

University of Central Lancashire ITE Partnership

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 27–29 April 2015 Stage 2: 28–30 September 2015

This inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty’s Inspectors, four additional inspectors and two Ofsted inspectors in accordance with the *Initial teacher education inspection handbook*. This handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2015.

The inspection draws on evidence 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 in 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 | 2 |

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the ITE in FE partnership

- The University of Central Lancashire, through its Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, works in close partnership with 15 colleges across the north-west region of the country. This partnership is a well-established provider of initial teacher education for the further education and skills sector.
- The partnership offers part-time programmes for both in-service and pre-service trainees and full-time programmes. Most of the full-time trainees are pre-service, but in 2014/15, 15 premium graduate scheme trainees were employed by their colleges. Trainees enrol on either the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at level 7 or the Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) at level 5 programmes. The university also validates the PGCE and Cert Ed mathematics: numeracy qualifications.
- In 2014/15, 142 trainees were enrolled on the full-time programmes, of whom 128 were PGCE trainees and 485 on the part-time programmes, of whom 273 were PGCE trainees. Fourteen trainees were enrolled on the mathematics: numeracy qualifications.

Information about the ITE in FE inspection

- Ten inspectors were involved over the course of this two-stage inspection; six in stage 1 and six in stage 2. The lead and assistant lead inspector were the same for both stages. Inspectors carried out 23 observations of trainees nearing the end of their training and 24 observations of former trainees in 12 settings. Inspectors also observed six training sessions.
- Inspectors interviewed trainees and former trainees, trainers and mentors in the different settings visited. They also interviewed course leaders and managers from the partner colleges and the university. They scrutinised trainees' and former trainees' pen portraits and their portfolios containing assessed work, lesson plans, lesson observation reports and progress records.
- Inspectors considered the partnership's self-evaluation, improvement plan and position statement documents and management and quality assurance information, including checking compliance with legislative requirements for safeguarding. They analysed data on outcomes for trainees by different groups. Inspectors also reviewed trainees' responses to the online trainee questionnaire at both stages of the inspection.

Inspection Team

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
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Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

The key strengths of the FE partnership are:

- The very high attainments for both full-time and part-time trainees.
- The high standards of teaching, learning and assessment demonstrated by most trainees and former trainees, which, combined with their high expectations of their learners, enable learners to make good progress.
- The very effective preparation that trainees receive from the partnership that enables them to work effectively with learners who have English as an additional language, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners who exhibit disruptive behaviour.
- The very good support and guidance that trainees receive from their trainers and subject-specialist mentors that help most trainees to make good progress from their starting points.
- The high awareness by trainers, trainees and mentors of the professional standards, which they incorporate into observation feedback and learning plans to assist trainees' development.
- The good use that trainees make of their highly developed self-reflection skills and their individual learning plans to drive their improvement and to enable them to measure the progress they have made during the course.
- The good leadership and management of the partnership, which combines rigorous quality assurance systems with self-critical analysis to ensure continuous improvement, so that the provision meets the training needs of local and regional employers very effectively.

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

The partnership should:

- Ensure that the recruitment and selection processes for part-time trainees are rigorous and that staff monitor the progress of part-time trainees closely to determine those at risk of non-completion, particularly male trainees.
- Increase the emphasis given to ensuring that trainees with limited English and/or mathematics abilities improve them during the course so that they become more confident in helping their learners increase their English and/or mathematics skills.
- Widen the range of trainees' experiences of the diverse further education and skills sector, so that they are more aware of the challenges of teaching different types of learners, of different ages, at different levels and in a broader range of settings.
- Improve the effectiveness of mentor training, the quality assurance of mentoring, the opportunities for mentors to share best mentoring practice and communication between mentor, trainee and trainer so that each knows how best to improve each trainee's performance.

Inspection judgements

1. The proportion of trainees whose overall attainment at the end of their course is good or outstanding is very high for full-time trainees (despite a slight decrease in 2014/15) and has increased to be very high for part-time trainees. The interim attainment grades for the 2014/16 cohort of part-time trainees indicate that the majority are already working at a good or better standard. All trainees who complete their training meet the 2014 professional standards for further education teachers and trainers; they demonstrate good practice in many of the standards and in all those pertaining to their personal and professional conduct. In terms of trainees' attainment, no significant differences are apparent in the attainment of different groups of trainees over time, but the proportion of full-time male trainees increasing their attainment grade during their course is below that of female trainees. Too few trainees who have improved to a good level of attainment half way through their course become outstanding by the end. Too few trainees who start the course with weak English and/or mathematical abilities make good progress during the course to improve them.

