

**Primary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on**

Durham University

**Old Shire Hall
Durham
DH1 3HP**

**A short inspection report
2005/06**

**Managing Inspector:
Sonja Øyen HMI**

© Crown copyright 2006. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date are stated.

Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Introduction

Durham University works in partnership with around 200 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a three-year BA(QTS), a BSc(Ed) with QTS and a full-time PGCE for the 5-11 age range. The BSc(Ed) is for those who wish to become curriculum specialists in information and communication technology (ICT). At the time of the inspection there were 249 trainees on the undergraduate programme and 93 postgraduate trainees. The undergraduate programme is taught at the Queen's Campus, Stockton-on-Tees.

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 high quality training in mathematics and science
- the intellectual challenge of the university-based training
- the good partnership with schools
- the effective work of the school training centre co-ordinators in developing individual trainees' professional skills
- the thorough steps taken to ensure that trainees develop an in-depth subject knowledge.

Points for consideration

- improving the stability and cohesion of staffing in English
- strengthening the links between the university and school-based training
- refining the procedures to evaluate the academic and professional elements of the training programmes by analysing evaluation data more rigorously
- planning for improvement by specifying in more detail the partnership's intended actions.

The quality of training

1. The undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are well structured, meet the Requirements and enable trainees to meet the Standards across Key Stages 1 and 2. The very strong emphasis given to academic underpinning ensures trainees have good subject knowledge, especially in mathematics and science. The content of the training in the core subjects fully covers the National Curriculum. In English and mathematics, there is a good emphasis on the national strategies. Teaching and learning in the Early Years is integrated well in mathematics and science courses but receives insufficient attention in the postgraduate English course. The overall quality of training in English, mathematics and science is good. Although trainees' evaluations of the training and external examiners' reports are very positive, inspectors judge that present staffing difficulties in English are resulting in disjointed delivery. As a result, the provision is not as strong as in mathematics and science, especially on the postgraduate programme.

2. In the undergraduate programme the content of the modules is appropriate. At the start of the postgraduate programme, a four-day conference, which focuses on current issues in primary education, provides a firm base for academic and professional study. Training in all the foundation subjects is provided in each programme. A good initiative is the introduction of training in modern foreign languages (German and Spanish) in the undergraduate programme. Although satisfactory cross-curricular training in ICT is included in both programmes, a shortcoming for postgraduate trainees is the limited focus on developing their skills in using ICT in the classroom. Most of the ICT training is provided in schools.

3. A major, successful development since the last inspection has been the regional clustering of schools to provide training. For the duration of their course, trainees are allocated to a school training centre which has links with a cluster of up to 10 other schools which can give them a variety of experiences of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2. The trainees also follow a programme of effective training, organised by their school training centre co-ordinator, linked to the university-based work. The university arranges for trainees to gain experience at Key Stage 3, in the Early Years, and of working with pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and with pupils who have English as an additional language.

4. In English, mathematics and science there are strong links between the subject knowledge training and the training in how to teach primary age pupils. Assignments and tasks contribute significantly to the coherence of the courses. In some, trainees are directed to link their learning from lectures, seminars and readings to their work and observations in the primary classroom.

5. The training is up-to-date and makes good reference to matters of current debate, including how to teach reading. The academic demands placed on trainees are very high. University-based training is provided by well qualified, experienced tutors. Most have good research backgrounds and draw on this expertise. The work of university tutors is enhanced through the training given by a number of practising

teachers; for example, some of the training in physical education is provided in a partnership school. However, the links between the content of the university and school-based training are not always strong enough to ensure that the university tutors know how well their subjects are being taught in schools. Most documentation relating to professional studies and the core subjects is well presented and detailed, with clear references to the Standards. There are some very good quality workbooks for trainees. Reading and directed tasks are supported by the availability of a good level of resources. The library resources at the Stockton campus have been significantly improved since the last inspection. An on-line virtual classroom is used effectively to support the training.

6. School training centre co-ordinators have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. During school experiences, trainees frequently receive good quality feedback following observation of their teaching. Comments relate to generic teaching skills and often include subject-specific advice with clear targets to enable trainees to make further progress towards meeting the Standards.

