

University of Nottingham

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

11–14 November 2013

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors and additional inspectors in accordance with the *ITE Inspection Handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from January 2013.

The inspection draws upon evidence from each phase and separate programme 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

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

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The secondary phase

Information about the secondary partnership

- The University of Nottingham is a large, established provider of initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development for teachers. It engages in educational research on a range of local, national and international issues.
- The university provides an ITE secondary programme which includes: a core secondary route with 240 trainees in the 11–18 years age range for English, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages, science (including biology, chemistry and physics) and physics with mathematics; a School Direct secondary route with 44 trainees in a range of subjects that is wider than those offered in the core secondary route and which is aimed at the 11–16 years age range. Both routes lead to the award of a Post Graduate Certificate in Education.
- The partnership includes 117 schools (93 secondary schools and 24 primary schools) in eight local authorities within the East Midlands region. The focus of this inspection was on the secondary programme, including the core secondary and the School Direct secondary route. Thirty four trainees were also training on a primary School Direct route during the inspection but there was insufficient evidence to include a primary phase section in this report.
- The university is also involved in the National Primary SCITT and a Teach First primary and secondary programme. These other programmes will be the focus of separate inspections.

Information about the secondary ITE inspection

- The inspection team consisted of four of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. Twelve schools were visited by inspectors and 24 lessons by trainees and former trainees were observed. Observations of trainees were usually jointly undertaken with mentors. Inspectors then observed mentors giving feedback to trainees.
- Meetings were held with university leaders and members of the School Direct Management and Development Board, university subject tutors, school-based mentors and coordinators. Meetings were also held with groups of trainees, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and former trainees from schools not visited by inspectors. A range of documentation and data was reviewed including course and subject improvement plans, external examiner reports, benchmark data on outcomes, NQT survey data and the responses to the online questionnaire completed by current trainees.

Inspection Team

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Kevin Morris AI	Team inspector
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Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 1

The key strengths of the secondary partnership are:

- The very high levels of professionalism and strong commitment of trainees, NQTs and former trainees to improving their practice. Their high aspirations for the pupils they teach result from the excellent training they receive and the strong ethos of inclusivity and achievement for all that permeates the training programmes.
- The major contribution the provider makes to ensuring sufficient numbers of highly qualified teachers enter employment in local schools.
- High levels of coherence between generic and subject elements of the programme which provide trainees with a solid base on which to develop their teaching skills rapidly and effectively.
- The very strong integration of theory and practice, informed by the most up-to-date and relevant research, enabling trainees to gain an in-depth understanding of the latest developments in education and in their subject areas. This provides trainees with an exceptional introduction to the teaching profession and encourages them to use this understanding to enhance their teaching practice.
- The shared vision and ethos, which permeates the partnership. This is characterised by very strong and active partnerships with schools, a highly inclusive approach, high expectations, the relentless pursuit of excellence and the continual drive to improve further in order to enhance the quality of training and ensure trainees enter the profession as good or outstanding teachers.
- University leaders who have an excellent track record of improving this already high-quality provision and demonstrate an outstanding capacity to develop and improve the quality of training and trainees' outcomes even further.

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

The partnership should:

- Ensure that, from the very start of their training, the impact of trainees' teaching on their pupils' learning is more consistently highlighted in lesson plans and feedback on lessons, in order to improve still further the quality of training and the outcomes of trainees.
- Sharpen written improvement planning to ensure success criteria focus more specifically on trainees' outcomes, in order to drive further improvement in leadership and management, and trainees' outcomes.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are outstanding

1. The attainment of trainees has improved consistently over recent years. In 2013, all trainees were judged to be at least good and over 50% were judged to be outstanding. The teaching by NQTs and former trainees observed during the inspection was consistently good and often outstanding. Trainees, at a very early stage of their training, were demonstrating excellent practice in some of the standards for teaching and in their personal and professional conduct.
2. Trainees and NQTs have high aspirations for the pupils they teach and are influenced by the provider's strong ethos of inclusivity and achievement for all. All trainees show a high level of self-confidence and presence in the classroom for this early stage of their training.
3. NQTs and former trainees ensure their pupils make at least good progress. In the lessons observed, they used a range of strategies, including questioning, written tasks and collaborative work, to check pupils' understanding and to identify misconceptions. Their assessment of pupils' work was accurate and their marking and feedback was diagnostic and helpful.
4. Trainees demonstrate a good understanding of the need to plan lessons to meet the differing needs of pupils, of how weak literacy and numeracy skills create barriers to learning, and of strategies to deal with these issues. For example, lesson planning by history and science trainees demonstrated their developing understanding of how a range of activities could be sequenced to support intended learning effectively. Many trainees are beginning to promote good learning and progress in their lessons. This is particularly the case for School Direct trainees who, at this stage of their training, have greater practical experience in the classroom than trainees on the core programme. However, some

trainees are still at an early stage in their development and aren't yet giving sufficient focus to the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning.

