

Buckinghamshire New University

Initial teacher education inspection report

Inspection dates Stage 1: 18–20 May 2015 Stage 2: 5–7 October 2015

This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty’s 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 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 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

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Initial teacher education for the further education system

Information about the FE in ITE partnership

- The Buckinghamshire New University partnership for provision of ITE courses was established in 2007 with Aylesbury College. The partnership offers one-year, part-time in-service courses validated by the university at levels 4 and 5. A certificate in education has been offered since 2013 and a diploma in education since 2014.
- Staff at Aylesbury College provide all training; no initial teacher education is provided by the university. Most trainees are staff or volunteers at Aylesbury College. The college also works with other education and training settings and voluntary organisations that provide employment or work placements for trainees.
- At the time of stage 1 of the inspection, in May 2015, 22 trainees were enrolled on ITE courses. All of them were approaching the end of their training. Ten trainees who were completing the certificate in education and training progressed on to the diploma in education and training in September 2015.

Information about the FE in ITE inspection

- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the teaching of six trainees during stage 1 of the inspection and five former trainees during stage 2. Inspectors observed trainees and former trainees teaching and examined trainees' assessed work, training plans, progress records, data, teaching plans, learners' work and other documentation relevant to the provision of initial teacher education.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by trainees who completed Ofsted's online survey carried out during stage 1 of the inspection, and the partnership's self-evaluation and development plans.
- At each stage of the inspection, inspectors interviewed trainees, former trainees, tutors, course leaders, subject mentors and managers from the college and the university.

Inspection team

Steven Tucker HMI	Lead inspector
Stewart Jackson HMI	Assistant lead inspector

The key strengths of the FE partnership are:

- trainees' creativity in planning and using a wide range of teaching techniques and strategies that successfully engage learners
- the high proportion of trainees that complete and achieve their qualification
- trainees' high standards of academic writing and research, and the enthusiasm for continued academic enquiry promoted by course tutors throughout the training
- tutors' copious and mostly useful feedback to trainees, which encourages them to build on their strengths, experiment with their teaching and evaluate their progress
- the strong partnership between the university and Aylesbury College, which ensures managers identify areas for improvement through effective monitoring and evaluation of the provision and take appropriate actions to tackle these areas
- the swift response by managers to recommendations at stage 1 of the inspection to implement changes to observations of teaching, training in English and mathematics and the role of mentors and line managers in supporting trainees.

What does the FE partnership need to do to improve further?**The partnership should:**

- use a wide range of evidence of the impact of trainees' teaching, including their assessment of learners' progress, to accurately identify trainees' strengths and areas for improvement
- accurately evaluate and report on the trainees' strengths and areas for further improvement at the end of their training to enable managers and employers to provide for the trainees' continuing professional development
- ensure that recent changes to the training in English and mathematics enable all trainees to confidently develop their learners' skills in these subjects and apply them, where appropriate, to their vocational specialism.

Inspection judgements

1. Trainees achieve high professional standards during their training and continue to develop these once their training is completed. Trainees meet the professional standards for FE teachers and are at least competent to teach their specialism. Most make substantial progress in developing the skills to teach highly effective lessons and a small number develop sufficient confidence through their training to begin teaching additional subject specialisms.
2. A high proportion of trainees complete and achieve their qualification, both at certificate and diploma level. All trainees on the diploma course remain in teaching posts at the end of their training and are well prepared to develop their careers in education. However, a third of trainees completing the certificate do not remain in, or progress into, teaching posts at the end of their course.
3. Trainees produce high standards of academic writing and research as a result of the course tutors' depth of knowledge and skill in setting assignments that relate closely to the trainees' development as practitioners. Trainees apply their learning well in their teaching and evaluate their progress well through supportive peer discussions. The high-quality action research projects which trainees complete during their training closely focus on topics that improve the quality of their teaching.
4. Trainees who start the course with little confidence to do more than lecture using electronic presentations are quickly taught how to encourage their learners to participate in lessons and how to assess their learners' acquisition of knowledge and skills. As a result, they become confident to experiment with new ways of teaching. Tutors and mentors provide constructive feedback to trainees on their teaching which, in most cases, accurately identifies the areas for improvement.
5. During their course, trainees demonstrate a good understanding of the aspects of their teaching that they still need to improve. However, the final written reflections by trainees on their progress, and tutors' written feedback on the trainees' remaining areas for improvement, are not consistently precise enough. As a result, a small number of former trainees do not have plans to tackle unresolved areas for improvement in their teaching.
6. Tutors provide feedback to trainees on their written work which encourages them to reflect on their practice and challenges them to consider alternative views and ideas. This feedback also enables trainees to develop higher levels of academic writing and to read widely.