7. There are very effective arrangements to ensure that trainees develop good subject knowledge. Core subject knowledge auditing is very thorough. Where necessary, trainees are supported effectively to enable them to deal with weaknesses. There are also good systems to develop trainees' professional knowledge and skills. Each trainee undertakes a period of 'home school experience' at the start of their course and the outcomes are used well by school training centre co-ordinators to aid their planning of a programme of school-based work. Individual trainees' needs are identified through regular, systematic observations by class teachers and link tutors who, through individual discussions and group seminars, offer trainees guidance in how to improve their teaching.

8. Trainees' evidence of progress and of achievement of the Standards is regularly reviewed by the school training centre co-ordinators. The accuracy of the assessment of trainees' teaching in each school training centre is moderated by university tutors and in each cluster through joint observations by class teachers and school training centre co-ordinators.

9. University assessment procedures are very detailed, clearly documented and systematically applied. In the core subjects, marking is rigorous and constructive but in education studies and professional studies the quality of marking is inconsistent. In their comments on assignments, tutors rarely refer to how well trainees have met the Standards.

Management and quality assurance

10. The management and quality assurance of the partnership meet Requirements. The partnership has strengthened since the last inspection. Effective procedures have been shared to the benefit of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. New areas of strength have developed but some aspects of the points

for improvement remain. For example, the plan to integrate academic and professional studies has only been partially achieved.

11. The procedures to select trainees are rigorous and effective. The prospectus, web site and presentations to candidates called for interview give clear information about the programmes, particularly the high level of intellectual rigour. Headteachers and co-ordinators from school training centres regularly sit on interview panels and play a significant role in assessing candidates' potential. Retention rates on the programmes have risen as has the proportion of trainees who secure a teaching post. As a result of widening access routes and contacting different communities, there has been a small increase in the proportion of trainees from ethnic minorities on the postgraduate programme and also in the proportion of male trainees. However, the partnership has not met its targets for recruiting from these under-represented groups.

12. Partnership arrangements are good and well founded in the apprenticeship model of training. While maintaining strategic development within the partnership committee, the university has devolved much of the management of the professional training to the school training centres and their clusters of schools. The success of the arrangement lies largely in the effective work of the school training centre co-ordinators and in the goodwill of schools. The school training centre co-ordinators shoulder a high degree of responsibility; they organise placements, compile a training programme, track the trainees' progress in meeting the Standards, moderate the work of the cluster schools and contribute to trainees' references. They are well supported and guided by the university. All the co-ordinators are members of the partnership committee, and meetings are used to share effective practice, refine documentation, review the quality of the school-based training and agree ways to improve it.

13. Good provision has been maintained in the university despite several difficulties which partly emanate from the university's requirements for tutorial staff. The appointment of teacher fellows has added valuable professional expertise but gaps due to staff absence and unfilled vacancies have weakened teaching teams, especially in English.

14. There are well established, effective systems to monitor, to evaluate and improve university-based training and also the training provided by the schools. Trainees' professional and academic progress is tracked systematically and the assignments are quality assured following the university's protocol. Trainees' and trainers' views about courses are regularly sought, tracked and analysed and beneficial changes are made to course structure and content as a result. A good example was the work to restructure the English course which brought it in line with the approach taken in mathematics and science. Nevertheless, information from all the evaluations of the university and school-based courses is not collated, analysed and used rigorously to enhance the quality of the provision. To decide where changes in focus are necessary, the university-based teams do not seek evidence from the schools of how well trainees apply course content in their teaching.

15. Overall strategic management is good. Programme leaders have a vision for the development of the partnership. They have outline plans to enhance the work of the cluster schools and to improve further the quality of the university-based training. These plans, however, do not set out in detail the partnership's intended actions. The programme leaders have set up effective systems to enable school training centres to direct their own work and place a significant degree of trust in their efficiency. The school training centre co-ordinators have good links with programme leaders through meetings and training sessions, and also with the staff in the partnership offices. The work of the moderators on the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes has strengthened the consistency of practice in schools, especially the assessment of trainees against the Standards. The moderators' work, however, has provided little formal, robust information on the effectiveness of the partnership, especially the impact of the school training centre co-ordinators.