

**Secondary Initial Teacher Training  
Partnership based on**

**The University of Hertfordshire**

**De Havilland Campus  
Hatfield  
Hertfordshire  
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**A short inspection report 2005/06**

**Managing Inspector:  
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## Introduction

The University of Hertfordshire works in partnership with 60 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training courses. It offers courses in art, business studies, English, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. All courses provide training for teaching the 11-18 age range, with the exception of business education, which is 14-19. At the time of the inspection there were 115 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 well-structured training programmes, with good coherence between the different elements
- the stimulating and up-to-date content of subject programmes, with good involvement of a wide range of external experts and school-based partnership staff
- the content and quality of the generic teaching and learning programme
- the accurate and consistent monitoring of trainees' progress towards meeting the Standards
- a strong commitment to the partnership from all involved.

## **Points for action**

- developing greater consistency in the quality of target setting to support trainees' progress.

## **Points for consideration**

- developing further the quality of improvement planning at subject level, taking into account the views of school-based subject staff
- clarifying the roles of link tutors and professional mentors and developing their responsibility for quality assurance
- developing resources to support the teaching of business studies
- linking more closely the information gathered at interviews to the knowledge and skills audits and sharing this systematically with first placement mentors.

## The quality of training

1. The structure and content of the PGCE programme are well designed to meet the Requirements, ensuring that trainees make good progress towards meeting the Standards. The programme covers national initiatives and strategies effectively. Subject programmes are progressively sequenced and they cover the requirements of each subject well. Training programmes are enriched by visits from a wide range of external expert speakers and visits to places of special educational interest. These are significant strengths of the provision. A practical dimension to the course is provided through the secondment of experienced practitioners from schools as teacher tutors in all subjects and, in addition, the involvement of an artist-in-residence in art and visits by well-known children's authors in English respectively.
2. The allocation of school placements is well managed, with the two secondary schools carefully chosen to ensure that trainees have the necessary range of experiences for the 11–18 age range and, in business studies, the 14-19 age range. A good balance is struck between the various course components, and the programme provides a coherent set of training experiences. The teaching and learning (general professional) component covers an appropriate range of generic educational topics. These are reinforced through subject studies sessions, the trainees' experience in two secondary schools, and the well focused three-day visits to a primary and a special school.
3. Training is designed to meet the diverse individual needs of trainees effectively. The provision of the part-time PGCE course in four subjects is a good example of this. Resources generally support trainees' development well although trainees in business studies lack access to a sufficiently wide range of subject-related pedagogic material.
4. The central teaching and learning course prepares trainees well for teaching in secondary schools. Subject studies are well taught and meet the detailed requirements of particular subjects across the 11–18 spectrum. School-based training is of good quality overall and time is used well to provide a balanced range of experiences.
5. The process for meeting the individual needs of trainees begins at the selection interview when a profile of experience and needs emerges. Professional and subject mentors from placement schools sometimes work with subject tutors on the interview panels to provide an additional view of applicants' suitability, their strengths and areas for development. However, in occasional cases, information from interviews is not always acted upon directly by trainers. Information is not always systematically shared with school-based mentors. As a consequence, some early opportunities for supporting trainees are lost. Knowledge and skills subject audits and information and communication technology (ICT) audits provide important additional information on trainees' needs once they arrive at the

university. These are very effective mechanisms for meeting individual needs, when shared systematically with all involved in training.

6. There are clear procedures for assessing trainees' progress as they work towards meeting the Standards. These are understood well by trainees, professional tutors and mentors. The procedures are systematic, comprehensive and rigorous and are designed to ensure that assessments are accurate. The evidence required for the award of qualified teacher status is shared clearly from the outset and trainees are helped to collect, organise and present the evidence effectively. The trainees' progress is reviewed regularly by mentors and link tutors; systems for monitoring trainees' progress in both the first and second placement are generally secure.

7. Assessment is successful in the way it links theory with professional practice through the assignments. These assignments are appropriate and contribute well to trainees' development over the course. Particular strengths of the assessment process lie in the use of joint lesson observations by the subject tutor and the mentor, and in the formal meeting towards the end of the course when each trainee presents their completed portfolio to their mentor and link tutor.

8. Individual target setting is a well established feature of the weekly experience of trainees. However, the extent to which targets are focused and useful is variable. In lesson observation forms most targets are carried forward to subsequent lessons and the impact of strategies to deal with these is evaluated by the next observer. In some cases, however, there is a lack of continuity and it is unclear whether weaknesses have been addressed. Some targets given in the end-of-placement reports and in formative feedback on the first assignment are not explicitly defined.

