

**Secondary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on**

University of Huddersfield

**School of Education and Professional
Development
Lockside
Queensgate
Huddersfield
HD1 3DH**

**A short inspection report
2005/06**

**Managing Inspector:
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Introduction

The University of Huddersfield works in partnership with 105 schools and colleges to provide secondary initial teacher training courses. It offers courses in mathematics, business education, science, music, history, information and communication technology (ICT), and design and technology. All courses provide training for teaching the 11-18 age range, with the exception of business education, which is 14-19, and design and technology, which is 11-16. At the time of the inspection there were 193 trainees.

Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a short inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Main inspection judgements

Management and quality assurance: Grade 2

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- well structured training, with secure coherence between all elements of the programme
- the content and quality of the generic studies programme
- the content of subject programmes which reflects recent curricular developments and meets the needs of individual trainees
- rigorous selection procedures which enable trainees to be well matched to particular courses
- a strong sense of commitment to the partnership, in which a wide variety of contrasting schools and colleges provide a very good range of contexts for training.

Points for action

- establishing a clearer process for prioritising issues, planning action and evaluating impact
- providing detailed information on trainees' strengths and weaknesses to all school-based trainers in order to help plan appropriate training programmes.

Points for consideration

- establishing greater consistency in the way professional mentors carry out their role in assuring the quality of school-based training
- making all school-based trainers fully aware of the role of the link tutor, especially in relation to the quality assurance of the training
- modifying the content of the citizenship enhancement programme to reflect best practice.

The quality of training

1. All training programmes are carefully designed to enable trainees to meet all of the Standards. Evaluation is used well to inform improvements to course structure and content. This has led to significant changes to the initial professional development (generic) course and centre-based subject programmes. The four key aspects of the generic course provide an effective structure, with opportunities for the university, schools and colleges to lead on different aspects. There is secure coherence between generic and subject training, and centre and school-based provision, and this represents an improvement in some subjects since the previous inspection. For example, history trainees now have opportunities to apply ICT more frequently within the subject. Direct involvement of subject tutors in the design and delivery of the generic programme is a strong feature; subject tutors work with trainees in mixed-subject groups. One advantage of this is that trainees benefit from different approaches to initiatives such as assessment for learning beyond their specialist subject area.

2. The training programme is well structured. Serial placements are effective in gradually introducing trainees to the school environment, and trainees benefit from regular contact with each other during their days at the university. The timing of specific university and school-based training sessions, both generic and subject-specific, is well considered.

3. The content of subject training programmes is comprehensive, and has been updated to reflect recent trends and developments within subjects. For example, modifications to the specialist ICT programme focus on changes to ICT within the school curriculum at Key Stage 3, and new examination specifications at Key Stage 4. The content of the centre-based citizenship programme, delivered as an enhancement to history and business studies trainees, does not currently reflect best practice in the subject.

4. Once trainees are established on courses their progress is monitored effectively. Periodic reviews inform target setting and action planning. One school visited had designed a structured weekly review that provided an additional focus on the precise needs of individual trainees in relation to the standards. Trainers are aware of the need to modify the content of the training programme where necessary and ensure trainees' needs are fully met. For example, history mentors are given a list of suggested topics to be covered in school-based training, and they understand how tasks and assignments support the programme. Beyond this, they tailor their programmes to meet trainees' individual needs identified through discussion, assessment, monitoring and target setting. However, in a minority of cases, school-based trainers do not receive sufficient information on trainees' strengths and weaknesses prior to school placements, and this affects their ability to design programmes to meet individual trainees' needs.

5. Trainees' prior experience, together with relevant skills and knowledge, are identified early through the selection process. There are secure and effective procedures for auditing subject knowledge and analysing needs once trainees have started the course. However, the short curriculum vitae forwarded to school-based trainers does not always reflect individual trainees' strengths and weaknesses in sufficient detail.
6. Every effort is made to accommodate all trainees, including those with disabilities. For example, in business studies a trainee with a visual impairment was given access to a full range of learning opportunities.
7. Overall, the quality of training is good. Centre-based training sessions are varied, relevant and engaging; tutors have acted positively on previous trainees' evaluations which suggested that lectures should model a wider range of teaching and learning styles. Resources at the university have improved since the last inspection and remain good. A web-based learning environment and the online discussion board promote effective communication between trainees. Visiting speakers who contribute to centre-based training include teachers from partnership schools and colleges, known for specific innovations or demonstrating good practice. In the main, school-based training, both generic and subject-specific, is of good quality. From the start, trainees are welcomed into schools and colleges as part of the teaching team. They benefit from observation of teaching across a wide range of subjects, and are encouraged to become actively involved as soon as they are ready. Trainees are provided with good quality support; on the whole, feedback from lesson observations is focused and constructive, and assignments are well marked.
8. Trainers' roles and responsibilities are clearly communicated and understood by most of them. However, inconsistencies in the quality of liaison between professional and teacher tutors within a minority of schools and colleges result in missed opportunities to mirror the centre-based collaboration between generic and subject training. Most tutors and mentors support trainees' preparation and research for their challenging first assignment and this provides an early opportunity to establish secure working relationships.

