

# Loughborough University

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Loughborough  
Leicestershire  
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A secondary initial teacher training  
inspection report  
2007/08

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## Introduction

Loughborough University works in partnership with about 70 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses for the 11-16 age range, with post-16 enhancement, in design and technology, physical education, and science. At the time of the inspection there were 128 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

Standards: Grade 1

Quality of training: Grade 1

Management and quality assurance: Grade 1

## Key strengths

- the strong leadership of the programme and subject courses, which results in continuous improvement in their quality and exciting innovations in their content
- the outstanding attention paid to trainees' individual needs from the moment they are selected for the course
- the excellent documentation, which provides very effective support for trainees and school-based staff
- the very effective training in professional studies
- the very good coherence between the university and school-based training
- the comprehensive use of evaluation evidence in very detailed improvement plans
- the well-designed selection procedures, which secure the recruitment of very talented trainees.

## The quality of training

1. The quality of training is outstanding. This is achieved by the early identification of individual needs and an efficient, tight partnership, in which communication between the university and schools is very good. The result is training that focuses very closely on the needs of individual trainees, and which enables them to make early and rapid progress.
2. Schools are highly committed to training and staff carry out their roles conscientiously. The trainees are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of training and the support they receive. When they arrive in their first school they have already made considerable progress since their interview and their mentors know a great deal about them, for example through their individual profiles and initial targets. This enables school-based trainers to set individual programmes from the start.
3. The training programme is very carefully structured to enable the trainees to develop their teaching skills progressively. All have opportunities to teach pupils in both key stages as well as post-16 groups. The early attention given to some very important matters, such as consideration of all four strands in physical education and the teaching of pupils with particular needs, enables the trainees to incorporate these elements in their planning from the beginning of their classroom experience. The trainees are very well supported by both university and school staff and many benefit from the support provided by their partner on paired placements. Subject tutors, for example, make themselves available to trainees throughout their school placements. They publish the trainees' strengths on the university's virtual learning environment so that they can share their expertise with others.
4. The content of the training programme is planned with meticulous attention to detail to develop trainees' knowledge, understanding and skills. It is systematically matched to the Standards. There is very good coherence between the university and school-based phases. The university-based periods are used effectively, first to prepare for the initial school experience and later to consolidate the learning from that experience and to prepare for the second placement.
5. University tutors are highly committed to ensure the courses are up to date. This is evident in the high quality, thorough documentation; and their enthusiasm for innovation. The courses take good account of recent curriculum developments, while professional development and research contribute significantly to improvements in the training and in schools. Some schools, for example, have enhanced their own teaching by adapting an electronics project developed between the university and a multinational company.
6. The general professional studies course is a strength of the programme. Its value is well understood by trainees. Particularly effective is the use of trainee-led seminars, which enable trainees from different disciplines to learn together by teaching professional topics and by evaluating each other's work. School-based

professional studies is planned very effectively by ITT coordinators, who draw on the strengths of other teachers.

7. Most trainees understand the connections between the professional and subject training. The trainee progress record in physical education is a powerful tool for making coherence explicit; it links very effectively a review of trainees' progress in professional and subject training with their weekly targets.

8. Assessment contributes well to training. Assignments are purposeful and rigorously marked. Targets, which are set frequently, are precise and are regularly followed up. Trainees produce reflective self evaluations and receive constructive reviews of their progress. Their self assessment and the school's report at the end of the first placement are generally clear and evaluative. Systems for sharing information about trainees between their placement schools are very good. As a result, trainees and mentors know very clearly their key training needs in the second placement.

9. Assessment procedures are generally well understood. Trainees and mentors record evidence to demonstrate achievement of each Standard but a small minority do not understand the status or purpose of the document and several do not fully appreciate the quality of evidence needed to demonstrate the achievement of a Standard. The partnership is aware of this and has produced guidance to improve understanding.

