

**Secondary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on
North East Essex Coastal Confederation ITT**

**Clacton County High School
Walton Road
Clacton on Sea
Essex
CO15 6DZ**

**A short inspection report
2005/06**

**Managing Inspector:
Anne Wellham HMI**

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Introduction

The North East Coastal Confederation works in partnership with six schools to provide secondary initial teacher training courses leading to PGCE 11-18. It offers training in English, history, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics and science. At the time of the inspection there were 13 trainees on the secondary course.

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 1

The overall quality of the training is at least good.
The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- The individualised training programmes that address trainees' needs very well
- The good use of ICT to enhance the teaching and learning strategies of trainees
- The balance of high expectations and rigorous assessment of trainees' performance with a high level of care and support
- The strong collaborative nature of the partnership with schools and the commitment of all partners to sustain and improve provision
- The good strategic planning that identifies and addresses key issues for future development.

Points for consideration

- Agreeing a more systematic approach to assess trainees' readiness for independent teaching during the collaborative phase
- Encouraging trainees to provide more sharply focused, reflective evaluations of their performance.

The quality of training

1. The structure and content of the programme are very well planned to ensure that trainees meet the Standards. Trainees are provided with placements which ensure a good breadth and balance of experiences. The PGCE professional studies programme continues to improve, using expert and experienced teachers effectively to develop trainees' skills in topics such as behaviour management and the planning of sequences of lessons. Trainees receive good training in the use of ICT as a tool to engage the pupils in learning, including the use of digital media. Subject programmes provide a good balance between the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and address current developments extremely well; for example, trainees in science are aware of imminent changes in the GCSE syllabuses.
2. The trainees understand very clearly how the elements of the training programme combine. The coherence of the course is strong, based on clear connections between professional and subject studies programmes with linked learning activities for trainees to pursue in their school placements. For example, in mathematics, trainees are required to observe and evaluate two lessons in which pupils with challenging behaviour are identified. The professional development journal provides a useful record of what the trainees are learning. However, some trainees' records are insufficiently focused and evaluative.
3. Recent developments in training have placed a stronger emphasis on the planning of lessons and sequences of lessons to meet the individual needs of pupils. Trainees have a good awareness of differentiation, but occasionally their evaluations of the lessons that they have taught lack detail or depth. The programme manager is developing strategies to encourage trainees to begin independent teaching earlier during the collaborative phase in the autumn term. There is scope for a more systematic approach to identifying trainees' readiness to teach independently.
4. The highly individualised training programmes respond very well to trainees' needs. The subject knowledge audit provides an effective basis for establishing the strengths and needs of individual trainees. This is regularly monitored to ensure areas for development are addressed. For example, the first assignment in the English course enabled a trainee to plan a series of lessons based upon diverse cultures as a result of identifying a need through the subject audit. Weekly meetings with subject leaders or mentors draw well upon lesson observations and the professional development journal to provide focused targets which address the needs of individual trainees. The trainees' entitlement includes professional development experiences. These are well used both to strengthen trainees' knowledge in other subjects and to explore areas of potential career progression, such as involvement in a school's pastoral work.
5. A significant number of the trainees take up their first teaching appointment in the confederation's schools. The need for partner schools to appoint highly effective and well prepared professionals reinforces the high expectations of trainees and the rigorous assessment of their performance. This is balanced with a commitment to

provide a high level of care and support. A recent innovation is the appointment of a professional tutor who visits trainees regularly and provides confidential help. Subject leaders, school co-ordinators and the programme manager all have a thorough knowledge of individual trainees' circumstances and contribute well to their progress.

6. The assessment of trainees' achievements against the Standards is very well staged throughout the course. The formative assessment process works well and recognises those who are exceeding expectations, as well as those in need of additional support. The formal observations of teaching include subject leaders or mentors, school coordinators and the programme manager. These ensure that assessments are moderated and rigorous. Additionally, joint observations regularly occur to maintain consistency of judgements. Written assignments are thoroughly assessed and provide good evidence of the trainees' progress towards the Standards.