Management and quality assurance

9. Both the prospectus and the university's web site include clear and accurate information on undergraduate and postgraduate courses in education; and all promotional materials are well designed and reflect a commitment to cultural diversity. The provider has considerable success in recruiting trainees from minority ethnic groups, and has consistently exceeded targets agreed with the Training and Development Agency (TDA). Candidates who are invited for interview are provided with clear and detailed information on all available training programmes.

10. The selection procedures meet the requirements of *Qualifying to Teach*. Applicants take part in a group interview, led by a practising teacher from a partnership school who assesses the candidates' ability to present a topical argument to the rest of the group. Individual interviews carried out by subject-specialist staff are effective in assessing the candidates' potential. Candidates are very well matched to particular courses of study, depending upon their background and qualifications; this is a strength of the selection process. Subject staff begin to gather information on candidates' strengths and weaknesses at the selection stage, and this is used to advise successful candidates on a range of appropriate pre-course activities. All trainees are provided with good quality materials on generic ICT skills, and many use these well in order to develop their skills before starting the course.

11. Overall, management of the training programmes is effective. The university and its partner schools and colleges show a strong commitment to the partnership, and many schools and colleges view their involvement as a valuable aspect of continuing professional development for school staff. The course committee includes a number of mentors from partnership schools and colleges, who are actively involved in the management and development of training programmes. The partnership includes a wide variety of contrasting schools and colleges, which together provide a very good range of contexts for training. Within individual subjects, tutors and mentors work closely together in developing the programme of subject-based training and some subject mentors and professional mentors effectively deliver components of the centre-based training.

12. The partnership agreement is clearly understood by all of those involved in the training, and the work of school-based trainers is well supported through a range of good quality guidance materials. Communication between the university and the schools and colleges is good: mentors and tutors maintain regular contact by email and telephone; the university produces a partnership newsletter; and the use of a web-based learning environment is beginning to improve communication throughout the partnership. Resources are effectively deployed to support the training, both in the university and in the partner schools and colleges.

13. Roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the training are clearly defined in course documentation. Training and support are provided for professional mentors and subject mentors; those who are unable to attend meetings at the university are supplied with the relevant materials within a short period of time. The provider has been involved with a successful regional initiative in training new mentors.

14. The university's policies on equal opportunities and race relations are effectively monitored, and good quality support is provided to all trainees, including those from minority ethnic groups. Trainees have a good understanding of procedures to be followed in schools and colleges in the event of a related incident.

15. There are some inconsistencies in the way in which professional mentors carry out their role in assuring the quality of school-based training. The best professional mentors meet frequently with those involved in subject training, carry out regular

joint lesson observations, scrutinise written feedback to trainees, and offer good quality differentiated support. A minority of them, however, have limited involvement in internal quality assurance, and do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of this aspect of their work. The role of the university link tutor has been re-defined recently, and it is intended that link tutors will make regular contact with schools and colleges in order to monitor the quality of training. It is not possible to evaluate the impact of this work yet, although at the time of the inspection some school-based trainers were not fully aware of the role of the link tutor in quality assurance.

16. The processes for monitoring the assessment of trainees are effective. New documentation supports the ongoing monitoring of progress well, and there are secure procedures for internal moderation of assessments. The final assessment of trainees is rigorous and accurate. The provider benefits considerably from the input of a team of subject-specialist external examiners, and all outcomes from external monitoring are carefully considered.

17. The provider gathers a great deal of evaluative information from a wide range of sources. Trainees are asked to evaluate both university and school-based training at various stages of the course. Schools and colleges are invited to evaluate aspects of the partnership's work, and all information gathered is recorded by the provider. However, there is no prioritisation of issues within whole-course improvement planning; and success criteria, timescales and resources are not always identified. The provider's annual evaluative report is effective in drawing together information from a variety of sources, including external examiners; however, the process for identifying issues, planning actions and evaluating the impact of such actions is not well documented.