

**Secondary Initial Teacher Training  
Partnership based on**

**Nottingham Trent University**

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**A short inspection report on  
2005/06**

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## Introduction

The Nottingham Trent University works in partnership with 117 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT). It offers programmes in business education, design and technology, English, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, music and science leading to PGCE. All programmes provide training for teaching the 11-18 age range, with the exception of maths, which offers training in both the 11-16 and 11-18 age range. At the time of the inspection there were 172 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 management of the training programme
- the shared drive for continuous improvement
- the coherence between all elements of the training programme
- the transition arrangements from first to second school placements
- the quality of training for all school-based trainers
- communication throughout the partnership.

## **Points for action**

- improving attendance at mentor meetings.

## **Points for consideration**

- ensuring that all trainees' needs are identified at the onset in sufficient detail to inform the first stages of the training
- tailoring the school-based EPS programme in the second placement so that it better meets trainees' needs
- improving monitoring systems to ensure that quality as well as entitlement is monitored
- increasing the involvement of schools in recruitment and selection.

## The quality of training

1. The training programmes are designed well to ensure that trainees meet the Standards. Serial school visits followed by block experiences are effective in introducing trainees gradually to independent teaching. The school experiences combine well to provide trainees with suitable opportunities to teach and assess pupils of differing abilities across the full age range for which they are being trained. Trainees usefully undertake a primary placement at the start of the course, but it is too early for many trainees to develop an understanding of progression from Key Stage 2. Assignments are integrated well into the training and effectively exploit school-based opportunities for action research.

2. The coherence between the different elements of the centre-based training is a strength. The fact that each theme introduced in the education and professional studies (EPS) programme is then developed by subject tutors in the context of the subject contributes to the value that trainees place on centre-based training. This coherence is then extended into the school-based subject training as topics are revisited within the context of the placement schools. Particularly effective guidance for school-based trainers is provided in English and business education. All trainees receive a comprehensive EPS programme in their placement school although not all schools used for the second placement tailor their programmes to meet trainees' needs fully.

3. The content of the programme is relevant and comprehensive and centre-based subject trainers integrate national developments into their training well. The strand leader for mathematics, for example, makes effective use of her good knowledge of national initiatives. Recent professional development for centre-based trainers about *Every Child Matters* reflects an accurate awareness of the need to update content in line with what is happening in schools and to embed such developments into their planning. There are innovative approaches to developing training in some subjects. In music, for example, a collaborative project with the local authority contributes to the range of subject training. In business education an enterprise initiative has been established with the support of a specialist business and enterprise college and enterprise tasks enrich the content of the training.

4. The Standards are integrated very effectively into all elements of the training. Consequently, trainees and all trainers make frequent and confident reference to the Standards and can provide appropriate evidence of their progress towards them. School-based trainers have a high level of understanding of the need to provide good opportunities for trainees to achieve the Standards and adapt their programmes accordingly.

5. Overall, the quality of training is good. Sessions are varied, relevant and engage trainees well. In centre-based sessions in English and science particularly effective use is made of modelling of different teaching and learning approaches which trainees might adopt in their own practice. A range of visiting speakers

contributes well to the variety of centre-based EPS training. Subject training is also enhanced and extended by external support. In English, for example, trainees work with a teacher poet and 'Theatre in Education.' Resources, including the learning environment at the university are good. Design and technology trainees have good access to specialist computer-aided design and manufacture tools and this prepares them well for working with this technology in schools. The virtual learning portal is developing as an important resource and trainees in English and business education are using it well to share ideas.

6. The level of on-going support for trainees is high. They benefit from early very well structured training in how to observe experienced teachers. Feedback on their own teaching is regular, focused and constructive. Oral and written feedback are referenced well to the Standards.

7. There are secure procedures for identifying trainees' subject knowledge needs through the pre-training action plan. Whilst these plans identify trainees' subject training needs clearly and inform training well, they do not always reflect trainees' broader strengths and weaknesses in sufficient detail. This can lead to less focused training in the early stages of the first school placement.

8. Procedures for assessing trainees against the Standards and for moderating assessments and assignments are good. The progress of trainees is regularly monitored throughout the programme. The training profile shows how these regular reviews inform target setting and action planning. This is particularly secure at the start of the second placement when mentors build well on the first summative report and make good use of the opportunity to meet the trainee prior to the start of the placement. The majority of mentors use the grading system well although a minority lack confidence in the use of the full range of grades. Joint observation between mentor and subject tutor provide good opportunities for observers to standardise their judgments on the trainee's teaching.

