

Secondary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on

Bishop Grosseteste College

Newport
Lincoln
LN1 3DY

A full inspection report on:
2005/06

Managing Inspector:
David Humphries HMI

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Introduction

Bishop Grosseteste College works in partnership with schools in Lincoln and a wide surrounding area to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses for the 11-16 age range. The college offers training in art and design, English with drama, mathematics, music, religious education and science. At the time of the final part of the inspection there were 45 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 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 3

Quality of training: Grade 3

Management and quality assurance: Grade 3

The provider will receive a full inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- effective college-based training in general professional studies and in some subjects
- the commitment of senior managers to improve the quality of provision
- high quality course documentation
- trainees' professional approach and valuable contributions to school life.

Points for action

- ensuring that trainees have sufficient sustained independent whole-class teaching to develop fully their teaching skills
- ensuring that trainees' teaching is monitored systematically throughout the training to identify strengths and weaknesses and to set targets for improvement
- developing mentors' skills so that they are all able to provide sufficient guidance on planning and teaching in their specialist subject
- ensuring that trainees employ a wider range of teaching strategies to meet pupils' learning needs and stimulate their interest and motivation.

Points for consideration

- improving trainees' evaluations of their lessons so that they focus more clearly on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning
- developing trainees' use of formative assessment strategies, particularly questioning.

Standards achieved by trainees

1. Trainees work hard to promote positive values and attitudes and are good role models for young people. They have good relationships with pupils and treat them with care and respect. They are committed to raising achievement, though occasionally they underestimate pupils' abilities and do not set sufficiently challenging work. Trainees behave in a professional manner and make substantial contributions to school life through involvement in development work in their subject areas and participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They are knowledgeable about schools' policies and procedures, which most trainees implement proficiently.

2. Trainees are reflective and thoughtful about their professional development and respond well to guidance and advice. They regularly complete lesson evaluations, though these tend to be overly descriptive and do not focus sufficiently sharply on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Although keen to raise pupils' standards of achievement, trainees are not always able to link teaching strategies and lesson content with pupils' motivation and behaviour.

3. Trainees have secure subject knowledge and make good use of opportunities to develop this through the training. They are less adept at relating subject knowledge to contemporary issues or pupils' interests. Trainees have a good understanding of National Curriculum programmes of study and assessment arrangements and of the National Secondary Strategy. They are aware of the 14-19 qualifications framework and many have useful experience of preparing pupils for examinations and coursework for the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE). Trainees have a clear understanding of the code of practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs and a good awareness of how to support pupils for whom English is an additional language. Trainees have well-developed information and communications technology (ICT) skills and use these to good effect to support their own professional development and teaching and learning.

4. Trainees plan their lessons conscientiously and in detail. They focus well on lesson structure, timing and learning activities, but are less adept at matching teaching strategies to planned learning outcomes. Trainees understand the need to provide a variety of teaching and learning activities to meet the needs of all pupils, but they lack the confidence to incorporate these in their planning and teaching. Planning is most effective when trainees have received good advice from mentors. In these cases, lesson plans include clear learning objectives, build carefully on pupils' prior learning and are well matched to their needs.

5. Some trainees plan and deploy a range of imaginative teaching and learning strategies in the classroom, including the confident use of ICT and collaborative group work which encourages active and independent learning. However, most trainees rely predominantly on a limited range of approaches and in a few cases

teaching lacks variety and pace. Most trainees are developing some effective class management techniques and the strongest establish firm classroom routines and make effective use of rewards and sanctions. In contrast, when trainees do not apply these techniques consistently well and when lessons are dominated by mundane teacher-led activities, pupils lose interest and occasionally misbehave.

6. Trainees have valuable experience of marking pupils' work, including GCSE coursework. This is done conscientiously and often provides pupils with constructive written feedback. Trainees can use schools' achievement data together with their own summative assessments to monitor pupils' progress and report on this to parents and carers. Their use of formative assessment strategies is more variable and not all trainees make effective use of questioning to monitor pupils' progress and probe their understanding. A few trainees do not pay sufficient attention to assessment when planning their lessons.

The quality of training

7. The course content has been carefully designed to meet the requirements of *Qualifying to Teach*. College-based training provides good coverage of key areas such as planning, differentiation and assessment. Subject programmes place a suitable emphasis on the development of subject knowledge and pedagogy. Recent improvements in content and sequencing have led to valuable improvements in some subjects. For example, in music there is better coverage of world music and composition; and in science, practical work and associated health and safety issues are addressed at an earlier stage of the training. All of the subject programmes have benefited from a recent upgrading of course handbooks; there is now more consistent linkage between training sessions and the Standards.

8. There are examples of good and very good college-based training though there are marked variations between subjects. In general professional studies and particularly in English, sessions are well planned and model good practice. In contrast, training in science is less effective in helping trainees to apply their subject knowledge successfully in the classroom.

9. The course is well designed to promote good coherence between generic training, subject training and school-based work. High quality course documentation provides school-based trainers with helpful guidance on how to build on the ground covered in central training, though there are marked variations in how well this is done by mentors.

