



**Primary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on**

Middlesex University

**Trent Park
Bramley Road
London
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**A short inspection report
2005/06**

**Managing Inspector:
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Introduction

Middlesex University works in partnership with over 170 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a three-year full-time undergraduate course, a one-year full-time postgraduate primary course and a one-year full-time postgraduate Early Years course. At the time of the inspection there were 320 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

- the collegiate approach to the management of training programmes
- the emphasis given to meeting the individual needs of trainees throughout their course
- the high level of support that trainees receive from the university and from partnership schools
- the arrangements for and quality of mentor training
- the close links and cross-referencing to the Standards within every component of the programmes.

Points for consideration

- strengthening the role of subject leaders in monitoring in order to ensure coherence between school-based and university-based provision
- incorporating more success criteria into action plans that focus evaluation on the outcomes for trainees
- analysing and using collated information about trainees to support improvement planning
- making more diagnostic use of the results of the English and mathematics tests used at interview.

The quality of training

1. The programmes are carefully designed to enable the trainees to meet the Standards across two Key Stages. All Requirements are met. There is good coverage of the National Strategies, the National Curriculum and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, and an appropriate amount of time is allocated to training to teach in English, mathematics and science. There are particular strengths in the breadth and range of the content of the courses, and especially in emphasising the creative and cross-curricular dimensions in English. There are well established links and very good cross-referencing to the Standards throughout the programmes. University and school-based staff and staff from early years settings use a wide range of knowledge and expertise to good effect in the design and teaching of courses.
2. Assignments are practical and relevant, and, by drawing on school-based tasks, have a strong pedagogical emphasis. They successfully link university and school-based training and experiences, and provide a wide range of well planned opportunities for the trainees to demonstrate progress towards the Standards. The recent development of web-based mentor training materials and support document for trainees provides a very good resource that is already highly valued and used well.
3. The development, assessment and recording of the trainees' subject knowledge are a prominent feature of subject programmes. Trainees develop their subject knowledge well, principally through directed and self-study, attendance at voluntary sessions and the application of subject knowledge in school-based experiences. All major school placements provide ample opportunities for trainees to experience teaching in the core subjects. On the rare occasions where trainees have not had a sufficiently wide experience in the teaching of science, alternative timetabling arrangements are sought.
4. Many aspects of coherence are good; for example, there are strong links between training courses in the core subjects, and with information and communication technology (ICT), and between university-based training in professional studies and subjects. The multi-faceted role of subject tutors in fulfilling responsibilities in professional studies and as link tutors contributes strongly to the consistency and coherence of many aspects of the courses. The attention paid to planning for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for those who have special educational needs is good. Coherence between university and school-based subject studies is less well developed.
5. Training sessions are planned well. Tutors model good primary practice and draw upon a suitable mix of theoretical and practical activity. Trainees are very positive about the quality of the school and university-based training. Any issues identified for attention are addressed successfully through module action plans. The recent development of web-based mentor training materials and support document for trainees provides a very good resource that is already highly valued and used well.

6. Trainees receive good support from school and university-based staff, and from staff in early years settings. They are also very willing to take responsibility for their own learning and development. As much as possible, trainees experience schools and providers with different contexts during their training. Where necessary, special arrangements are made to, for example, ensure that trainees have experience of children from minority ethnic backgrounds or with English as an additional language. In most schools and settings there are appropriate arrangements to ensure that trainees have a breadth of experience across the full age range for which they are being trained and opportunities to observe experienced teachers are good. A particularly strong feature is the arrangement for trainees to observe teaching either side of the phases for which they are being trained. However, opportunities are missed for some trainees to plan, teach and assess pupils across the full age range. Trainees receive good quality support for developing their practical teaching. Written feedback is appropriately cross-referenced to the Standards and provides mainly good quality guidance for improvement. Especially appropriate emphasis is given to feeding back on subject knowledge.

7. The university takes good account of individual needs in all subjects from the initial induction stage through to the completion of the courses. From the outcomes of all auditing and written assessments, the trainee completes an overall picture of strengths and weaknesses in each subject. Clear targets or next steps for action are provided. In meeting these, trainees are given individual help through contact with tutors, self study, group discussion and support from school-based trainers. This is good practice.

