



Further Education Teacher Training  
Canterbury Christ Church University

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Inspection report  
2005/06

Managing Inspector:  
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## The inspection

1. The inspection was carried out in accordance with the framework for the inspection of initial training of further education (FE) teachers and the guidance in the handbook for the inspection of initial training of further education teachers, both published in 2004.
2. It was conducted in two phases by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), supported by a full-time inspector from the Adult Learning Inspectorate and specialist additional inspectors. Pre-service provision at the university and in-service courses delivered by the university and three of the seven partner colleges were evaluated as part of the inspection. Inspectors focussed on the quality of training and management and quality assurance procedures during the first phase, which took place in January 2006. During the second phase, inspectors concentrated upon evaluating the achievements of trainees through observing their teaching and gathering evidence of their progress during the course. Phase two of the inspection was completed in June 2006.

## Background

3. The department of post-compulsory education offers a wide portfolio of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Qualifications endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK) are delivered in partnership with seven colleges in the south east. In addition, courses are taught nationally by university staff at five police centres. Provision at the university comprises a full-time postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) and a part-time certificate in education (Cert Ed) which is taught at Tunbridge Wells for trainees who work in adult and community learning settings.
4. Thirty-three trainees were recruited onto the pre-service full-time course in September 2005. The course lasts 36 weeks and trainees spend 84 days at university and 96 days on placement, 18 of which are on a second placement. Trainees spend their main placement in one of the consortium colleges. The second placement is individually negotiated and may take place in higher education, adult and community education, work-based learning or prison education. University staff teach on all modules and staff seconded from the further education (FE) colleges also contribute to the more practice-related modules. Destination data for pre-service trainees who completed the PGCE in 2004/05 show that about half work in colleges and half in schools.
5. In 2004/05, 862 trainees completed year 1 of the Cert Ed course and 546 trainees completed year 2. At the time of inspection second year trainees were completing the final year of an advanced certificate in education. This has been superseded by a certificate in education introduced in September 2005. In-service trainees with degrees can gain a PGCE through differentiated assessment tasks. Assessment of the minimum core of

language, literacy and numeracy takes place in the first year of the programme.

### Effectiveness of provision

6. The overall quality of provision is good (grade 2). Trainees make good progress; they grow in confidence and competence during their time on the programme. The structure, content and assessment of the training programmes have been devised skilfully so that trainees can relate theory to practice and develop well as teachers. The quality of the taught elements is good and trainees benefit from the input of both college and university teacher trainers. Mentors, teacher trainers and individual tutors give freely of their time to ensure trainees are well cared for. Support for subject specific teaching varies in quality and some trainees do not gain sufficient breadth of experience in the workplace. Processes for individual target setting and monitoring progress are underdeveloped on the in-service course. There is insufficient checking of the extent to which trainees improve their own literacy and/or numeracy skills. The university is highly successful in leading a collaborative consortium with a clear agenda for improvement. Programmes are well managed and there are detailed plans to implement the national reforms in FE initial teacher training.

## Key strengths

Inspectors identified the following strengths:

- very strong rapport that trainees establish with their students who often lack confidence and self-esteem
- well-designed taught programmes with a skilful blend of theory and practice
- high standard of training sessions provided by the teacher trainers
- well-planned and supportive assessment that encourages trainees to improve their performance
- good development of trainees' personal skills in numeracy on the pre-service course
- many opportunities for trainees to undertake additional qualifications to enhance their career progression
- very good collaboration in training, assessment and quality improvement fostered by the university
- well-managed courses with particularly strong leadership of the pre-service programme
- self-critical quality assurance procedures with clear identification of areas for development within individual colleges and across the consortium as a whole.

## Areas for attention

The partnership should address:

- insufficient development of trainees' specialist teaching skills and knowledge of wider professional role through mentoring and other activities
- unsystematic monitoring of the progress made by in-service trainees in developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills Further information on strengths and areas for attention is contained in the substantial sections of the report that follow.

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## Achievement of trainees

7. With very few exceptions, trainees grow in confidence and make good progress in their teaching and study skills. They demonstrate strong empathy with their students and provide good role models, especially for the most vulnerable and reluctant learners. Trainees generally have high expectations, regardless of their students' starting points. The outcomes of students' initial diagnostic assessment are often used well to inform lesson planning and to set challenging but appropriate learning goals for individuals and groups.

8. Trainees are very clear about how they can advance their career and gain additional qualifications. Many in-service trainees take advantage of using their Cert Ed to access the university's BA Hons (post compulsory), or for those with degrees, a masters level qualification. Trainees who specialise in teaching Skills for Life take advantage of the specialist qualifications delivered in consortium colleges.

9. Pre-service trainees make very good use of a second placement to broaden their experience and deepen their understanding, particularly across the 14-19 phase. Trainees are committed to their own ongoing professional development and make good use of training opportunities available in the colleges and elsewhere. They are highly effective in using their own evaluations and those of others to identify ways of improving their own practice. However, trainees' knowledge and ability to evaluate wider aspects of their professional role are sometimes inhibited by their narrow experience within their job role or placement.