5. NQTs and trainees have very strong subject knowledge and use this well to engage pupils' interest and to respond to pupils' questions. In modern languages, trainees demonstrated strong subject knowledge in their excellent use of target language. Trainees are developing a very good understanding of the content and implications of the new national curriculum for September 2014 and many are sharing their knowledge with teachers in their placement schools.
6. NQTs' ability to manage behaviour effectively was a strong aspect in all the lessons observed. This was based on very good relationships with pupils, engaging activities and a very good focus on learning. Trainees were making excellent progress in developing their behaviour-management skills. For example, many insisted on the use of good listening skills when the teacher was explaining a point, and were using their schools' behaviour policies effectively.
7. School-based staff repeatedly commented on the way in which NQTs and trainees from the partnership showed a mature level of professionalism, very high standards of personal and professional conduct, a highly reflective and self-critical approach and a very strong commitment to improving their practice. Trainees on the School Direct route were already full members of their school communities, taking an active part in the pastoral life of their schools and taking on wider roles and professional responsibilities.
8. Completion rates are consistently high on the core secondary programme, and are particularly so in history, mathematics and modern languages. Employment rates on the core secondary programme have improved continuously over recent years, with 100% of English, history and geography trainees being employed in teaching posts in recent years. All of the physics with mathematics trainees, a new course introduced in 2012/13, gained employment. Almost 70% of all trainees who complete their training gain employment in schools in the region, indicating the important contribution the provider makes in supplying high-quality teachers to local schools.
9. Any differences in outcomes between particular groups of trainees are not significant and where potential differences have been identified, for example in relation to mature trainees' completion rates, highly effective support strategies are in place to minimise these differences.

The quality of training across the partnership is outstanding

10. Training is outstanding. It has been carefully structured to ensure trainees make rapid progress from the start and that they enter the teaching profession as good or outstanding teachers.
11. The quality of training in the newly introduced School Direct route is very good and is informed well by the long-standing and highly successful core secondary programme and by the previous highly successful Graduate Teacher Programme.
12. Highly skilled and very well qualified university-based tutors, many with national and international reputations in their subjects and curriculum areas, ensure excellent integration of research and training. They are involved in a range of innovative and creative projects to enhance teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics and in English. As well as enhancing provision for trainees, this work is having a much wider impact on curriculum innovation and the professional development of teachers in partnership schools. It was clear from discussions with NQTs and former trainees that the legacy of this very high quality training feeds into their teaching long after the original training is over.
13. Very experienced and committed school-based mentors ensure trainees gain the experience needed to become good or better teachers. In the core secondary programme, the practice of having mentoring departments, rather than just individual mentors, ensure trainees have the opportunity to take advantage of a range of support and advice, and to see good practice in action regularly. School-based mentors know their trainees well and shape teaching programmes and development opportunities very closely to meet the individual needs of trainees.
14. Training is highly personalised to build on trainees' prior experience. Tutorials and support groups enable all trainees to make rapid progress. Very good use is made of peer support and expertise to encourage the development of trainees' subject knowledge, teaching skills and levels of confidence. For example, support is provided for a group of mature mathematics trainees who are being matched with mature NQTs who understand the particular challenges facing these entrants to the teaching profession.
15. Secondary subject knowledge is audited and addressed very effectively during the training course. Valuable on-going training is provided on the new national curriculum and on changes to sixth-form teaching and curriculum. As a result of this, trainees should be able to make a confident transition from the curriculum requirements on which their current practical training is based to the new national curriculum they will need to teach when they are in employment.