Management and quality assurance

7. Selection procedures are very good. Clear and accurate information about the training programme is provided for prospective applicants and very good use is made of the web site. The information is clearly presented and the site is easy to navigate. Training routes are clearly identified and appropriate links are made to other sources of information including descriptions of all partnership schools, with links to their web sites and their most recent Ofsted report. This provides prospective trainees with very good information about the partnership schools. The web site uses images of minority ethnic trainees and former trainees from under-represented groups positively to promote their recruitment and successfully meet their target.

8. Recruitment and retention are high priorities for the confederation as a number of trainees leave part-way through the course, for a variety of reasons. It is successfully broadening its recruitment and retention strategy to publicise and raise the profile of its work more widely. A wide range of imaginative strategies has been developed to support existing practice. A very clear action plan for recruitment identifies a wide and varied programme of activity with universities, the media and local and county shows to raise its profile even further and promote its work. These activities have had a good impact, particularly in the recruitment of trainees from Ireland, although recruitment in shortage subjects is below target.

9. In an effort to reduce the withdrawal rate, the confederation, in collaboration with the Training and Development Agency, is providing opportunities for undergraduates to have 10 or 20 days 'taster sessions' in the partner schools prior to application to increase prospective trainees' knowledge, and help them to understand the demands of the role.

10. Schools are actively involved in the selection of trainees and co-ordinators and subject leaders are present at all interviews. The application and interview process is used rigorously and effectively to filter out unsuitable applicants at an early stage. Once a place has been offered, a very high level of individual support is provided throughout the course. The self-audit of trainees' individual skills, knowledge and experience is used effectively to plan programmes which are tailored to meet individual needs.

11. The very high level of collaboration between partnership schools results in a high degree of consistent and coherent practice and ensures the good quality of the training. The training programme is firmly embedded within the five participating schools and viewed by headteachers as a positive contribution to recruitment, continuing professional development and school improvement. The frequency and efficiency of communication between those involved in the training is a strong feature of the partnership. The headteachers and the programme manager form the steering committee and provide very effective strategic leadership. Their clear vision for improvement is shared at all levels.

12. The agreement between the partner schools is well established and their mutual responsibilities are clearly understood. All partners have a very good understanding of their role and discharge their responsibilities very effectively. The confederation pays very good attention to training and professional development. A strong commitment is made through funding the attendance of all school-based trainers at coordinators' and subject leaders' meetings that take place regularly in school time. Consequently, all trainers attend and are highly committed to developing their role. This provides excellent professional development. Particularly good consideration is given to succession planning with trainers in a minor subject leader role having the opportunity to shadow more experienced major subject leaders.

13. The programme manager, co-ordinators and subject leaders monitor and assure the quality of the training programmes closely. They do this through regular contact with trainers and trainees, trainees' evaluations, joint observations of trainees' teaching, scrutiny of records of meetings and trainees' personal development journals. They are alert to and respond quickly to any weaknesses in the training. Managers have introduced observations of training sessions and mentoring tutorials as an additional means of quality assurance. A written record is shared with trainers. This is excellent practice, which would now benefit from the development of a more consistent approach to setting targets.

14. The assessment process is effectively moderated. Joint observation by co-ordinators and subject leaders is used to moderate judgements and all assignments are second marked and moderated at subject leader meetings. The regular meetings of co-ordinators and subject leaders are used well to compare judgements and track the progress of individual trainees. External examiners fulfil their responsibilities and moderate judgements accurately. They also provide advice and support, which the provider is quick to act upon.

15. Improvement planning is of very good quality. The confederation responds efficiently to feedback from trainees' evaluations and from internal quality assurance. Self-evaluation is rigorous, comprehensive and accurate, and is used to compile a thorough annual self-evaluation and review report. This is used to identify strengths and the priorities for further development. For example, in order to retain more trainees, the confederation has appointed a part-time professional tutor who provides additional pastoral support and is engaged in long-term planning to improve recruitment and retention.