10. The course structure includes two block teaching placements, one in the autumn term and a second placement commencing towards the end of the spring term. These are separated by an extended period of serial and post-16 experience during which trainees benefit from opportunities to observe teaching, provide in-class support and participate in team teaching. However, too many mentors do not ensure that trainees have a sustained programme of independent whole-class

teaching during this period; consequently trainees have fewer opportunities to develop their practical teaching skills and this impedes their progress.

11. Trainees demonstrate a keen awareness of the Standards and understand how the different elements of the course combine together to secure their progress. A record of professional development encourages trainees and mentors regularly to review experiences and progress and, when used well, makes a valuable contribution to the training. In contrast, procedures to monitor the development of trainees' teaching skills are less effective. Formal observation and feedback on teaching occurs only during the two block practices. Consequently, for much of the spring term there is no systematic monitoring of trainees' teaching to identify strengths and weakness, set targets for improvement and review progress. Furthermore, when formal observations do occur, they are undertaken in rapid succession during a tight time frame by a variety of tutors. These arrangements are not well designed to enable trainers to identify strengths and weaknesses in trainees' teaching; nor do they help trainees to understand what they need to do to make the maximum progress.

12. There is a great deal of effective school-based training, involving committed and capable mentors in highly suitable partnership schools. Nevertheless, despite recent developments in mentor training and support, there remain some significant weaknesses in a small number of placements. In these cases trainees' progress is impeded, particularly when mentors do not identify weaknesses in trainees' planning and teaching, or provide sufficient feedback or guidance on how to teach their specialist subject.

13. Despite weaknesses in monitoring trainees' progress during the spring term, arrangements for final assessment are clear and understood well by all those involved. Assessment procedures have recently been enhanced by the appointment of specialist external examiners for each subject and increasing the proportion of formal observations of trainees' teaching carried out by specialist subject tutors. These procedures are applied consistently and lead to accurate judgements at the pass/fail border.

Management and quality assurance

14. Selection procedures have improved since the last inspection. Candidates are provided with clear and helpful guidance about the application process and nature and demands of the training. A detailed handbook provides those involved in selection with comprehensive guidance on all aspects of the process. Interviews involve subject tutors and in the great majority of cases mentors from partnership schools. However, for the present cohort of trainees, not all subjects undertake a systematic auditing of subject knowledge, or the identification of individualised pre-course tasks to help prepare for the training, as part of the selection procedures. A small number of trainees with evident weaknesses were offered places and despite high levels of support some have struggled to complete the course successfully.

Withdrawals are analysed carefully; many are related to illness or changes in personal circumstances. Revised selection procedures which are now being employed are well designed to identify weaker trainees, analyse their individual needs and ensure that they are fully prepared for the training.

15. The partnership has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy and the race equality policy is designed to meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The college works hard to recruit trainees from minority ethnic and other under-represented groups through institutional widening participation programmes in a number of areas. These are complemented by targeted advertising in minority ethnic communities and joint initiatives with the local authority. The college prospectus and web site promote an inclusive ethos, with prominent messages which encourage diversity. The college attracts trainees from a wide range of backgrounds, though recruiting trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds is a challenge in an area where these groups are substantially under-represented in the wider community.

16. The head of teacher development and the secondary programme leader have given a high priority to developing the partnership in order to improve the quality of provision. The management structure is well designed to improve the quality of the training, and provides increasingly good opportunities for school-based trainers to be involved in programme development. Course documentation is of high quality and provides very useful guidance for trainees and school-based trainers. The partnership agreement clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the training. There is a comprehensive, imaginative and increasingly well attended programme of training for mentors and coordinators. During the present year there have been some valuable improvements to subject training programmes, action planning and the resources available for trainees.

17. These changes have not yet had a sustained impact on the quality of provision. This is because some are at an early stage of implementation and there continue to be weaknesses in the quality of training provided in some partnership schools. College staff are clearly aware of this, but have not yet been able to secure consistent improvement across the partnership. To some extent the course structure limits the college's capacity to assure the quality of school-based training. Throughout most of the spring term, when there are no block placements, tutors do not undertake school visits and consequently are not well placed to identify deficiencies in school-based training.

18. The range of procedures used to evaluate the quality of provision includes trainee evaluations and questionnaires completed by mentors and co-ordinators. The appointment of subject specialist external examiners and a chief examiner is making a helpful contribution to these arrangements. The value of annual reviews has improved markedly over recent years; there is now a much greater emphasis on analysing the available evidence and evaluating the quality of provision in individual subjects. These quality assurance arrangements have enabled senior managers to identify many of the strengths and weaknesses in the training, though there has not

been a sufficiently sharp focus on evaluating the impact of key aspects of the training, including the course structure, on the quality of trainees' teaching.

19. The action plan compiled after the previous inspection has been regularly revised and has evolved into a strategic development plan. This is a high quality plan, clearly linked to issues identified by inspectors, external examiners and the provider's own self-evaluation. Success criteria are clearly specified and related to the anticipated impact of the actions taken on the quality of training. The provision is well led by senior staff and some capable subject tutors. Many of the changes that they have introduced have the potential to improve the overall quality of provision, though they have yet to become embedded in practice across the partnership so that they promote consistently high quality training.