sufficiently on identifying their intended learning outcomes. Trainees' planning clearly identifies opportunities to develop learners' skills in literacy and/or numeracy. The development of learners' skills in these areas is successfully integrated into more vocationally oriented sessions. Trainees also demonstrate a good awareness of strategies to meet the additional learning needs of learners, for example learners with dyspraxia or learners from more challenging backgrounds. Trainees have a good awareness of equality and diversity and they routinely challenge stereotypes in their teaching. For example, one trainee always uses pictures of female rather than male football players in teaching sports science. In some instances, trainees miss opportunities which occur naturally in discussions with their learners to develop further learners' understanding of equality and diversity.
16. Trainees demonstrate high levels of commitment and very good subject specialist knowledge and skills, which they apply particularly effectively in gaining the confidence of their learners and in making learning more relevant and motivating for them. Trainees also use a wide range of learning technologies routinely and competently to support learning. In

one very effective session, the trainee encouraged learners to use their smart phones to access web links relating to the topic of parliament, in the absence of other computing facilities. In a few cases, trainees do not always make full use of the potential of the resources available, including smart boards, to create more stimulating activities for learners or to consolidate the learning which has clearly taken place.

17. Trainees assess their learners' progress effectively. In good lessons, trainees make effective use of carefully differentiated questioning to assess learning and to challenge and stretch individual learners. Trainees then build effectively on learners' responses to develop teaching and learning points. Trainees also provide motivating and constructive feedback to learners on their responses to questions or on their progress in classroom or workshop activities.
18. Trainees show good skills in critical reflection and this is encouraged and fully supported by trainers. Trainees also show a good standard of written work in assignments which is helped by the careful and very constructive feedback by tutors.

The quality of training across the partnership is good.

19. The training that prepares trainees to teach in the further education and skills sector is good, and some aspects are outstanding. The good training and strong personal support from tutors and mentors in the workplace ensures that trainees combine a good understanding of educational principles with a good range of effective teaching and assessment skills in their subject specialist areas.
20. Tutors demonstrate good levels of expertise and skills. They use their deep knowledge and understanding of education and teaching and their wide experience in the learning and skills sector very effectively to maintain and develop the good quality of the training they provide. A particularly strong feature of the provision is the effective focus placed by the teaching team on preparing trainees to manage behaviour in the classroom competently. Trainees are extremely appreciative of the quality of the training they receive and are also very positive about the impact of the good modelling of teaching by tutors on their own teaching. Their views are supported by inspectors' own observations.
21. The various elements of the courses, particularly in the revised programme introduced since the previous inspection, combine successfully to support individual trainees' progress and improvements in their teaching. Training sessions cover essential theoretical aspects of teaching and learning, and relate these effectively to practice. Tutors know their trainees well and link theory very skilfully and directly to individual trainees' subject areas. In a very few cases, trainees felt that these links could be made more quickly within taught sessions. Written

assignments, particularly in the revised programme, strengthen the coherence of the programme and have a sharp focus on reinforcing what has been learned in taught sessions in the trainees' own subject specialist planning, teaching and assessment of learning.

22. The overall effectiveness of the training is underpinned by the strong focus on the personal support provided for individual trainees by tutors and mentors. This contributes greatly to the individual progress of trainees and helps them to grow in their personal confidence and professionalism. Trainees value greatly the willingness and responsiveness of their tutors in offering a high level of personal support. The initial assessment of trainees successfully identifies any specific support needs, and these are dealt with sensitively and effectively. Trainees also make good progress in their subject teaching as a result of the frequent expert specialist advice and strong individual support provided proactively by their mentors and other colleagues in the workplace. Mentors are closely and carefully matched to the specialist interests of trainees. Many are very experienced in the role of mentor, and they have also previously completed a professional teacher training programme within the university partnership so that they understand the demands of the programme on their trainees very well.
23. Trainees' progress is carefully monitored through their programme to help them achieve. A revised individual learning plan has been introduced since the previous inspection. This is used very effectively to track the progress of trainees, and it provides tutors and mentors with a coherent, holistic view of individual trainees' progress across both generic and subject specialist teaching skills. First-year trainees find the individual learning plan very helpful in forming a clear overview of their individual performance, progress and areas for development. Trainees meet frequently with their mentors and tutors to review their progress and to set developmental targets. The feedback provided by tutors and mentors is constructive and encouraging. While targets agreed with trainees are generally clear and identify specific actions to help trainees improve their performance and improve their teaching grades, other targets lack the precision required to help all trainees improve their teaching.
24. Assessments of trainees, including the quality of their teaching, are accurate. Criteria for the assessment of written assignments and observations closely reflect the Professional Standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the FE sector. In lesson observations, trainees are accurately assessed against a range of generic grading descriptors which highlight the major characteristics, strengths and areas for development identified in teaching. Tutors and mentors thoroughly review trainees' previous observation reports before carrying out a further observation in order to gauge trainees' progress against agreed targets.