Trainees use the resources provided by the college and the university well to extend their knowledge of educational theory.

7. Subject mentors in the workplace mostly support their trainees well and ensure they improve the knowledge and skills specific to their subject specialism. However, a small number of mentors are not sufficiently clear about how best to use lesson observations to promote trainees' development rather than assess performance; in this respect they lack clarity about how the role of a mentor differs from that of a line manager.
8. The course structure and content allow tutors to respond well to the development needs of most trainees. Training ensures trainees meet the professional standards for FE teachers. Most trainees fully understand how to apply the knowledge they gain during the course to their teaching, although a small number of trainees who only teach a few hours each week need, and receive, a lot of help from their mentors to adapt information to suit their setting. Trainees are taught well how to manage learners' behaviour and individual needs through observations and feedback from the course tutor, through discussions with peers, through the action research project and through discussions with mentors.
9. Observations of trainees' teaching are carried out frequently and observers mostly make accurate judgements about trainees' teaching. However observations focus too much on assessing and grading individual lessons and do not take sufficient account of the impact of this teaching on learning over time. Observers do not consistently use observations to analyse and provide feedback on specific weaknesses in the trainees' teaching.
10. Trainees are very positive about the course. A significant minority told inspectors how they embarked on the course with little enthusiasm but, as a result of their experiences, developed a strong interest in research and reflective practice. Managers respond well to the feedback from trainees. They have, for example, increased the access trainees have to the university library and provided clearer feedback on the grading of assignments.
11. The course team has recently developed its promotion of English and mathematics well. They clearly inform current trainees about the skills they need to develop and the responsibilities they have to teach English and mathematics to their learners. Former trainees were not given sufficient information about the course expectations and standards for English and mathematics and received too little training on how to teach these subjects. The university and the course team have appropriate

plans in place to monitor the effectiveness of recent initiatives to improve current trainees' teaching of English and mathematics.

12. The university and college staff work very closely together to ensure that the academic standards of the courses are maintained. The university recognises that, since there are only two tutors on the course, it has a responsibility to support the course team. It does this effectively through, for example, continuing professional development and collaborative planning.
13. Managers across the partnership have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision. Self-assessment of the courses is accurate, improvement plans are realistic and their implementation is carefully monitored by managers.
14. Managers at the university and the college have responded well to the feedback at the end of stage 1 of this inspection. They have acted swiftly to research effective methods of evaluating the quality of trainees' teaching by using a wide range of indicators to supplement observations of lessons. University staff are closely monitoring the impact of changes made to the courses to ensure they improve the quality of provision. Other recent changes, including revisions to the role of the mentor and the training on English and mathematics, are well considered but have not been in place long enough for their impact on current trainees' practice to be evaluated.
15. Arrangements for the recruitment and selection of trainees are thorough and effective. Course tutors ensure that trainees are only recruited if they are in jobs where they can practise and develop their skills.
16. Course tutors use their own experience of research to ensure that their trainees produce high-quality action research. The course leader has made judicious links with other universities to ensure that course tutors and trainees benefit from current research.
17. Course tutors arrange an extensive programme of peer observations and visits from external speakers which ensure trainees have a broad range of influences on their training. However, trainees do not have sufficient opportunities to observe teaching practice in a range of settings in order to gain a wider understanding of practice in the FE and skills sector.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following college:

Aylesbury College

ITE partnership details

Unique reference number	70167
Inspection number	1004647-2
Inspection dates Stage 1	18–20 May 2015
Stage 2	5–7 October 2015
Lead inspector	Steven Tucker HMI
Type of ITE partnership	HEI-led partnership
Phases provided	FE and skills
Date of previous inspection	14–18 November 2011
Previous inspection report	http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/70167
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