## **Management and quality assurance**

9. Selection procedures are designed well to meet the Requirements. The whole process, from initial application to preparing for the interview is supported well by a range of detailed and helpful documentation for both trainees and interviewers. Interview tasks probe the potential trainees' commitment and knowledge of educational issues well. There is also a range of well-designed subject-specific tasks to assess the range of trainees' subject knowledge at interview. Interviewing panels have now been strengthened by representation from partnership schools.

10. Strenuous efforts have been made to increase the number of trainees from minority ethnic groups. The percentage has improved over the last three years and the secondary programme exceeded its target for this cohort. There are effective procedures for monitoring the policies for equality of opportunity and race relations

with regards to recruitment and selection. The race equality group which was newly established at the time of the last inspection has had a positive impact in terms of a raised level of awareness. All statutory requirements are met.

11. The withdrawal rate this year is higher than usual. The analysis of the completed exit questionnaires does not make clear the reasons for this. The partnership is aware of the need to make its exit documentation more probing. A good number of trainees is successful in obtaining teaching posts and many trainees are employed by partnership schools.

12. The programme is well managed and schools show a good level of confidence in the management. The programme leader has a good overview of the provision and acts quickly when any areas of weakness are identified. The partnership has responded well to the points for action and consideration of the last inspection report; for example, all subjects now have good individualised pre-programme preparation. The programme manager and the partnership manager have a very good knowledge of the schools in the partnership and the quality of the placements is well reviewed at the end of the year. Strand leaders also provide very good leadership and all managers share a drive for continuous improvement. Strand leaders meet regularly. However, there is scope for the central training team to share best practice further in order to achieve the high quality training to which they aspire.

13. School placements provide contrasting and complementary experiences and the vast majority of schools take great care in choosing subject areas where they have confidence in the capacity to mentor trainees. The second placement is particularly well chosen and the transition between the two phases is very well managed. A minority of trainees, however, did not have a good training experience in their first school where mentors were not well enough prepared for them.

14. Communication throughout the partnership is very good. Good use is made of electronic and paper communication and there is a termly informative newsletter. The management team is very well supported by efficient and effective administrative support. Documentation is well organised, clear and provides a good level of guidance for mentors as they work with and assess trainees. The roles and responsibilities of all members of the partnership are explicit in all the handbooks and understood well by all.

15. There is very good mentor training for both new and experienced mentors. There are also good opportunities for professional development. Evaluations completed by those that attend indicate a high level of satisfaction in the mentor training and acknowledge the impact of that training on their work. However, despite the high quality of the training, attendance is not high. The university ensures that schools do not miss vital information by providing follow-up visits and high quality supporting documentation but mentors are missing valuable opportunities to learn from others and improve their practice.

16. Centre-based trainers are well prepared for their various roles and have good access to additional professional development should they need it. There is an appropriate level of resources and these are deployed fairly to ensure trainees are supported in school placements as well as in their central training.

17. The partnership employs a good range of measures to monitor provision. Informal networks are used well to pass on information and good use is made of strand leaders and subject tutors when they visit schools to assure the quality of subject feedback and reliability of assessment. Link tutors play a key role in monitoring school provision as a whole. They make well-timed visits to schools and assess whether trainees are receiving their entitlement, for example to mentor sessions. This process is used well to ensure that information is shared and that strand leaders are alerted to potential problems. Link tutors do not have the role of following up on issues or of improving the quality of school-based training.

18. Assessment procedures are monitored well by the university. Centrally held records of formal lesson observations and interim reports provide easily accessed evidence of trainees' progress against the standards. Judgements are moderated effectively within the partnership by means of joint observations between subject tutors and mentors. External moderation is provided by subject-specific external moderators whose reports are incorporated well into improvement planning.

19. The university reacts quickly to trainees' concerns and wherever possible, and when appropriate, will make improvements. There are also good formal opportunities to evaluate its provision. There is a comprehensive evaluation of the trainees' placement experiences. This provides a clear picture of relative strengths and weaknesses across the partnership but it does not provide information to individual schools on their particular strengths and areas for development.

20. There is a very effective and thorough action planning process which is linked to the university procedures. The programme and subject action plans make good use of a wide range of data and outcomes of evaluations and set specific targets which are regularly reviewed and evaluated in terms of the impact on training.