

# The Pilgrim Partnership

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The Priory Centre  
52 Newnham Avenue  
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A primary initial teacher training  
inspection report  
2007/08

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## Introduction

The Pilgrim Partnership works in partnership with 39 schools to provide primary initial teacher training courses. It offers training to teach pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. At the time of the inspection there were 40 trainees on the one-year course leading to the award of qualified teacher status.

## 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 revised report combines the judgements from a short inspection of the provision and of the management and quality assurance arrangements in 2005/06, with the judgements from the scrutiny of further evidence submitted to Ofsted in February 2008.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

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

## Main inspection judgements

Standards: Grade 1

Quality of training: Grade 1

Management and quality assurance: Grade 1

## Key strengths

- the schools' commitment to the partnership and the support they provide for trainees
- the rigorous assessment of trainees' progress
- the leadership and management of the training programmes
- the effectiveness of the selection procedures to identify very good trainees
- the quality assurance procedures and the use of benchmarking information to bring about improvements in the training programme.
- continuous year-on-year improvement in the quality of the training so that by the end of the last complete year, trainees' Standards overall were outstanding

## Points for consideration

- clarifying the purpose of the programme leader's visit to schools

## The quality of training

1. The quality of the training is outstanding. Data on the performance of the trainees over the past three years shows a clear year-on-year improvement which is related directly to the excellent training provided by the partnership.
2. The training programme is well structured, provides good quality training in National Curriculum subjects and religious education, and meets the Requirements. There is a high level of coherence between the centre and the school-based elements of the course. The centre-based sessions have clear aims and the content is based on good primary practice. For example, in English, trainees receive effective training in the teaching of phonics, and in mathematics there is a strong emphasis on best practice in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. In science, there is a good emphasis on investigation supplemented by activities to develop the trainees' subject knowledge. An opportunity for trainees to visit a nursery school adds significantly to an understanding of how young children learn.
3. Trainees' individual needs are met very well. They are carefully assessed on entry, and self-learning modules are planned to meet their personal training needs. These modules are assessed by course tutors to ensure that individual needs are being met. Subject training is effective. For example, trainees not only improve their subject knowledge but also increase their enjoyment of a subject they have previously found very difficult. A virtual learning environment enables trainees to access course materials as well as to communicate with tutors and other trainees.
4. Trainers have 'specialist knowledge, a wealth of experience, and enthusiasm for the teaching of their subject.' Subject leaders are well qualified and model good practice in their training. They have an infectious passion for their subject which develops great enthusiasm in the trainees. Guidance on the structure of taught sessions and the teaching methods to be used is provided for tutors. A good balance is thus achieved between tutor input and practical activities. There is a very strong emphasis on showing the trainees how to be reflective practitioners. The trainees make intelligent contributions during training sessions and show a readiness to think critically about their own practice.
5. There is a rigorous programme of monitoring to check that trainees make very good progress. When in school, they are observed formally twice every week. They are provided with written feedback on each occasion and this includes the setting of developmental targets for the next period of training. Joint observations with lead mentors are used to moderate the mentors' assessments. Records of observations show a clear progression of skills with increasingly challenging targets for trainees.
6. Procedures for the assessment of trainees are comprehensive. Assignments are clearly linked to the Standards and are based on published criteria. The tasks set for trainees in mathematics are of particularly good quality and require a good balance of skills. The marking of assignments is robust and incorporates an

appropriate system for second marking. Comments from tutors are clear and unequivocal. Most trainees' written work is of a high quality and reflects their commitment to their own professional development.

7. The centre maintains a good library of resources for mathematics although resources for science are more limited. Further materials for science are available from a local university, and schools support trainees fully by providing them with a wide range of teaching resources.

## Management and quality assurance

8. The information provided to applicants is comprehensive. The prospectus has improved since the last inspection and the web site is outstanding. Many trainees are impressed with the detail it provides when they initially make enquiries. They find the continual update of 'places available' very useful when applying late in the year. Selection procedures are thorough and are implemented consistently. They are continually evolving as the partnership seeks to find reliable means by which to assess trainees' potential. For example, the writing task and past experience of working in classrooms are now given a lower priority as selection criteria, since evidence shows they have little correlation with the final achievements of trainees. All trainees are interviewed in schools by a panel of headteachers; the commitment shown by headteachers to this process is striking. Interviews effectively test subject knowledge and aptitude to teaching. Each candidate is assessed in detail and the scoring system is used to set trainees' targets, organise groups for central training, and provide information for assuring the quality of the outcomes. Successful candidates are sent a letter that identifies their strengths and weaknesses in detail. The whole selection and interview process is very impressive and ensures good trainees with the potential to do well are recruited. The partnership meets its overall targets for recruitment including its targets for minority ethnic and other under-represented groups. Withdrawal rates are below average.

9. The management and committee structure works well. A strength of the partnership is the quality of central management provided by the programme leader, ably supported by the administration team. The commitment shown by the schools to the partnership is also very strong. For example, trainees are in their base school from the first day of the autumn term; this helps them to integrate quickly into the school. All teachers in the school contribute well to the development of the trainees.

10. Criteria for the selection and deselection of schools are clear and appropriate. The partnership consists of mainly local lower schools, which cater for 3-7 year olds. The vast majority are very good training bases and provide a high quality experience for the trainees. No schools have been removed from the partnership since the management works well with the schools to improve practice and to remove variation in mentoring. There is considerable mentor expertise, and turnover is low. The key role of the lead mentors in managing the quality of the provision for a group

of schools is developing well. An impressive feature of the management is that a code of conduct permeates every aspect of the training and management.

11. Excellent documentation supports the training process.

12. The partnership agreement is a good document that makes clear the working arrangements and responsibilities of everyone in the partnership. Quality assurance takes place at a number of levels in the partnership. For example, each training session is evaluated by trainees and trainers, and the outcomes are used to inform course structure and content. The partnership has appointed a number of experienced lead mentors who support a group of mentors in schools and assure the quality of their work. They visit their allocated schools every term and report to central management and to the headteacher of the school in order to improve training. In addition the programme leader visits schools regularly, though the purpose of these visits in the quality assurance process is unclear. At the end of the year a comprehensive and high quality external moderator's report informs a partnership development and action plan. The latter is monitored for progress very well.

13. Benchmarking is outstanding. The partnership evaluates its performance on a number of levels. For example, over time it analyses trainees' performance in aspects of their teaching, assignments and tasks, against their interview and entry profile. This has led to the partnership changing its selection procedures and course structure and content. The partnership continually strives to perfect its selection systems to identify those trainees who are most likely to succeed, and to tailor the support to meet individual training needs at the outset of the training. The provider uses Training and Development Agency data to measure its performance against national norms.

14. The partnership produces a good quality and detailed development plan which effectively addresses issues raised in recent inspection reports.