

Edge Hill University

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A primary initial teacher training inspection report

2007/08

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Introduction

Edge Hill University works in partnership with just over 1000 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) programmes. It offers three-year full-time and four/five-year part-time primary undergraduate programmes, one-year full-time standard and flexible primary postgraduate programmes and a three-year full-time early years programme. At the time of the inspection there were 1016 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 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

Quality of training: Grade 1

Management and Quality Assurance: Grade 1

Key strengths

- the well managed and highly effective links with partnership schools that is enhanced by high quality programme and partnership documentation
- the attention to individual needs, and how this informs school placements from the outset of the training
- the strong coherence that exists between professional values and practice/personal and professional development and the training provided in the core and foundation subjects
- the very strong sense of partnership that exists between university staff, mentors and trainees
- the outstanding support that trainees receive from the university and from partnership schools including rigorous monitoring of their progress through the use of well-designed professional development profiles and supporting evidence portfolios
- the provision of high quality resources across all training programmes
- the highly effective systems for recruitment and selection.

The quality of training

1. The quality of the training is outstanding. Programme documentation and support materials are very well designed. The balance and structure of the training ensures very good coherence between professional and subject training and centre and school-based training. This is exemplified by the clear links that are made between taught modules, independent study, directed and school-based tasks. The structure and timing of school placements is planned well in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to complement the taught sessions and ensure that trainees receive good quality training in two key stages.
2. The centre-based training programme is very well planned and organised to provide a clear progression in pedagogic skills and subject knowledge. Very good attention is paid to ensuring that trainees have an effective understanding of the National Curriculum, the Primary National Strategy, the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and *Every Child Matters*. The professional values and practice/personal and professional development programme underpins the subject training and is highly effective.
3. Taught sessions in English and mathematics make pertinent links between theory and practice and science similarly provides very strong emphasis on the practical considerations of teaching the subject. Very good use is made of information and communications technology (ICT) to support the training; trainees are advised well about how it can be used to support their teaching. The early years programme makes very clear links between child development and the associated areas of learning. Both centre and school-based tutors are well trained and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Centre-based trainers are well qualified, enthusiastic practitioners with recent and relevant school experience. Consequently, trainees respond very well to the training and acquire good or better levels of subject and pedagogic knowledge and understanding.
4. A key strength in all training programmes is the outstanding support that is provided for individual trainees. Very good account is taken of their needs at selection and throughout their training, and the personal tutor system is highly effective in ensuring that remedial action is taken to plan, address and evaluate progress when weaknesses occur.
5. Very good arrangements are in place for assessing the trainees. Central to this are the very well-designed professional development profiles and supporting evidence portfolios, which accurately record trainees' progress and clearly link each curriculum and pedagogical area to the Standards. Lesson observation forms provide high quality evaluative judgements and clear targets for improvement which are reviewed in subsequent observations. Trainees generally receive very good feedback. Systems of internal moderation and double marking are effective in ensuring that assignments are accurately marked against clear criteria. Feedback given to trainees on the quality of their assignments and their use of standard

English is detailed, provides helpful guidance on how to improve and links closely to the Standards. As a consequence, the ongoing assessment of trainees is rigorous and accurate. The procedures for the final assessment of trainees are secure.

Management and quality assurance

6. Selection procedures are very good with some features that are outstanding. The prospectus and supporting brochures are inviting and contain all the necessary information that prospective applicants need. Carefully chosen selection criteria are considered at every stage of the recruitment process and these are robust, fair and consistently applied. The interview process promotes equal opportunities by ensuring that the reasons for selection or non-selection are recorded clearly, set against the relevant criteria and rigorously moderated. A strong feature of the selection process is the requirement that all candidates entering the primary and early years programmes, regardless of age, are expected to have a science GCSE or equivalent qualification. The university provides tuition and a test programme to facilitate this. All PGCE trainees receive short-term developmental targets following their selection and this useful feedback is also provided to those undergraduate applicants who demonstrate a need for short-term targets in specific areas. Prompt action is taken to ensure that all those offered places receive enhanced clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau before they begin their school-based training. Systems to promote equal opportunities are very good. The prospectus contains a clear and positive equal opportunities statement as does the on-line information from the Faculty of Education.

7. The monitoring of recruitment is secure and provides the university with the information necessary to understand its performance in this area. From monitoring data it knows it is performing well in attracting higher calibre entrants and under-represented groups.

8. An outstanding feature of this large provider is the strong sense of partnership that permeates the life of the university. This includes the highly effective relationship between university staff and the trainees and also between the university and its partner schools. University staff provide exemplary levels of support to aid trainees' studies and support their teaching experiences; the approachability and accessibility of staff is highly valued by the trainees. Relationships with partner schools are strong, with link tutors, school-based mentors and training staff supporting the delivery of a high quality school-based training programme. There is a clear strategy for the recruitment of new schools to the partnership and for the application for higher level partnership status. Communication at all levels is excellent and is enhanced by the various management groups that include representation from both schools and trainees.

9. The university works very successfully with a large number of schools reflecting a wide range of settings and contexts. High quality programme and partnership documentation supports the training and contributes to trainers' and trainees' good understanding of their roles, responsibilities and expectations. Care is taken to place trainees in schools in different contexts during their training and this

is carefully recorded on a school experience database. Trainees gain experience of teaching across the full primary and early years age range as appropriate. Placements are organised very efficiently and trainees have sufficient early notification to enable them to make introductory visits to their schools; this was a positive feature highlighted by schools.

10. The university attaches great importance to staff development and all staff take part in an annual peer review process to identify their professional development needs. The induction of new staff is thorough. The use of associate and university-based tutors ensures that training programmes are kept up-to-date to reflect current primary and early years practice. Mentor training is a strength; all new mentors receive an appropriate training programme which includes joint observation and feedback with an experienced link tutor. Mentors are kept up-to-date with developments through regular partnership updates that are increasingly delivered through school cluster arrangements.

11. The senior management team and committee structure provide very effective leadership. Roles, responsibilities and terms of reference are clearly identified and senior managers have a very good understanding of the strengths and priorities for development across all programmes. Improvement planning is comprehensive and of good quality. The strategic objectives for the partnership are highly appropriate and reflect the team's commitment to sustaining improvement. Staff and trainee representation on programme and subject boards and consultative committees leads to improvements in the provision.

12. The quality of resources overall is very good and in some instances is outstanding, for example, in ICT which has improved markedly in recent years. Other examples include resources in science along with the facilities and general learning environment afforded by the Faculty of Education building.

13. Tutors work very effectively as members of curriculum and programme teams, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the taught sessions. Internal and external moderation and evaluation procedures are well established and highly effective. In particular, feedback from external examiners and external consultants, who observe trainees teaching, is thorough, relates clearly to the set criteria and supports the quality assurance process.

14. The university is very effective in evaluating its own internal and external performance through a wide range of strategies including using suitable benchmarking information. University tutors, school mentors, headteachers and trainees have extensive opportunities to evaluate all elements of the training programmes. Trainees' and trainers' evaluations, external examiners' reports and school placement evaluations all contribute to the identification of suitable action plans for each curriculum area. Due regard is given to the outcomes of internal and external evaluation to formulate action plans for curriculum, programmes and the partnership. The university has been recognised nationally for its work on evaluation of performance and has provided web-based guidance for all ITT

providers. Its intranet, which is available to all trainees, contains useful guidance and training materials based on an evaluation of best practice.