## **Management and quality assurance**

9. The provider's selection procedures are effective and result in the recruitment of good quality trainees. Basic information about the course on the university web site and in the prospectus is clear and references to the university's equal opportunities and race equality policies feature on all key marketing and recruitment material. Selection data are monitored carefully. The university's efforts to widen participation have been successful, with good recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of mature trainees, particularly on the part-time PGCE courses. Planned pen-portraits for the web site are designed to represent more fully the rich diversity of the student body.

10. Interviews are rigorous and evidence is recorded fully by specialist subject tutors. In some subjects, for example English, school-based colleagues are involved, but not systematically across all programmes. Further improvements to interview procedures are already underway for 2006/07 candidates; for example a part-time

school-based colleague has been engaged for all main interview days to give a consistent external perspective.

11. The audit document, which trainees take away from interview to complete prior to enrolment, constitutes a potential strength of the selection process. It provides detailed and helpful generic guidance for pre-course preparation, although it is not currently individualised. Subject tutors use the audit well at the induction phase of the course. However, it is not used with mentors systematically enough on the first placement. Information gathered at interview is not always used effectively in the early weeks of the course, resulting in some missed opportunities for supporting weaker trainees.

12. The management of the partnership works well at both strategic and operational levels, with the result that all schools, including those new to the partnership, show a high degree of commitment to the course. The local authority for the majority of partnership schools is well represented on the steering group for the school of education. Responding to the findings of the previous inspection report, the provider has increased the active involvement of partnership schools in the further development of the programme. For example, there is now strong headteacher representation on the steering group, teacher tutors are seconded part-time to support the subject tutors in delivering central training, and several schools now host sessions for groups of trainees. Two new initiatives have already begun to have an impact upon schools: the development of mentor accreditation and the expansion of the partnership web site. The work of the university's partnership tutor has been extended to include the secondary PGCE course; this has had a very positive effect on developing a closer relationship with schools. Details of roles and responsibilities are clearly set out in partnership documentation. There is, however, some confusion amongst school-based staff about the role of the link tutor.

13. The provider supports the continuing professional development of its trainers well. Subject tutors are very knowledgeable experts in their field. They are well supported by teacher tutors, who bring current experience in schools to the central training programme. A strong feature of management is the induction of new colleagues. Periodic mentor sessions provide good training opportunities for school-based staff and payment made to schools for key meetings fosters good attendance.

14. Resources are generally of a very high quality. Facilities for ICT are good and improving, for example with the phased introduction of interactive whiteboards for training rooms. The university's learning resource centre provides very good facilities, although resources to support the teaching of business studies are underdeveloped. The university intranet site is well managed and provides trainees with good access to course materials. Good progress has been made in the use of the partnership web site to share essential information with schools.

15. Good practice in equality issues underpins all aspects of the programme, with policies and data carefully monitored and analysed. The central training course prepares trainees very well for promoting good race relations in their future careers, and placement schools provide very good environments for them to develop their

awareness and skills further. However, school-based trainers are not systematically informed of the good university developments in this area.

16. Central training programmes are monitored through a wide range of mechanisms; for example, trainees evaluate each module of their course through questionnaires, which are very carefully analysed and translate rapidly into action. Trainees from each subject area elect representatives to the programme committee, where their views are taken seriously and lead directly to action by programme managers.

17. Subject tutors monitor the work of their teacher tutor colleagues and are also involved in peer assessment across subjects. They also monitor the work of mentors in schools, undertaking joint observations and prioritising sessions with new mentors. Link tutors' visits ensure that school-based programmes meet the partnership's requirements. Whilst the quality of school-based mentoring is generally high, there is some variation between schools and subjects within schools. Visits by link tutors provide a potentially good quality assurance mechanism, but greater clarity about their role and responsibilities is needed to ensure optimum effectiveness. Similarly, the quality assurance role of the professional mentor has not been developed to ensure that all mentors fulfil basic requirements to the high standards required by the university.

18. Mentors are given the opportunity to evaluate, and contribute to, the course through regular meetings. Professional mentors attend an annual conference towards the end of the academic year where their views on the future direction of the course are sought. There is, however, currently no systematic written survey to gain views of all school-based staff at the end of placements.

19. The monitoring of trainees' progress is rigorous and all trainers share a good understanding of the course assessment procedures. Joint observation between subject tutors and mentors during the two placements provide good internal moderation opportunities and the final *viva voce*, where a trainee presents their portfolio to the link tutor and mentor, is a good mechanism for moderation.

20. The PGCE management team is accountable through the university's rigorous quality assurance procedures and all subject leaders contribute annually to the programme review, which is scrutinised at school, faculty and university levels. The course is this year undergoing a periodic review, during which external consultants have reported on all aspects of the course. Subject-specialist external examiners complete annual reports, which result in action plans. Whilst subject tutors take good account of all evaluation findings, formal action planning at subject level lacks detail in target setting for improvement.