16. High levels of coherence between generic and subject elements exist. Trainees identify this as a really positive feature of the course because it enables them to explore and develop the application of theory to subject and curriculum pedagogy and to classroom practice. Developing trainees' ability to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is a key focus of the training, ensuring that they understand data, recognise the characteristics of particular groups of pupils, and learn about strategies to narrow gaps in achievement of such groups.
17. High quality complementary placements enable trainees to develop new skills and consolidate earlier learning. All core secondary trainees have very good opportunities to observe, plan, teach and assess their subjects at post-16 level during at least one of their placements. Their initial school experience placement provides them with opportunities for experimentation, risk taking and time for reflection. Opportunities exist for trainees interested in teaching in special schools or in alternative educational provision to experience split placements. The buddying approach for the second placement in the School Direct route enables trainees to experience a different school in a collaborative way with one of their peers and thus to share the good practice developed.
18. High-quality training enables trainees to teach reading, writing, communication and mathematics effectively through their subjects and to recognise that it is the responsibility of all teachers to promote these skills.
19. The design of lesson planning pro forma and the reflective journals encourage trainees to evaluate their own performance critically. At this early point in their training, evaluations were not always linked sufficiently to the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Rigorous assessment of trainees against the Teachers' Standards ensures accurate judgements. Evidence of high-quality oral and written feedback was seen with challenging and appropriate targets being set to develop skills and attributes. However, there is not always sufficient reference in some feedback to the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' learning and to the Teachers' Standards.
20. The Schools and Society module with its focus on inclusion is a key element of both training routes. It includes a strong and early focus on different types of bullying, the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning and the importance of recognising and following up safeguarding issues.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is outstanding

21. There is a relentless pursuit of excellence by leaders of the partnership. Their actions are based on a very deep and well-researched understanding of initial teacher education in general and of the partnership's performance in particular. Leaders of the partnership are proactive in responding to national, regional and local developments. Their track record in sustaining the quality of this high performing partnership demonstrates their outstanding capacity to bring about further improvement. Their key objective in relation to preparing trainees to teach is to 'future-proof' them, that is, to prepare them for any future developments or changes in education they might face so that they can be good or outstanding teachers regardless of the context and times in which they teach.
22. Self-evaluation overall and across subjects is thorough and accurate, and actions taken as a result lead to continual improvement in the quality of training and in trainees' outcomes. However, written improvement plans do not focus sharply enough on measurable success criteria related to trainees' outcomes.
23. Quality assurance systems are very effective in sustaining this high-quality provision and in ensuring a process of continual improvement. Systematic analysis of internal and external data, and highly effective monitoring and evaluation processes contribute to this. Leaders respond immediately when they identify areas of relative underperformance or where they deem provision can be improved further. Recent changes to the structure of the core secondary programme, arising from evaluations by schools and trainees, is having a very positive impact on the quality of training and on trainees' outcomes.
24. The very effective partnership between the university and schools is built upon mutual trust. Schools are highly influential in shaping new developments through subject working groups and strategic leadership boards and are thoroughly involved at the design, delivery and evaluation stages. The new School Direct school partners have been able to build on existing good practice.
25. A major strength and feature of the partnership is the fact that subject leaders use the most up-to-date research to promote high levels of subject knowledge and excellence in teaching. For example, the university's Centre for Research in Mathematics Education (CRME), researches into areas that are relevant to the professional development of teachers. Forty former trainees and subject mentors from partner schools are currently involved in the research team's work.

26. Well attended, regular, high-quality mentor training sessions focus on key elements of the role such as lesson observations, feedback and target setting. They enable school-based mentors to be confident and skilled when supporting and guiding trainees, and ensure there is consistency of quality across the partnership.
27. In the School Direct route, highly effective and very strong partnerships between the schools and the university exist, with schools being the enthusiastic initiators of the programme, the key decision makers and the designers of this model of initial teacher education to meet secondary and primary local needs. In this model of teacher education, the University of Nottingham has been sought out by schools as their preferred partner because of its expertise in initial teacher education and because of its vision and ethos in relation to the importance of education as a vehicle for social change and social justice.
28. Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, which fully involve school staff, are in place for the core and School Direct routes. These ensure trainees recruited have the potential to become good or outstanding teachers. Discussions with NQTs and former trainees and evidence from exit surveys confirm the rigour of the selection process. All initial teacher training criteria and statutory requirements are met.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

De Ferrers Academy
Holgate Academy
John Port School
Joseph Whitaker School
Kirk Hallam Community Technology and Sports College
Littleover Community School
The Long Eaton School
Minster School
South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form
Sutton Community Academy
Toothill School
West Park School.

ITE partnership details

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