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Dr M Wild
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Dear Dr Wild

Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of behaviour training in the secondary ITE partnership

Thank you for the help which you and your colleagues, trainees, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and schools and settings gave when I conducted a monitoring inspection of your secondary ITE partnership on 28 January 2015. The focus of the inspection was to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of behaviour training.

Having considered all of the evidence I am of the opinion that, at this time, the quality and effectiveness of behaviour training are good.

Context

Oxford Brookes University provides initial teacher education in both the primary and secondary phases. The secondary subjects offered are: English; mathematics; physics with mathematics; physics; chemistry; biology; art, design and technology; modern foreign languages; music; and history. The secondary partnership involves 84 schools. Currently 29 trainees are completing their training on the core programme and a further 26 trainees are on a School Direct programme centred on two of the partnership's schools; the Wycombe High partnership (six schools) and the Cherwell Partnership (17 schools). One of the partner schools is a special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).

One inspector spent one day gathering evidence from the university's academic staff, and looking at documents pertaining to the centre-based training on behaviour management. The inspector also visited two partnership schools, met with school leaders, trainee mentors, professional mentors, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and their school-based mentors, and School Direct trainees. Several parts of lessons taught by three NQTs and two trainees were observed. There was no centre-based training on behaviour management taking place during the inspection.

FMI monitoring inspection letter



Outcomes for trainees

All the trainees and NQTs interviewed by the inspector are satisfied with the training that they have received to help them develop their behaviour management skills. They have a good understanding of the educational research behind the range of behaviour management models. They recognise the need for consistency and fairness in applying school policies. They know the importance of planning activities that engage, motivate and challenge pupils. In the lessons observed, they unobtrusively offered verbal advice to keep individual pupils on task. They made sure pupils complied with school policies, for example the 'hands up if you have a question' policy. In all the lessons, calm and good-natured dialogue between teacher and pupil demonstrated that trainees and NQTs have established effective working relationships.

The range of different school placements plays an important and effective part in giving trainees experience in developing their behaviour management skills. The professional school mentors of NQTs have no concerns about the intrinsic abilities of new teachers from Oxford Brookes University to manage behaviour well enough from the outset of their careers. The assessment by the partnership of trainees' relative strengths against the Teachers' Standards is accurate; NQTs assessed as 'good' for teaching standard TS 7 demonstrated a higher level of awareness and a faster response to untoward chatter or distraction from their pupils than those judged as meeting the Standard at the minimum level. The provider's assessment shows that, on completion, 88% of trainees in the 2013/14 year were judged as good or better in managing behaviour effectively.

The quality of training across the partnership

Since the previous inspection, and in response to information from the national NQT and provider trainee surveys, the provider has further improved the quality of the centrally-based training programme around the management of behaviour. Several different internal and external consultants, from partnership schools and at a national level, provide lectures and run seminars outlining strategies that help ensure good learning responses from pupils. The partnership draws on the specialist expertise from its BESD special school as part of the centre-based training programme. All trainees spend time in an SEND school or SEND specialist unit.

The training materials provided centrally by the partnership are concise and clear, allowing trainees to build up an easily available library of information and ideas to inform their planning and classroom practice. A useful review, written by university trainers, summarises the worldwide research evidence of the full range of behaviour management strategies. The review sets these in the context of different schools and different models of education in England. The reviews would benefit from a

simple 'start with this one' set of suggestions to take new recruits through a pragmatic use of these ideas in their teaching.

School Direct trainees at The Cherwell School teach four days per week in their host school and one day in a different partnership school. This does provide a range of different settings every week and allows them the opportunity to try out new teaching methods. However, trainees noted that 'once a week' made it difficult for them to establish a good understanding of a particular class. They commented that, in these classes, pupils had worked out that the trainee was just that (as opposed to 'their' teacher), making it more difficult to establish credibility and authority. In the other School Direct partnerships, the second placement is a six week continuous block.

Trainers clearly and quickly address the initial anxieties of new trainees, reassuring them that Ofsted school inspection evidence shows that behaviour is actually good in most schools, despite public perceptions. The training consistently refers to the need for careful lesson planning to make sure pupils can access the activities. This year, the partnership is training all of its mentors in using their subject expertise to show trainees explicitly how to use specialist subject knowledge as part of engaging and enthusing pupils.

A recent centre-based seminar, entitled Perspectives on Behaviour, invited NQTs together with trainees to a series of workshops exploring behaviour management strategies with experienced headteachers, behaviour psychologists and partnership lead tutors. It included a strong focus on low level disruption, leading to enhanced understanding by NQTs and trainees of what this looks like and how to address it. Delegates reported that it has helped them understand how to address the causes of weak behaviour, not just 'how to treat the symptoms'. The seminar was oversubscribed and will be repeated later this term.

The quality of leadership and management of the ITE partnership

Effective and on-going evaluation of trainee outcomes, including consideration of NQT and in-house surveys, has led to further strengthening of training on aspects of behaviour management, detailed above. A 'behaviour advocate' has been appointed to lead mentor training and coordinate workshops and lectures. An analysis of the reasons causing trainees to withdraw from, or not complete, their training in 2013/14 did not find any connection to concerns around the trainees' confidence in managing behaviour, or of actual shortfalls in that area of the Teachers' Standards. Trainees' responses to Ofsted's trainee survey for 2013/14 indicate no negative responses around trainees' knowledge of how to promote good behaviour and implement a range of behaviour management strategies.

Frequent and formal 'assessment of progress' against the Teachers' Standards by partnership mentors and tutors shows steadily improving performance profiles over

time for all of the Standards. Unsurprisingly, 'behaviour management' (TS 7) is relatively weak at assessment point 1, during the first placement, but by the completion of the training has caught up with the other strands of the Standards.

Leaders are keen to ensure placements allow trainees to teach in schools whose context show high proportions of disadvantaged students. Some placements are in schools that require improvement, or are inadequate. In each of these cases (seven partnership schools in the 2013/14 academic year), a formal review of the support available to the trainees in a particular subject or faculty takes place. It includes any specific detail available from Ofsted's school monitoring visits. If that support remains effective, and the trainee is in a department where outstanding teaching can be observed, the placement is retained.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your ITE partnership. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector