

Primary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on

Bradford College

Great Horton Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
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A full inspection report
2005/06

Managing Inspector:
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Introduction

Bradford College works in partnership with around 250 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers both postgraduate (PGCE) and undergraduate courses (BA QTS) that cover the 3-7 or 5-11 age ranges. At the time of the inspection there were 70 postgraduate trainees and 231 undergraduate trainees, 43 of whom were in their final year of training.

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 full 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

Standards achieved by the trainees: Grade 2

Quality of training: Grade 2

Management and quality assurance: Grade 2

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- the quality of trainees' planning and teaching, their demonstration of effective class management skills and their good attitudes to professional development
- the good quality of college- and school-based training; it is particularly successful in responding to individual needs and circumstances
- the well-structured courses with professional studies at their core
- the well managed partnership so that good quality training in both college and schools is promoted; relationships between partners are of a high order
- the very effective mentor training
- the college's effectiveness in improving provision.

Points for action

- ensuring that there is consistency in trainees' ability to make appropriate provision for different groups of pupils, especially the more able and those whose first language is not English
- improving postgraduate trainees' subject knowledge in science and their use of assessment information in planning pupils' work.

Points for consideration

- making more explicit the links between the Standards, and training sessions and assignments
- increasing the challenge in college-based training sessions
- ensuring that there is more effective support for those trainees whose use of standard English is not consistent.

Standards achieved by trainees

1. Trainees demonstrate good attitudes to their professional development and are very willing to learn from advice and support. They create good action plans to improve their teaching skills. They are aware of the learning needs of different groups of pupils and are committed to raising their achievement. However, not all of them are sufficiently skilled at making the right provision for the most able pupils. Nevertheless, their motivation to develop as teachers is high and they will go out of their way to add to their professional development. They are very willing to contribute to the wider life of their schools; for instance, they attend school staff meetings and contribute to dramatic productions. Their relationships with school staff are of a high order and they are valued by staff as professional colleagues.
2. Most trainees evaluate their teaching well, identifying strengths and weaknesses and setting targets for improving their performance. However, a minority of these targets are too general and do not focus sufficiently on the subject content of the lesson or on how well pupils are learning. Trainees also learn from the feedback they receive from written assignments and school-based tasks and take steps to use the school experience to address areas of identified weakness.
3. Trainees have a good knowledge of the primary curriculum and of how pupils learn. They show good understanding of the key stages before and after those for which they are being trained. They are confident in delivering the Primary National Strategy but a small number of undergraduate trainees do not model accurate standard English in their teaching. Those trainees following the early primary course have a good understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and plan their lessons to take account of the early learning goals.
4. Trainees' subject knowledge in the core subjects is good overall. However, postgraduate trainees' knowledge of the science curriculum is more variable; a significant minority has insufficient understanding of key ideas, such as the classification of living things. Trainees use information and communication technology (ICT) well in their teaching. They are skilled in the use of interactive whiteboards to promote learning in other subjects. In one Year 2 science lesson, a digital microscope was used very effectively to investigate the diet of owls. Trainees' knowledge of the foundation subjects is good and they take steps to research areas in which they are less confident.
5. There is good understanding of the wider requirements relating to teaching. Trainees deliver lessons in personal, social and health education with confidence and are able to use a range of strategies to promote good behaviour. They are well aware of issues relating to health and safety, including those related to school visits. Some trainees have taken significant responsibility for these and show very good knowledge of how to conduct risk assessments. Knowledge about special educational needs provision is satisfactory. The weakest area of professional knowledge relates to the support for pupils with English as an additional language.

More than half the trainees seen by inspectors were unsure about how to make good provision for such pupils.

6. Trainees teach well and many benefit from planning alongside other teachers. Their planning is of high quality and very detailed. They set clear learning objectives for lessons but often miss out on identifying the specific learning needs that more able pupils require to achieve well. They use a good range of strategies to help pupils learn, and include in their lessons whole class, group and individual elements. Questioning strategies are used well to promote thinking, although there is a tendency to spend too much time on these. Nevertheless, they are good at involving a wide range of pupils in contributing ideas and suggestions. 'Talking partners' is an effectively used strategy that engages all pupils in answering questions. Trainees use resources well, including other adults, and maintain a good pace to lessons.