## Management and quality assurance

10. Selection procedures are very effective. Recruitment in physical education and science is close to target. An astute change since the last inspection is the introduction of a waiting list so that candidates who withdraw before enrolment are replaced without loss of quality. A good range of challenging activities is used to identify suitable candidates, many of whom are of a very high calibre. The great majority of successful trainees proceed to teaching posts or further study. Mentors contribute to the process by agreeing the selection criteria and tasks and, in the majority of cases, interviews involve a subject mentor.

11. Individual targets, based on candidates' subject knowledge and experience, are identified and recorded at interview along with strategies for meeting them. A large number of trainees attend booster courses, for example, which prepare them very well for the start of the course.

12. The high quality of the training is due to very good leadership at programme and subject level. In particular, the relentless drive to keep the courses up to date through research-based innovation has helped to improve their quality since the last inspection. In physical education, for example, this is reflected in many excellent improvements to the training, such as the use of video to analyse trainees' teaching. Initiatives based on current research have resulted in improvements in the course

content and also in the curriculum of partner schools; some, for example, have benefited from the use of new materials and technologies in science and design and technology. University tutors meet regularly under the leadership of the programme director to share good practice and to establish a consistent approach to training which reflects the best qualities of all three courses while respecting their essential differences.

13. There is a good level of involvement of schools in the management of the programme and in the design and delivery of the courses. Each subject has an advisory group which enables mentors to contribute to improving the course. The physical education group has considerable responsibilities which include support for new mentors, moderation of assessment, and dealing with departments causing concern.

14. Schools are good venues for training. The partnership manager uses a detailed profile of each school, which includes details such as any distinctive features and the number of pupils who have English as an additional language, to place trainees in schools that match their needs. Over the year trainees teach the full age and ability range, despite the varying age groups which partnership schools serve. Subject departments are strong and well resourced and provide mentors whose commitment is reflected in the many hours of support they give their trainees.

15. School-based trainers carry out their responsibilities well because of the very good training and support they receive. In particular, the excellent documentation makes it very clear how to carry out their roles. The partnership handbook, for example, is a well-organised, easy-to-read document which contains a comprehensive range of highly useful information and guidance. Staff feel particularly well supported by its calendar of action points and the reflections by former trainees on good mentoring. Training for mentors and ITT coordinators deals with pertinent issues. The three yearly sessions for mentors are very well attended; this is achieved partly because the meetings are also used to introduce mentors to their trainees. Training for new mentors and new ITT coordinators cover important topics such as observing lessons and giving feedback. The regular visits to schools by visiting tutors are supplemented by additional visits, sometimes by other subject mentors, where there is a particular need. A strength of the partnership is the highly effective communications between the schools and the university; teachers are quickly able to contact relevant staff at the university and to get a swift answer to queries and concerns.

16. Quality assurance procedures are good with several very good features. They include a very good range of methods for monitoring the school-based training. A questionnaire, completed at the end of each placement by trainees, mentors, ITT coordinators and visiting tutors, enables managers to get a clear view of the school-based training from four perspectives. Visiting tutors make regular checks that trainees receive their entitlement, and provide feedback to managers on the quality of school-based work. When, rarely, the training falls short of requirements managers intervene effectively. A key element of quality assurance has been the development of the role of the ITT coordinators, whose primary responsibility is now

the monitoring of school-based training. Assisted by some excellent guidance, they have a good understanding of how to carry out this part of their role.

17. The comprehensive mechanisms for evaluating the training provide managers with an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Trainees have many formal and informal means of expressing their views on all elements of the course and their considered opinions lead to significant improvements. Previous criticism of duplication in three of the assignments, for example, has led to a more streamlined approach. External examiners provide well-substantiated verification of the accuracy of final assessment, but not all provide useful advice in their formal reports to subject leaders on how to improve their courses. Data from the evaluation forms are carefully analysed and permit comparisons to be made between the three subjects.

18. The response to internal and external evaluation is excellent. The thoroughly detailed programme and subject improvement plans explicitly address all of the major issues from each source, including the last inspection report and a variety of benchmarking data. The plan is extremely honest about any shortcomings. The resulting actions have had a beneficial effect on training and on management; they have been the basis of improvements in the professional studies course, for example, and in the way subject leaders respond to external examiners' reports.