

Liverpool Hope University

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Inspection Dates 20–23 January 2014

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty’s 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 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

	Primary QTS
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	2

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The primary phase

Information about the primary partnership

- Liverpool Hope University is in partnership with over 230 schools in several local authorities to provide initial primary teacher education. At the time of the inspection, 656 trainees were following the four-year Bachelor of Arts in Primary Teaching with Qualified Teacher Status, and 263 trainees were taking the one-year Post Graduate Certificate in Education. All trainees have opted for one of the 14 specific subject/aspect options, which include Early Childhood and Modern Foreign Languages. There were also 51 School Direct trainees in five primary schools.

Information about the primary ITE inspection

- Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors visited nine primary schools to observe eight former trainees and nine current trainees teaching either English or mathematics. All observations were carried out jointly with school-based mentors. Inspectors observed the giving of feedback to trainees and met with mentors and trainees to discuss the training. They also observed training sessions at the centre for trainees and for mentors, and met with groups of current trainees, including School Direct trainees, and former trainees. The lead inspector held meetings with a member of the Governing Council, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) in his role as Dean of the Faculty of Education, the Head of School of Teacher Education, programme leaders and members of the Partnership Steering Group and Strategic Improvement Group. An inspector held a telephone discussion with an induction tutor of a former School Direct trainee. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of documentation, including trainees' files and records of progress, case studies and minutes of management meetings.
- This inspection focused particularly on the impact of the action taken by the provider in response to the areas for improvement identified in the inspection in November 2012 when overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement.

Inspection team

Sonja Øyen, Her Majesty's Inspector – lead inspector
Joanne Olsson, Her Majesty's Inspector – assistant lead inspector
Andrew Maher, Additional Inspector – team inspector
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The key strengths of the primary partnership are:

- The concerted drive, decisive action and effective teamwork at all levels which have resulted in rapid improvement in the quality of the training, the outcomes for trainees and trainees' satisfaction with all aspects of their training.
- The continued improvement in the training in reading, the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) and now also in writing, which ensures that trainees have a good understanding of development in English across the primary phase.
- The radical and positive changes in the training in mathematics which have ensured trainees have an increasingly secure subject knowledge and know how to develop pupils' conceptual understanding and also pupils' ability to use and apply mathematical knowledge.
- The now open communication and the rejuvenated and reinvigorated partnership with schools which have much enhanced trainers' and trainees' involvement in shaping the content of the provision, how it is delivered and the strategic direction for initial teacher education overall.
- The judicious use of well-timed procedures and the rigorous analysis of data to gauge trainees' progress in relation to the Teachers' Standards, and the use of findings to inform changes in provision including timely intervention and the tailoring of training content to trainees' needs.

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

The partnership should:

- Make even better use of data and information from focused observations, evaluations and trainees' profiles to identify precisely where support is needed to ensure all trainees make the best progress against each of the Teachers' Standards.
- Extend the work within the partnership to ensure consistency of quality in how trainers give subject-specific feedback, how they frame targets to guide trainees in making the best progress and how they moderate judgements of trainees' performance.
- Ensure that centre- and school-based training gives trainees greater opportunities to gain a well-informed understanding of how to assess pupils' progress across the curriculum and how to apply information from assessment in planning to meet the needs of all pupils.

Inspection Judgements

The outcomes for trainees are good.

1. All indications are that the good outcomes in 2013 are strengthening. Significant changes since the inspection in November 2012, especially in the content and coherence of the training programmes with more time in school, have had a rapid and markedly positive impact on the outcomes for trainees. Year 4 undergraduate trainees referred to provision now being 'a million times better' and their progress 'huge' compared with previous years, a view echoed by undergraduate trainees in other years. Retention, completion and employment rates have risen to above average and trainees' confidence in their training is at an all-time high. In the Ofsted online survey, 98% of the 285 trainees who responded agreed that the training would enable them to be a good teacher. In all but one question, the response of 'strongly/agree' was above the national average: for instance, there was 96% agreement that trainees knew how to deal with homophobic bullying, an area of concern in the previous inspection. Now, due to the involvement of national specialists and partnership schools, this is a budding area of expertise and influence.
2. In 2013, just under 50% of trainees were judged to be outstanding. This was higher than in 2012 and reflected the concerted and effective move by a restructured leadership team to ensure that all trainees, but most especially the Year 4 undergraduate trainees, met the potential shown at interview. A defining move was the collection and rigorous analysis, at key review points, of information regarding trainees' progress. Leaders identified weaker performance against certain Teachers' Standards and instigated additional training and targeted support for individuals, particularly for those trainees on the cusp of being good or outstanding. Data confirm that a significant proportion of trainees improved their effectiveness on their final placement in 2013. The upward trend was not as pronounced for postgraduate trainees, possibly because the final placement is the first time many have sole responsibility for a whole class and they take time to 'find their feet'. The very few trainees who were judged to be less than good overall had secured good outcomes in several specific Teachers' Standards, especially in managing pupils' behaviour.
3. Although there is little difference in final outcomes for undergraduate, postgraduate and School Direct trainees, a few anomalies appear when comparing outcomes against the specialism that trainees select. For instance, a smaller proportion of trainees who take Early Childhood have been judged to be outstanding compared with those specialising in English or sports studies. The now obligatory placement in a nursery for Early Childhood trainees is a good step in sharpening their experience of

effective practice and how to deliver it. Leaders accept that there is room for higher attainment and challenge, especially for the most-able trainees.