10. Trainees acquire a wide repertoire of teaching skills which are informed by enquiry, research and sound theoretical knowledge. They demonstrate a good command of their specialist subject or vocational expertise. They draw well on these to enliven teaching and learning. For example one trainee with a background in running a small business skilfully used a range of learning resources and activities based on real life examples to make a business start-up course relevant and meaningful. The quality of teaching and learning resources produced by trainees is generally good. Handouts and activities are particularly well suited to the needs and interests of their students. Trainees' confidence and competence in the use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support and enhance learning is variable.

11. The most effective trainees have a good understanding of how weaknesses in their students' skills literacy and/or numeracy can create barriers to learning. Pre-service trainees are highly proficient in identifying opportunities to develop their students' numeracy through their own classroom practice. In-service trainees also demonstrate a good understanding of their students' literacy and numeracy needs, but their skills in supporting these needs are less well developed. A significant minority of trainees fail either to systematically plan for, or prepare activities to develop students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills within the subject content of their

lesson. For some trainees this is exacerbated by weaknesses in their own literacy and/or numeracy. For example, in a construction lesson the trainee teacher assumed that all the students would be able to undertake the planned activity and had not planned any differentiated tasks to ensure that all students could succeed. Students had significant problems in measuring a wall to find its centre point. One student confused metric and imperial measurements and another two had trouble dividing the height to find the centre. Because some students were unable to make progress the trainee completed the measurements for them.

12. Trainees generally set clear learning objectives when planning their lessons. They are often informed by their students' prior attainment, but do not always indicate how progress and achievement will be monitored. Most trainees have a good understanding of the purpose and role of assessment. Although the majority of trainees are confident in marking students' work and provide constructive feedback, some trainees do not effectively use assessment to monitor students' progress over time.

13. Trainees organise and manage their lessons well, even when faced with challenging behaviour. In practical lessons trainees show good attention to health and safety; they make good use of realistic learning environments and the resources available to support learning. Where specialist support tutors work alongside trainees, they are usually very well integrated into the lesson because trainees have planned to use them effectively.

## Quality of training

14. The new Cert Ed/PGCE has been skilfully designed so that theory and practice are well integrated. The programme offers trainees a coherent route through the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) teaching standards. The initial modules focus on the skills required by new teachers whilst the second year modules demand a more theoretical and reflective approach. Overall, the consortium has made satisfactory progress in embedding minimum core standards of language, literacy and numeracy into the taught programme. On the pre-service programme, support for trainees' numeracy through further testing, assignment work and specialist workshops has been particularly effective. Programme handbooks and documentation are clear, comprehensive and well structured.

15. Because pre-service trainees are on placement for 28 out of 36 weeks of the programme, many have felt isolated from their peers and tutors. This has been recognised by the university and the course structure has been adapted to allow for more frequent contact between tutors and trainees over the programme. Trainees' entitlement to experience a range of teaching situations is not planned effectively. For some trainees there are insufficient

opportunities to teach, assess and observe students across different qualifications, levels and age ranges.

16. The quality of training sessions provided by university and college staff is of a high standard. Trainees are made aware of good practice through explicit reference to different aspects of teaching and assessment practice and classroom management techniques. For example, in one session trainees drew skilfully upon different theories to analyse their own teaching practice. The teacher trainer successfully developed trainees' contributions and demonstrated how theories could be used both as a 'lens' for understanding their own classroom practice' and sometimes as an 'aid' for improving it. The teacher trainer's contributions were models of good practice and indeed, exemplified some of the theoretical points that trainees had made.

17. The contribution made by teacher trainers from the university to the programme in each consortium college is a particular strength. Through working along side FE teacher trainers, university staff are able to ensure that their own classroom practice is relevant and up-to-date. In addition, trainees benefit from the exposure to a wide range of different teaching and learning styles. For example, university teacher trainers are able to draw on their current research and scholarly activity to extend the development of trainees' academic research and study skills.

18. Arrangements for the initial assessment of trainees' literacy and numeracy needs are generally comprehensive and thorough. There is no initial audit to establish the extent or currency of trainees' specialist subject knowledge. Where trainees are identified as having weaknesses in numeracy and/or literacy, there is no systematic follow-up of whether or not their needs are being met, or if their skills are improving. Each consortium college has identified appropriate means of supporting trainees, but it is left to the trainees' own discretion to take advantage of the provision. Those who attend literacy and/or numeracy support sessions make significantly better progress in their teaching than those who do not.

19. Pre-service trainees are taught in cognate curriculum groups for four of the six modules. These are fairly broad groups, namely humanities and arts; vocational; health and care and social science and basic skills. Pre-service trainees are also allocated to subject mentors during the extensive period that they are on placement. The quality of mentoring experienced by trainees varies significantly between different placements. In some instances mentors have been too busy to formulate and direct their trainee's learning whilst on placement.

