

**Primary Initial Teacher Training  
Partnership based on**

**Wandsworth Primary Schools Consortium**

**Swaffield School  
St Ann's Hill  
Wandsworth  
London SW18 2SA**

**A short inspection report  
2005/06**

**Managing Inspector: Norman Blackett HMI**

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## Introduction

The Wandsworth Primary Schools Consortium works in partnership with 11 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers two PGCE routes: early years and 5-11. At the time of the inspection there were 38 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 efficiency of the senior management group in the day-to-day management of the course
- the thoroughness of the evaluation procedures
- the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection procedures in ensuring that trainees are well suited to this course
- the commitment of consortium school headteachers to the management and quality assurance of the course
- the comprehensive professional values and practice element of the training and the innovative 'arts' and 'themes' weeks
- the emphasis on meeting trainees' individual needs
- the quality and imaginative use of the suite of training rooms in the lead school.

## **Points for action**

- tracking trainees' teaching experiences to ensure that they have sufficient opportunities to teach across the age and ability range for which they are being trained.

## **Points for consideration**

- establishing more clearly which committee has the overall responsibility for the course structure and content
- developing contingency plans to show how instability in staffing the central training will be managed
- involving tutors in preparing good quality documentation for the centrally delivered training.

## **The quality of training**

1. The structure and content of the course are mainly good. The balance of school and centre-based training is effective and the timings of centre-based training and school experience elements are logical and coherent. However, the organisation of school placements restricts trainees' opportunity to engage in sustained teaching across the whole age range for which they are being trained. This is because each trainee is based in just two classes for the whole of their school experience and during the first, fairly short placement, which occurs relatively early in the course, pairs of trainees are placed in the same classroom.

2. The content of the individual subject courses and the professional values and practice course equip trainees with sound knowledge and skills to teach the primary curriculum. The professional values and practice programme is sensibly used as a lynchpin for the whole course. It provides training in generic aspects of teaching; gives trainees theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning; and usefully draws on a range of subjects and aspects to develop trainees' understanding. Concern for inclusion permeates training in the core subjects, and additional training is delivered in discrete sessions within the professional values and practice course. An interesting and stimulating feature of the course structure is its innovative 'arts' and 'theme' weeks when trainees give presentations and take part in peer training sessions and in collaborative and creative projects.

3. The foundation stage curriculum is given appropriate attention and it is successfully incorporated into the English and science courses. The content of training in the specialist early years course is highly relevant and up to date. However, although trainees who opt for this route are required to visit a nursery, they do not all have sufficient experience of teaching in a nursery class.

4. The course handbook and school experience documentation are comprehensive and clearly written but the quality of the course booklets for individual subjects is too inconsistent. The best example is the science booklet, which provides useful information for all those involved with the training. For instance, session outlines and reading lists support all trainees to engage in independent study, the links between the science course and other elements of the course are made clear, and the Standards to be addressed in each session are fully acknowledged

5. The well-balanced centre-based and school-based elements of training combine effectively to enable trainees to make at least good progress towards the Standards. School experience tasks are suitably positioned and expectations regarding the trainees' commitments to teach mirror the taught programme. However, during the first term the centre-based course has a strong Key Stage 1 focus and, while this works well to support most school experience placements, the focus is less helpful to the minority of trainees who undertake a Key Stage 2 placement at this point. School mentors are generally clear how the elements of the

course combine to make a coherent whole; however, they are not given an overview of the taught course so it is difficult for them to match their training to that provided centrally.

6. The quality of centre and school-based training is at least good. All of the partners have proper regard for the care and welfare of the trainees. The school mentors are conscientious and effective trainers. The planning for centre-based training sessions indicates that the quality of training in the core subjects, early years and the professional values and practice course is very good. Trainees rate the quality of their course very highly in their evaluations. They have good opportunities to develop theoretical knowledge and understanding and to practise teaching. They benefit from access to up to date guidance, research, inspection findings, and opportunities to work with each other as well as to observe and learn from expert practitioners. Provision for information communication and technology (ICT) has been improved and all trainees are introduced to a good range of strategies and resources to enhance teaching across the curriculum. Trainees have good access to range of high quality resources. The course assignments complement the centre- based course and school experience.