4. The very few trainees who have withdrawn so far this academic year, particularly from Years 1 and 2 of the undergraduate programme, is in stark contrast to high numbers in previous years. Those who left have cited valid personal reasons rather than dissatisfaction with the training.
5. Headteachers recognise 'the Hope teacher' as one who shows resilience, resolve, works hard and gives of themselves to help others. Such attributes were evident in former and current trainees' reflective, professional attitudes to teaching and in their good relationships with mentors, teaching assistants and pupils. In discussions, all trainees indicated their determination to stay the course and do well, especially now that they felt their voice was being heard and acted on.
6. Teaching observed in English and mathematics was generally good. Lessons were well structured, with tasks matched to pupils' differing abilities, and confidently taught, reflecting trainees' secure subject knowledge and ongoing evaluation of pupils' responses. A few trainees, more frequently postgraduates in the early stages of teaching, were less attuned to how well pupils were learning. The assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress is still an area where current trainees feel insecure, despite an increased emphasis in training. Year 4 undergraduate trainees praised highly the oral examination in the assessment of English, mathematics and physical education which had boosted their knowledge and understanding of the cycle of assessment, planning and teaching to meet individual needs.
7. Trainees' good knowledge has been sustained in how to teach structured, systematic phonics and progression in reading, and their knowledge in teaching writing and mathematics is rapidly catching up. Trainees' own subject-specific knowledge still shows some surprising gaps, but is improving due to measures such as personal study following audits, and trainers insisting during centre-based sessions in mathematics and science that trainees use and explain correct subject terminology.

The quality of training across the partnership is good.

8. The quality of the training has improved markedly in the four terms since the last inspection and is now good. All recent surveys of trainees' opinions show high satisfaction rates and undergraduate trainees were particularly effusive in praising the current programme. A Year 4 trainee summed it up by saying, 'Our timetable is now jam-packed with relevant things.' The basis for this comment lies in the restructured programme,

which is rooted in the views and suggestions of trainees and trainers, and links closely centre-based training to school experience. The developmental approach, revisiting aspects in each of the four years, promises to avoid the gaps in trainees' knowledge and experience which typified the former programme.

9. Significantly more hours have been allocated to training in English, mathematics and science, especially in Years 3 and 4, and also to the foundation subjects to give trainees a practical understanding of the new National Curriculum. The training in mathematics has undergone a complete overhaul, drawing on successful elements in the delivery of English. Trainees value highly the way trainers skilfully link theory to classroom practice, modelling strategies such as starting a session with activities to improve pupils' mental fluency in number. Integral to the programmes are saturation days and focus weeks on a particular theme, often prompted by identified weaker spots in trainees' knowledge. A conference for Year 4 undergraduate trainees, for example, was led by an early years practitioner who shared practice in outdoor learning.
10. Several strengths are emerging. First, trainees are profiting from the specific expertise of skilled practitioners, as in the day for Year 2 undergraduate trainees which highlighted effective practice in fostering progression in writing from the early years to Key Stage 3. Second, trainees comment that centre-based training inspires them to 'have a go', especially in planning practical activities for pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science. During the inspection, trainees taught phonics to small groups of pupils brought to the centre from partnership schools, and also took part in workshops to develop their understanding of how a problem-solving approach can prompt pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measures. Some postgraduate trainees felt that their lectures and seminars did not always highlight such useful practical guidance. Third, additional sessions designed to help identified trainees improve their subject knowledge draw in other trainees because of the interesting content and engaging delivery.
11. Trainees are well supported in schools. The e-profile gives mentors a full picture of trainees' experience, progress and targets, and they give considerable time to helping trainees in planning lessons and reflecting on their teaching. Observed oral feedback to trainees was well balanced with a review of what was effective and what could be better, often with practical suggestions. In some cases, the feedback and coaching was of outstanding quality with a sharp focus on what would make a difference to pupils' learning in the next lesson. However, some mentors are new to the recently revised guidance on how to evaluate lessons and give subject-specific feedback. For a few trainees, feedback gave an overly positive picture of their teaching in relation to pupils' learning, and agreed targets were too general to bring about immediate improvement.