25. All trainees have very good experience of working with learners at different levels. Trainees on the full-time programmes gain good experience working on placements in different FE contexts, for example in classroom or workshop settings, or in a range of learning and skills providers. Although trainees on all programmes are strongly encouraged to observe a range of lessons to give them greater awareness of these different contexts, the extent to which they do this is inconsistent.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership requires improvement

26. The quality of leadership and management across the partnership requires improvement in order to improve outcomes for all trainees. Leaders and managers, especially within the university, are fully aware that outcomes for all trainees require improvement and that there is still work to be done to ensure there is greater consistency across all programmes offered by the partnership. Leaders have a clear vision and detailed understanding of what needs to be improved, and the partnership has the commitment and capacity to drive improvement, and to ensure that improvements are firmly embedded in practice for all groups of trainees.
27. The provision meets well-defined local and regional needs very effectively, including raising awareness and providing opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds to become teachers in the sector. The university has responded quickly and effectively to demands from local employers and regional authorities to provide initial teaching programmes which enable teachers and trainers to develop the generic and specialist teaching knowledge and skills required to progress to more advanced teacher training programmes. The partnership also provides good professional development opportunities for all staff involved in the partnership, including tutors and mentors. There are good selection procedures to ensure that trainees are on the most appropriate course and that they have the skills, understanding, experience and qualities necessary to be successful.
28. Since the previous inspection, actions taken by leaders and managers have been successful in significantly improving the attainment and outcomes for trainees on full-time pre-service programmes. However, some steps taken by the partnership since the last inspection have not yet impacted consistently across all programmes. In particular, the rate of retention for trainees on part-time programmes, and consequently the rate of successful completion for these trainees, has declined since the previous inspection. The partnership recognises that the current self-evaluation document (SED), although resulting from well-established review processes involving all stakeholders, is insufficiently self-critical, and that the analysis of outcomes for trainees within the SED is overly descriptive rather than evaluative. Leaders also recognise that the

analysis of data within the SED does not provide sufficiently detailed evaluation of all aspects of the performance of different groups, including the withdrawal of trainees, to inform fully the planning of future actions or to set appropriately challenging targets for improvement.

29. Individual institutions within the partnership are working very closely together in order to shape and implement the actions needed across the teacher training programmes to drive improvement in outcomes for all trainees. Communications between partners are very good and a number of steps have already been taken by the partners, both individually and collectively, to improve the quality, consistency and coherence of the provision. For example, the members of the partnership have successfully introduced a revised teaching programme which is much more closely focused on the needs and progress of individual trainees. This action has already contributed to the improved outcomes for trainees on one-year full-time programmes.
30. Other actions taken since the previous inspection include improvements in the shared resources available to all trainees, including an improved virtual learning environment (VLE), a carefully revised and well-received programme for mentor training, the introduction of an improved teaching and learning toolkit for trainees, and the introduction of a specialist development day for trainees, tutors and mentors focused on the exchange of best practice in the teaching of trainees' subject areas. Leaders and managers have also taken steps to improve further the consistency of practice across the partnership through the introduction of an effective 'buddy' arrangement between groups of partner colleges. This has successfully increased the development and exchange of best practice between partner institutions. However, these measures have not yet impacted positively on the overall outcomes for all trainees across the partnership, particularly those on two-year part-time programmes.
31. The partnership has also begun to take steps to ensure greater consistency in the arrangements for the management and standardisation of mentors and the monitoring of their performance. Work is now in progress to introduce more effective targeting of training for mentors and to implement more rigorous systems for the standardisation of mentor observations and feedback to trainees. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of these measures in improving outcomes for all trainees.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Darlington College
Hartlepool College
Middlesbrough College
New College Durham
Redcar and Cleveland College
Stockton Riverside College

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70106
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Lead inspector Alan Winchcombe HMI	Alan Winchcombe HMI
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Date of previous inspection	5-9 December 2011
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