7. All those involved in training have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This is demonstrated by their willingness to resolve issues quickly, address gaps in provision and support trainees beyond the partnership agreement. All staff are well qualified with relevant primary experience, and part-time tutors are kept informed about all aspects the course.

8. Training is tailored to support trainees' individual needs. The course tutors know the trainees very well and ensure that their needs are met within sessions and in tutorials. Students with special needs are supported sensitively. Course documentation explains the schools' role in providing a differentiated challenge suited to the trainee's experience and abilities. Their prior experience is valued and built upon. Trainees are confident and willing to seek help from trainers and other trainees with suitable expertise.

9. The arrangements for tracking trainees' progress against the Standards are mostly good and the arrangements for moderation have been strengthened. The regular lesson observations are completed carefully and most offer well focused feedback. Every observation is used to set clear targets for improvement which are usually closely related to the Standards. Trainees write individual action plans following the completion of subject knowledge audits but the plans do not always show how weaknesses in subject knowledge have been remedied and monitoring is inconsistent. The trainees' range of teaching experience is not sufficiently tracked or monitored to ensure that they have opportunities to teach across the age range for which they are being trained.

10. Guidance on assignments refers to the professional standards that should be achieved. However, written feedback does not focus on how well the trainees have achieved against the Standards. All external and internal assessments confirm that trainees meet the Standards and a significant proportion reach very high academic

levels. Trainees are very successful in securing employment in local schools. At the time of the inspection, which was relatively early in the course, the trainees were achieving well against the Standards and some were already demonstrating that they were becoming evaluative and reflective practitioners.

## **Management and quality assurance**

11. The strengths of the selection procedures described in the previous report have been sustained or improved. The consortium recruits trainees with the professional dedication needed to work with children in an inner city context. The interview procedures are extremely thorough, employing tests for written English and numeracy as well as individual interviews where trainees are probed on their enthusiasm for teaching in inner city schools. They all spend a day in a consortium school where their suitability for this training route is also assessed.

12. Each year the quality assurance officer reports upon a number of selection and interview sessions. The reports indicate that the process is carried out thoroughly and that any action points which are raised are addressed promptly.

13. The quality of candidates remains high: around two-thirds have an upper second honours degree or higher. Publicity materials have been updated and are now supported by a re-designed web site. An introductory briefing paper and useful checklist are sent to candidates to help them prepare for the interview. They provide candidates with a clear perception of the selection process, the structure of the training programme and the two training routes.

14. The monitoring of equal opportunities and ethnicity in recruitment and selection is now undertaken more formally and systematically to include the collection of data on age, gender, disability and cultural heritage. Acceptance rates for candidates from each of these groups are monitored to ensure that there is no hidden bias. The consortium draws on former trainees who are members of minority ethnic communities to form an advisory group on recruitment procedures. On the recommendation of this group it now places advertisements in publications aimed at graduates from ethnic minorities. There has been an increase in the percentage of trainees with a minority ethnic background from 11 percent to 18 percent. The consortium's well established equal opportunities policy is inclusive and celebrates diversity.

15. There are secure and efficient systems for recording relevant information about trainees and ensuring that criminal checks have been undertaken. Trainees are required to study the National Strategies and complete a thorough self-audit of subject knowledge in English before starting the course. A short introductory reading list is also provided. Audits of subject knowledge in mathematics and science are done at the beginning of the course

16. The partnership arrangements support high quality training. Improvements since the previous inspection include the enhanced role of headteachers in monitoring the work of mentors and the introduction of lead mentors to manage the training in the school.