7. Trainees have a good awareness of the range of achievements in their classes. They use a range of methods to check how well pupils progress and use this information to keep records of progress, mostly carried out through a small sample of pupils. However, postgraduate trainees make insufficient use of this information in planning further work for pupils. Trainees are confident in assessing pupils' attainment against National Curriculum level descriptions.

8. The way in which trainees manage their classes is a particular strength. They demonstrate very good relationships with pupils and are enthusiastic about their teaching. Praise is used effectively to motivate pupils and trainees ensure that positive feedback is given to them. Expectations of behaviour are high and there is good adherence to schools' discipline and health and safety policies. Trainees generally ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. However, this is not fully successful as they are not consistently meeting the needs of pupils at both ends of the ability range, especially the upper end.

The quality of training

9. The quality of training has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall although that in science is not as strong as it was because of tutor changes. Recent additions to staffing in this subject have strengthened primary expertise. The college has rightly identified several strengths in its self evaluation.

10. Both the postgraduate and undergraduate courses are well structured and their content is effectively designed to ensure that trainees meet the Standards. Revisions to both training routes have ensured more coherence between college- and school-based training, especially in the courses for English, mathematics and ICT. Professional studies modules are at the core of both routes. Subject courses not only develop the trainees' subject knowledge but also their ability to put theory into practice. The development of subject knowledge in literacy and numeracy is particularly strong. Additional aspects strengthen the quality of the provision,

particularly in meeting the Standards in professional values and practice. The special placement in Year 3, the working field trips for PGCE trainees and the additional courses in physical education are all good examples of the college's success in meeting one of its key aims, that of providing 'a unique experience' for its trainees.

11. There is a clear, logical progression in both training routes from year to year with increasing intellectual challenge. The focus on developing critical, reflective practitioners in the postgraduate course is also evident in the later stages of the undergraduate course. There is a clear focus on all three key stages of primary education and also frequent mention of practice at Key Stage 3 for those trainees specialising in teaching pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Trainees on both routes who opt to specialise in the Foundation Stage gain a good overview of effective practice. ICT is threaded into all the modules with the focus on its use rather than developing the trainees' skills. This is a sensible change given the increased level of ICT competence of the trainees when they begin their training.

12. There is good coverage of several strands across subjects, such as ethnic diversity and pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. However, provision for trainees to learn about how to support and assess pupils with English as an additional language is not entirely effective because some trainees lack confidence and knowledge in this area. Feedback from trainers, trainees, mentors and class teachers has resulted in beneficial changes in course content, timings, accommodation and resources. While reducing the number of school-based tasks, the college has retained those valued by external examiners and schools alike, most notably the compilation of a child study by postgraduate trainees.

13. The overall quality of training in both college and schools is good. There are outstanding college-based sessions in English, mathematics and the foundation subjects. The quality is more variable in ICT but with some good sessions, and satisfactory in science because changes in staffing have narrowed expertise in primary practice. This staffing issue is now resolved. Recent appointments elsewhere have strengthened the pool of recent and relevant teaching experience, especially in the early years of schooling.

14. In most training sessions there is a purposeful atmosphere. The objectives are clear and the tutors keep up a lively pace, drawing in the trainees and developing their ideas. They model good primary practice and skilfully weave in advice on the effectiveness of different teaching techniques. Trainees respond very positively but their open acceptance masks less effective aspects of the training. Although sessions are well planned and prepared, some are not sufficiently challenging. In addition, the training does not ensure that all trainees can use standard English consistently.

15. Trainees are highly complimentary about the courses. One trainee commented that the tutors' enthusiasm comes through and is contagious. Trainees find the theory hard but are making good use of material on the college intranet to prepare and follow up training sessions. Trainers are using this facility to publicise

recent books and journal articles. This offsets to some degree the outdated course booklists. Trainees also know that they can get support from mentors and tutors who willingly give of their time. Very effective relationships are a key factor in the overall quality of the training.

16. The college has clarified further the roles of link tutors, mentors and class teachers in the training process. Enthusiastic school-based mentors provide good personal and professional support geared to helping the trainees to be better teachers and to meet the Standards. New curriculum maps provided for mentors for the coming academic year give very clear details of the content of each of the programmes by subject and semester so that college-based coverage is clear. Schools are good venues for training. The development of the colour-coded Standards and outline grade characteristics has made it easier for mentors to judge trainees' progress accurately. However, these are not used well enough to build a cumulative record of postgraduate trainees' progress towards meeting the Standards. In addition, taught sessions and assignments are not clearly enough referenced to the Standards. The final assessment of trainees' teaching against the Standards is accurate. Mentors and link tutors work well together to ensure that judgements are moderated and consistent; this is an improvement since the last inspection.