2. Most trainees and former trainees have high expectations of their learners and encourage them to reach their potential. Evidence from the great majority of lessons observed shows that trainees and former trainees plan learning activities very effectively and implement these plans appropriately, changing them where necessary during the lesson to meet the dynamics of the group. These activities are often interesting and challenging, include group and pair work and can be tailored to meet the individual needs of learners. The activities form a logical sequence of learning processes and encourage learners to make good progress. Trainees and former trainees use information learning technologies and modern digital techniques expertly to enliven learning and to widen access to many different types of information.
3. The best trainees use questioning techniques very effectively. They direct challenging questions to individuals, check that others have heard the response and then probe more deeply to check that learners' understanding is not superficial. Wherever sensible to do so, trainees and former trainees check their learners' English and mathematics skills and help them to improve these skills through a wide variety of activities closely related to the vocational or academic area being studied. They also emphasise health and safety matters where necessary by embedding them into the content of the lesson. Because of their presence and the respect they have engendered in their learners, they manage minor disruptions very effectively and promptly.
4. A former trainee was prepared to experiment with a role play activity related to employability skills with a group of learners with a wide range of personal, health and learning difficulties. Because of careful planning and mutual respect between teacher and learners, the risk taken was worthwhile and learners enjoyed and benefited from their experience. The great majority of trainees and former trainees have good subject knowledge and often apply their industrial and commercial experiences to enliven the topic being taught so that their learners appreciate its significance in real life.
5. In the few cases where trainees' and former trainees' teaching is less effective, teaching lacks challenge and learners' progress is slow. A small minority of trainees and former trainees do not check that their learners have understood and learned new topics and are making the progress expected of them. They do not plan effectively how to improve their learners' English and mathematics skills. In a small minority of lessons, trainees and former trainees do not prepare learners for life and work in a diverse society, even when it would be most appropriate to do so.
6. The proportion of full-time trainees completing their course has increased and is very high. For part-time trainees, the completion rate is approximately the same as in previous years but is low. This is primarily

because of low retention rates during the first year of the course and this is partly because of insufficient rigour in recruitment and selection processes and initial information and advice about the demands of the course, especially in one college. Managers have now remedied these concerns. Consequently, the 2014/16 part-time cohort's first year retention and achievement rates are much higher than those for the 2013/15 cohort. Completion rates vary only slightly between different groups of trainees, except for male, part-time trainees, where they are significantly below those for female part-time trainees. Managers have analysed the reasons for those leaving early and they do not appear to be related to gender, but this is an area for further investigation.

7. Employment rates for trainees leaving their courses in 2014 are high, given the significant decrease in employment opportunities in the area in further education and skills in the last few years. Although it is too soon to judge the full employment picture for trainees completing in 2015, nearly two-thirds are already employed in education and training. For a significant minority of in-service trainees completing the course, promotion often results. A higher proportion of male trainees gain employment than female trainees, even though the attainment of female trainees is higher.
8. The overall consistency, quality and coherence of the training are very effective. The quality of the training across the partnership, as judged by the impact on trainees' outcomes and the suitability of former trainees to work in the further education and skills sector, is consistently good, with examples of outstanding provision. Training sessions focus very effectively on the impact of trainees' teaching, learning and assessment on their learners. Trainees improve their academic writing and teaching, learning and assessment, often significantly so. They develop very high-quality self-reflection skills which are mature, self-critical, relevant and effective in helping them make good progress. Many trainees increase in self-confidence as a result of the very constructive advice and very good support given by their trainers and subject-specialist mentors.
9. Although the partnership raises most trainees' awareness of many contemporary issues affecting the lifelong learning sector, their experience varies considerably between the partner colleges. Consequently, although the training has prepared most trainees very effectively to work with learners who have English as an additional language, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners who exhibit disruptive behaviour, their understanding of other matters is very variable, dependent on where their training took place. For example, trainees generally are less aware of issues such as: radicalisation, extremism and the 'Prevent' agenda; children looked after; further education in higher education; and 16–19 study

programmes, as a result of their training. Nevertheless, many former and in-service trainees have learned about these issues from their employing colleges.