The quality of leadership and management across the partnership is good.

12. The clear vision and determined approach to improvement noted in the inspection in 2012 underlie the impressive steps forward. All the shortcomings then identified have been resolved. One partnership headteacher referred to changes coming 'thick and fast, but all to the good'. As a result, the provision has been transformed, two-way communication restored with schools, trainers and trainees, and the partnership renewed. 'It's a new mindset' and 'It's not them and us, we are now a team' typified comments. Leaders know that this second year of planned improvement should see new ways of working becoming embedded and the full impact of action showing in the outcomes for trainees. Nevertheless, there is a justifiable, growing pride in what has already been achieved.
13. Several aspects of leadership and management are outstanding. The personal lead by a Pro-Vice Chancellor as Dean of Faculty, with the full support of the university's Governing Council, has been a key factor in raising the profile of initial teacher education and in empowering leaders to take the action needed to make the necessary improvements. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities have been clarified, new positions created, such as senior professional tutors who liaise between the centre and partnership schools, additional funding secured and experienced practitioners appointed to the training team. 'The Hope tutor' has emerged sharing the same attributes as 'the Hope teacher', particularly resilience, positive outlook and conviction. A shared vision of excellence, effective teamwork and a proactive approach have been key factors behind the rapidity of change on many fronts. In addition, leaders have encouraged others to play their part, and have taken note of trainees' and school-based trainers' views and solutions.
14. Development planning is thorough, comprehensive and highly detailed, drawing on the findings from evaluations, reviews, reports and the analysis of data. Up-to-date evaluations show how action is running to time and how success criteria are being met and, in some cases, exceeded. Leaders rigorously check that statutory requirements are met and use national and regional data to benchmark effectiveness. The self-evaluation is accurate and insightful: leaders have a clear overview of where continued development is needed to improve outcomes for trainees. The areas for improvement identified in this report are already reflected in current development plans.
15. After the 2012 inspection, leaders took immediate action to boost the provision for trainees and also initiated root-and-branch review of

programmes. The result is training that trainees and trainers alike deem relevant and challenging. The high-quality published reports on progress, and training support booklets, such as that on teaching writing, show the new professional face of initial teacher education, as do the weekly bulletin and hotline for trainees, and the expanding programme of development with links to qualifications at Masters level for newly and recently qualified teachers.

16. The partnership has been reinvigorated through consultation and consideration of what school-based trainers felt was needed. Working parties discuss and pilot materials, such as the paperwork to record trainers' observations. As a result, schools in the partnership are actively steering decisions about the content of training and how it may be delivered. The identification of lead partnership schools, with identified areas of specialism, has facilitated greater involvement of expert practitioners. The partnership is growing again and the cluster model of training ensures the cascading of information and trialling of documentation and procedures, including joint observations by school-based trainers to moderate judgements of trainees' teaching.
17. Schools are also now playing a more active role in the selection of trainees and in preparing them for their first teaching post. For example, representatives from 20 schools questioned Year 4 undergraduate trainees as part of mock job interviews and all candidates for training places have been interviewed by a practitioner as well as a centre-based trainer. This year, candidates have also had to pitch their educational views to a panel along with completing audits of subject knowledge. This has tightened procedures in a move, sparked primarily by schools, to ensure the selection of able trainees with clear potential to be good teachers, but also with the desired 'Hope' personal qualities.
18. From selection, leaders keep a close monitoring eye on how well trainees are making progress against the Teachers' Standards. Any trainee seen to be underachieving or at risk of doing so is given support, sometimes in a lead partnership school to gain particular experience. School-based trainers use the flexibility in placement arrangements to raise the challenge for those trainees who progress rapidly. Some post-graduate trainees, for example, have been planning lessons and teaching classes across the curriculum while others have worked with groups.
19. Procedures are strong and strengthening further to assure the quality of the work of centre- and school-based trainers and ensure even higher consistency of approach. A good example is the way centre-based English and mathematics trainers are monitoring school-based trainers' feedback to trainees and identifying aspects for development for trainees and trainers. This monitoring has shown, however, that not all

trainees are regularly being observed teaching specific aspects of English, such as the teaching of writing, or all subjects of the National Curriculum. Monitoring has also identified that there is scope to agree a pattern of focused observations and to draw on subject skills and expertise within the partnership to widen feedback to trainees.

Annex: Partnership schools

The following schools were visited to observe teaching:

Church Drive Primary
Greenbank Community Primary
Oakfield Community Primary
Our Lady and St Edward's RC Primary
St Francis de Sales RC Infant and Nursery School
St Margaret's Anfield CE Primary
St Mary and St Paul CE Primary
St Patrick's Catholic Primary
St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary

ITE partnership details

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Previous inspection report	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70130
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