20. On the in-service course subject pedagogy is developed through observations of trainees' teaching, reflective logs, micro-teaching and a dedicated module in the second year of the programme. The extent to which trainees successfully develop their subject pedagogy relies entirely on the skills and expertise of their workplace mentors. The current model of



mentoring for in-service trainees is not sufficiently well structured to ensure that all trainees are able to get a full grasp, not only of their specialist subject pedagogy, but also the extent of their role as an FE practitioner. For example, some trainees do not get sufficient experience of college learning support systems, quality assurance procedures or different assessment methods. The consortium is very aware of this weakness and has developed a more appropriate model of subject mentoring for the next intake of trainees.

21. Progress monitoring and target setting are well integrated on the pre-service course. The personal development planner provides an effective means for tutor, subject mentor and trainee to monitor progress and agree development targets. The college mentor and/or the university tutor complete their section of the planner regularly and focus on the short-term targets identified by the trainee. Although planners have been introduced onto in-service programmes, they are not used consistently well.

22. Assessment schedules for both programmes offer a wide variety of assessment opportunities. These are well-suited to the needs of a diverse cohort of trainees and allow them to work to their individual strengths. Assessment activities are developmental and lead in the second year to more in-depth activities requiring higher order skills. Trainees receive very high quality feedback on their assignment work and on their teaching. The feedback provided on teaching practice records is very detailed with clear guidelines about what trainees need to do to improve particular aspects of their practical teaching. There is some good evidence of references to subject pedagogy on teaching observation feedback.

## Management and quality assurance of provision

23. Since phase one of the inspection consortium colleges have worked hard to ensure greater levels of integration between their human resource functions and initial teacher training. For example, in one college a new training and development manager post has been created with the aim of bringing together continuing professional development, quality and teacher training functions. In another college these key functions have been brought together in the same building to improve communication. College human resource staff have also revised their recruitment processes to ensure they are more closely aligned to the national reforms in FE teacher training.

24. Recruitment and selection procedures are thorough and well-documented. Arrangements are in place to ensure that enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are undertaken at an early stage for all pre-service trainees. Equal opportunities data are collected and monitored assiduously at consortium and individual college level. Over several years there has been an over-representation of female trainees, reflecting patterns of recruitment in FE more generally. Analysis of recruitment of trainees at individual provider level has shown that the proportion of trainees from minority ethnic

backgrounds matches that of the provider's locality. Teacher training teams make good use of initiatives within their individual colleges to ensure initial teacher training is promoted more widely.

25. The university's leadership and management of the consortium are very strong. The consortium is well established; partner colleges are highly committed to working collaboratively with the university which views itself as an equal partner. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and communication between college and university staff is frequent and mutually supportive. The university requires college teacher trainers as well as mentors for pre-service trainees to undertake an associate tutor course. This provides excellent opportunities for staff development and sharing good practice.

26. There is a high level of awareness of the national reforms; a clear and detailed strategy for development has been communicated throughout the consortium. Leadership of the pre-service programme is excellent. The course team have been highly successful in using their experience of delivering Qualified Teacher Status programmes to introduce good practice onto the PGCE.

27. Trainees benefit from a wide range of learning resources either through the university or at their chosen college. The quality of training accommodation provided by consortium colleges improved significantly during the course of the inspection. The university's virtual learning environment (VLE) is used extensively by teacher trainers and trainees on the pre-service course. It serves as a means for communicating and regularly updating all course requirements and as a means of peer-group support whilst trainees are on placement. It is used less well by in-service trainees who tend to access materials and learning resources on individual college intranet sites. At present the VLE has not been fully exploited, for example as the basis for trainee led sessions or for the development of subject materials.

28. There is a self-critical process of monitoring and review on both the pre-service and in-service programmes. The university has invested substantial resource in developing procedures for the monitoring of partnership provision. There are memoranda of agreement in respect of each college and linked academic schedules in which the university specifies the admission requirements, resource and academic standards expected for each course. There are academic forum meetings, each year when senior representatives from the university meet with senior college managers to monitor developments, resources and other aspects of the courses.

29. The university's quality assurance systems work very well with those in consortium colleges. College processes of course review and self-assessment are carried out conscientiously with clear actions for improvement identified and implemented. In one college, the quality of training sessions delivered by university staff is routinely evaluated through its own lesson observation scheme. The monitoring of assessment both within individual colleges and

across the consortium is strong. Colleges are paired for the moderation of trainees' written work. Centre managers from each 'pair' meet to compare examples of assessed work and to engage in peer review. University link tutors also undertake joint observations with college staff to ensure consistency in the assessment of trainees' teaching practice.

## Appendix list of colleges

The following colleges were members of the HEI Partnership at the time of the inspection;

- Bexhill College
- Canterbury College
- Lewisham College
- Mid Kent College of HE & FE
- Orpington College
- South Kent College
- Thanet College