Management and quality assurance

17. The management and quality assurance of provision have improved since the last inspection and are now good.

18. The procedures for the selection of trainees meet requirements well and enable the college to recruit and retain high quality trainees. There is good quality information available to prospective trainees that present positive images of cultural and ethnic diversity. The college is particularly successful in recruiting trainees from minority ethnic heritages and other under-represented groups, such as those seeking a career change. This results in a diverse trainee population, most of whom come from non-standard entry routes.

19. Interviews are carefully managed so that the potential of prospective trainees is assessed thoroughly, including an evaluation of their competence in written and spoken English. Where relative weaknesses in the use of standard English are identified, support is provided for trainees during their course. There are good strategies to ensure that there is consistency between interviewers and that their recommendations are moderated by a senior tutor. The outcomes of each interview are recorded well; an improvement since the last inspection. The systems for ensuring that checks are carried out with the Criminal Records Bureau are robust and scrupulously monitored. An increasing number of staff from partnership schools are involved in the selection process. Trainees value the information they receive before starting their course; they are warmly welcomed and sufficiently prepared.

20. The partnership is well managed. There has been a recent college-wide management restructure that has led to significant staffing changes to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Managers and tutors have been very successful in ensuring that the impact of these changes on trainees has been minimal and that temporary gaps in primary science provision have been filled.

21. The roles and responsibilities of those involved in the partnership are clear and appropriate. Significant advances have been made in developing the roles of link tutor and school-based mentor since the last inspection. These are now consistent and carried out effectively. This is because of well focused mentor training and very clear written guidance that is widely understood, complemented by a very useful link tutor handbook.

22. Underpinning the management of the partnership is a very clear partnership agreement that is valued by schools. The primary partnership steering group reviews the agreement annually, an effective means of ensuring that it continues to meet all partners' needs. This group, along with course committees, plays a significant role in the management of the partnership by allowing trainees' and mentors' voices to be heard and acted upon when changes to provision are being planned. More effective use is being made of the expertise found in schools to strengthen the partnership through course planning and delivery or in trainee placements.

23. There are good procedures for ensuring that trainers discharge their roles well. Mentor training is very effective and evaluated highly by school-based staff. The move to provide more whole-school training and to tailor it to meet particular needs is a valuable development. Tutor induction and development are carefully managed. There is very good communication across the partnership so that all parties are fully briefed on requirements and changes to provision. The college's web-based information system is particularly valuable in helping trainees' access to tutors and learning materials, and is beginning to provide a similar service for school-based staff. Resources are deployed well to support effective training; those relating to ICT have improved since the last inspection.

24. Quality assurance procedures are good and meet requirements in full. There are good systems to ensure that the college's race equality and equal opportunity policies are monitored well. The college very successfully models itself as an organisation committed to the inclusion of every trainee. School-based training is monitored well through the link tutors; they ensure that trainees are well-supported in their school placements. College-based training is also monitored well through peer and management observations and regular evaluations by trainees. This has contributed to the improvements to training since the last inspection. There is still room for improvement in ensuring that all college training is as good as the best.

25. The strategies for evaluating provision are varied and give the college clear information about how well it provides for trainees. Trainees have a particularly strong role in these; their views are sought several times a year and prompt action is taken to address any areas of concern. Link tutor meetings and annual mentor

meetings provide further opportunities for internal evaluation. Procedures for the external evaluation of provision are good and lead to very helpful reports from external examiners; these are acted upon swiftly. While the college has a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in provision, informed by good use of benchmarking data, it does not systematically feed these back to schools so that excellent practice in the partnership can be disseminated. It does, nevertheless, formulate well constructed action plans to address deficiencies. Although these focus on the right things to improve, not enough attention has been paid to the impact of these on trainees' teaching. This is now improving through better use of data on how well trainees meet different Standards.

26. Trainees' assessments are moderated well, particularly those relating to practical teaching. The partnership has ensured that the systems for internal and external moderation are robust. The use of joint observation of trainees between link tutors and school mentors adds a further, helpful, dimension to the consistency and accuracy of judgements.