17. The highly efficient senior management group oversees the course delivery, as well as resolving staffing problems, providing pastoral care and ensuring that communication across the partnership is effective. The commitment of partnership headteachers to the management of the consortium, through the headteachers group, the consortium managers group and the various sub-committees also makes a substantial contribution to the effectiveness of the partnership.

18. It is not clear where the overall responsibility for the course structure and content resides. The consortium management group has responsibility for the governance of the provision and the validating university has the responsibility for ensuring that the academic requirements of the PGCE are met. Neither of these bodies recognised that the changes to the school placements implemented by the senior management group would require more careful monitoring to ensure that trainees had a suitable range of teaching experiences across the two key stages for which they are being training.

19. There has been some instability in staffing the centrally delivered training, which the senior management group has managed skilfully by drawing on personal contacts. More robust contingency plans are required to ensure that the high quality of the centrally taught elements of the course would be maintained if key tutors or members of the management group were unavailable.

20. Schools are selected to join the consortium only if they meet the rigorous criteria and agree the conditions defining their contribution to the training. Each school is regarded as a training school and the mentors' contract commits them to provide model lessons as well as supervising and supporting trainees. They follow a rigorous training programme and meet together regularly. The introduction of lead mentors has also helped to ensure that support for trainees is consistently of a high standard. Consortium headteachers also play a formal role in maintaining quality by interviewing mentors and completing a checklist of activities. Link tutors know what is required of them and they carry out their responsibilities to monitor training and trainees' progress assiduously. The role of the subject tutor in developing course documentation has been less well understood, in part because their main responsibilities lie elsewhere. However, they have always recognised their responsibility for providing high-quality training.

21. The lead school houses the consortium's training centre, which has a well resourced suite of teaching and ICT rooms that are used to good effect. The trainees' base room is imaginatively modelled on a school staff room so that trainees quickly become familiar with school routines. Trainees also have access to the local authority professional centre and Kingston University's library. When in schools, trainees have access to the resources they need. The consortium pays mentors

directly for the work they are contracted to undertake in recognition of their status as trainers. Overall, the funding is deployed well to support high quality training.

22. The policies on equality of opportunity and promotion of good race relations are strenuously monitored through link tutors and the management group. Managers know all the trainees well and monitor their experiences throughout the year. As a result they are aware of any concerns trainees may have about equality of opportunity. The consortium schools emphasise their own policies to trainees at the beginning of placements and link tutors, along with lead mentors, monitor the trainees' experiences in schools. Equal opportunities and good race relations are components of taught sessions on professional values and practice, highlighting the teacher's role in promoting good race relations.

23. The senior management group monitors the training in schools very thoroughly through link tutors' visits and the observations of training made by lead mentors and headteachers, as well as through the trainees' termly course evaluations. The school experience committee meets at least twice during each placement to consider the performance of trainees and mentors. The management group monitors the training provided centrally through direct observations of training sessions and trainees' evaluations.

24. Kingston University's internal and external assessors play a useful role in evaluating the quality of the training and outcomes by visiting and reporting on a sample of trainees. Any issues raised by assessors are discussed by the consortium management group and recommendations are included in the development plan. Link tutors, lead mentors and mentors all assess trainees' achievement against the Standards. In all, the final assessment procedures are extremely rigorous.

25. The close regular contact and good relationships between trainees and the senior management team make it easy for trainees to express any concerns about the quality of the training. More formal aspects include the regular meetings between trainees' representatives and the senior management group and the evaluations trainees complete at the end of each term. At the end of the course the quality assurance officer carries out a sophisticated exit evaluation process which results in grades for each component of the course and recommendations for improving the provision. The regular meetings of the senior management group, consortium heads and other committees lead to continual evaluation of the training. The consortium has a strong ethos of seeking ways to give trainees high quality, stimulating training and it responds to evaluations speedily and effectively. There are clear examples where the development plans have led to improvements in provision.