10. Not all trainees know about the different remits and settings in the diverse further education sector. They are unaware of the challenges of teaching different types of learners of different ages, at different levels and in different settings. Their understanding of working in the different remits within the sector occurs through discussion with their peers, rather than through a more systematic approach from trainers. The great majority of trainees and former trainees teach in providers whose learners come from very challenging socio-economic backgrounds and the course prepares trainees very effectively to work in such environments.
11. Trainers and mentors are very aware of the 2014 professional standards for further education teachers and trainers. They use them very effectively to gauge how well trainees teach and how well they act personally and professionally. Feedback from trainers and mentors relates to these standards appropriately and informs the individual learning plans. Trainees use these plans very sensibly and effectively to collate feedback action points and to address them throughout the course. The plans also enable trainees and their tutors to quantify and to judge the good progress they make during the course.
12. A small minority of trainees have weaknesses in their English and/or mathematics skills at the start of the course. Consequently, they lack confidence in their abilities in these areas and are often unsure how best to help their learners to improve their own English and/or mathematics skills. Trainers, mentors and trainees do not give sufficient priority to developing trainees' skills in these subject areas.
13. The quality of mentoring is very good in the great majority of cases. Trainees are very pleased with the support, advice and guidance that they receive from their mentors. Mentors often give very freely of their time to assist their mentees and to help them improve their subject-specific teaching. Nevertheless, the quality of mentoring is inconsistent in that a few mentors are unsure how best to observe and feed back on trainees' lessons, rarely meet with their trainee and relevant tutor as a threesome to ensure each knows how to aid the trainee's progress, rarely share best mentoring practice with other mentors and are unsure of how their mentoring is quality assured.
14. Trainers' and mentors' assessment of trainees is detailed, comprehensive and valid. Marking of academic work is thorough. Feedback on academic work and on lesson observations is very constructive and helps trainees to develop. At the end of their course,

they carry forward their final action points into their induction and continued professional formation in employment. Because of their high aspirations, they are determined to continue to become better teachers and many go on to take higher qualifications. The partnership is very keen to keep in touch with former trainees and is proactive in encouraging them to remain in contact with their trainers, mentors and managers. Inspectors agreed with the great majority of the partnerships' evaluation of trainees' attainment, although in a very small minority of cases, final grades awarded appear high. Trainers occasionally apply assessment criteria rigidly and do not give sufficient emphasis to how well trainees enable their learners to learn.

15. Managers and staff within the partnership have very high aspirations and ambitions for the partnership; they are determined to continue to improve the quality of their provision. Managers at all levels have taken the emerging areas for improvement at stage 1 of the inspection very seriously and have developed most appropriate and detailed action plans to address each one. Because of their strong desire to develop the provision quickly, they have already made good progress in introducing new systems. It is, however, too early to judge their impact on trainees.
16. Managers have improved the self-evaluation process and its ensuing findings since stage 1 of the inspection. The self-evaluation document is open, honest and concise and is now more self-critical. It uses data effectively to illustrate strengths and areas of concern. It includes areas for improvement based on the emerging findings from stage 1, the partnership's own evaluation and that of external examiners. These issues relate to associated action points in the improvement plan. Managers monitor the effectiveness of these actions and intervene where necessary.
17. Managers have increased their collection of data regarding recruitment and selection, attainment, completion and employment by different groups, as a consequence of feedback at stage 1 of the inspection. Already, they have analysed many of these data and are following up any issues of potential concern.
18. The partnership is a very open and engaging one in which all partners are equal and each contributes very effectively to the whole. Managers at the university work closely with all their partners over a very large geographical area to improve the quality of their provision. They experiment with new ideas through pilots in a few colleges and then expand to the whole partnership if successful. Partner colleges serve areas of considerable socio-economic deprivation. All but one are judged by Ofsted to have good or outstanding overall effectiveness. All participate fully in the corporate vision for excellence in initial teacher education for the further education sector. The quality assurance of the

provision is very comprehensive and thorough. Managers are aware of the partnership's strengths and areas for improvement and they take action to raise the quality of the provision.

19. Managers were concerned about the recruitment and selection process for potential part-time trainees at one college and took action to improve the rigour of the process and the quality of the initial information, advice and guidance given to applicants for the course. Consequently, in-course retention is now much increased. Pre-service trainees, however, do not consider that they underwent a rigorous selection process to gain a place on their course. The partnership selects mostly high-calibre trainees and prepares them very effectively to work in the further education and skills sector. The training gives trainees many transferable skills which enable them to work effectively in schools and other settings. The training inculcates in trainees and former trainees a genuine desire to become better teachers and to improve the lot of their learners, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds. The provision meets the needs of local and regional employers very well.
20. The partnership meets the statutory requirements relating to the promotion of equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination and safeguarding, including e-safety. It is aware of the need to ensure a full coverage of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and to embrace the 'Prevent' agenda in the partnership's training.
21. Leaders and managers at all levels and in all partners have a strong desire to improve their provision. They have the capacity to do so. They have maintained a good standard of provision for some time. They aspire to become outstanding. They have the human and physical resources to continue to improve the quality of their provision and consequently improve trainees' practice.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Blackburn College
Burnley College
Carlisle College
Furness College
Hugh Baird College
Kendal College
Lakes College West Cumbria
Lancaster and Morecambe College
Myerscough College
Runshaw College
Southport College

St Helens College
West Lancashire College
Wigan and Leigh College
Wirral Metropolitan College

ITE partnership details

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| Phases provided | FE |
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| Previous inspection report | https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user |
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