8. Trainees' progress is monitored carefully. University and school-based trainers work well together to set the trainees targets for improvement. Trainees themselves are predominantly responsible for providing illustrative evidence to show they have met the Standards. A strong feature is that all trainees have additional sessions with university tutors after the mid-point review in all school experiences to check the evidence in their personal development portfolios. Trainees also keep a separate record of their progress in training to teach each subject. This encompasses a detailed log of pre-course achievements, outcomes of audits and a record of coverage and progress in teaching primary core subjects.

Management and quality assurance

9. The selection procedures are good. The prospectuses and supporting brochures contain relevant and useful information on entry requirements. The arrangements for selecting candidates are thorough and fair, and provide sufficient opportunities for candidates to draw on their varied life and school experiences. School-based trainers play a full and active part in the selection and recruitment of trainees and there are good systems for inducting new staff into the role. Tests in English and mathematics are used successfully to screen out applicants with weak

subject knowledge, although the results of these are not shared with candidates nor are they used diagnostically with successful candidates. There are therefore some lost opportunities for identifying individual training needs or for setting pre-course tasks to remedy weaknesses. Effective measures are in place to ensure clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau for those offered places before they go into schools.

10. There is a clear commitment to equality and diversity and to attracting suitable applicants from as wide a variety of backgrounds as possible. Interview procedures promote equality of opportunity. There is a range of suitable support for applicants with declared disabilities, and an especially strong track record of attracting and recruiting candidates from Access courses. The university attracts high calibre entrants, including from minority ethnic groups. Male trainees, however, are under-represented, and the partnership continues to explore ways to increase their numbers. Strenuous efforts are made to find alternative courses and training opportunities for those few trainees who find that teaching is not for them or who are counselled out of courses.

11. Training programmes are managed well. Individuals provide good leadership and the strong collegiate approach across the primary team contributes considerably to the overall coherence in the training and the consistency of the assessment of trainees. The primary team has a well-developed understanding of the strengths and priorities for development across all courses, and prompt action is taken to secure improvements. Roles and responsibilities of university staff are mostly clear, although the position of the subject leader is not well defined, especially in monitoring subject-specific school-based training and in ensuring coherence between school and university-based aspects of subject provision.

12. The university works productively with a large variety of schools and settings in the early years to offer effective central and school-based training. The work is supported by generally high quality documentation and this contributes significantly to trainees' and trainers' clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and expectations. There are good systems to ensure that trainees have experience of observing a wide range of teachers, but do not sufficiently reinforce the benefits of planning, teaching and assessing pupils across the full age range. Strategies for promoting partnership and for recruiting new schools to the partnership are good. Increasing use is made of school-based staff to support and monitor trainees in schools other than their own. Lead mentors work alongside their colleagues and provide good support to those new to the mentoring role. Schools, do not always, however, sufficiently avail themselves of the opportunity to undertake joint observations with link tutors as a way of furthering the development of new mentors or to confirm assessments.

13. There is a strong commitment to staff development. Effective use is made of peer review and annual staff appraisals to identify the personal professional development needs of university tutors and of the primary team as a whole. Induction procedures for new staff are appropriate. Training for mentors is a significant strength. It is suitably differentiated at three levels, allowing mentors to

make good progress in developing the skills and knowledge needed for effective support, monitoring and assessment of trainees. Stage three training has an emphasis on the selection of class teachers and classes for trainees, moderation and models of management of training in schools. This is leading to increasing numbers of schools with more than one mentor and thereby increasing the pool of expertise available to support trainees. Expertise from within partnership schools is used well to support training and arrangements are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the needs of the schools that find releasing staff difficult.

14. There are well-established and embedded procedures for the internal moderation of trainees' written work and practical teaching. These are supported by high quality external moderation, and the university responds promptly to issues raised in external examiners' reports. Systems for monitoring the quality of provision are effective. In particular, newly developed systems for action planning allow for a more immediate response to emerging needs. The university is at an early stage in making use of benchmarked information against similar providers in similar circumstances.

15. A range of data and information from a wide variety of sources, including evaluations from tutors, schools and trainees, informs plans for improvement. The identified priorities and tasks are relevant, clear timescales are set for developments and there is close monitoring to ensure progress is made and tasks are completed. However, there is a lack of focus in the measures and procedures by which staff can evaluate the success of initiatives in terms of outcomes for trainees. The university has detailed and relevant knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the trainees' teaching at an individual level. This information, however, is not collated to provide a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses or the extent to which there has been an improvement in provision.