



# Further Education Teacher Training

University of Hull

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Inspection report  
2005/06

Managing Inspector:  
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## The inspection

1. This inspection was carried out in accordance with the framework for the inspection of initial training of further education 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 by one of her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), an inspector from the Adult Learning Inspectorate and three additional inspectors. 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 a sample of trainees, through observing their teaching and evaluating their planning, assessment and coursework. Phase two of the inspection was completed in June 2006.

## Background

3. The partnership provides initial teacher training Certificate of Education / Post Graduate Certificate of Education (Cert Ed / PGCE) courses for teachers in further and adult education. The partnership is about five years old. It began with a validation arrangement with three partner colleges, who worked independently and developed their own training programmes. In the last two years the partnership has been in transition towards closer collaboration. It has developed at short notice, collaborative provision with a local Adult Education Service, fulfilling a self-identified training need. Two of the three further education colleges have adopted the same course programme as that developed for the Adult Education Services, which is now in its first year. The other college will adopt the common programme in 2007.

4. Provision at the university and two of the partner colleges was inspected. All run part-time two year in-service courses and one institution has a small one year full-time pre-service course. There are 204 trainees enrolled on Cert Ed / PGCE courses across the partnership. The further education colleges deliver their own training in college. The training programme for the Adult Education Service takes place at the university. It is taught mainly by trainers from the Adult Education Service and one of the trainers from a partner college, but the university course leader also teaches some sessions.

## Effectiveness of provision

5. The overall quality of the provision is adequate (grade 3). Most trainees achieve good standards in their practical teaching and the teaching is never less than satisfactory. They often show great commitment to the progress of their students and generally establish a good rapport with them.

By the end of the course most trainees can use a variety of teaching strategies successfully to motivate students and sustain their learning. Trainees are often less successful in embedding language, literacy and numeracy into their lessons and some are unclear about how to do this. Assessment criteria are generally used effectively to assess achievement, but trainees' diagnostic assessment of students' work in order to help them progress is often only adequate.

6. Teacher trainers are well qualified with appropriate experience. The quality of the training programmes is generally good, although there is too little attention to the systematic development of trainees' specialist expertise across an appropriate portfolio of relevant courses. The monitoring and assessment of trainees' assignments is generally satisfactory, but is hindered by the lack of clear assessment criteria and sometimes lacks rigour. The assessment of practical teaching is variable in quality and only adequate overall, with limited assessment by subject specialists and no external moderation of standards until this year. The identification of trainees' needs and monitoring of the progress that they make during the course is variable across the partnership.

7. The University of Hull has played a limited role in the partnership until recently. It is now working much more closely with its partners and has introduced a number of constructive initiatives that, when fully implemented, will improve various aspects of the provision significantly.

## Key strengths

Inspectors identified the following strengths:

- strong commitment of trainees to the success and care of their students
- careful planning, organisation and management of lessons demonstrated by trainees
- good opportunities for trainees to share experiences and develop reflective skills during training sessions
- strong leadership provided by the university's course leader in driving forward improvements.

## Areas for attention

The partnership should address:

- ensuring that the range of teaching and associated experiences of all trainees is appropriately broad
- ensuring that trainers and trainees develop good diagnostic assessment practices
- increasing the level of training for trainees in their specialist expertise, including further developing the role of mentors
- helping trainees to incorporate literacy and numeracy more effectively in their own teaching
- increasing collaboration and sharing of good practice between partner institutions
- monitoring the implementation of University of Hull policies for equal opportunities and promotion of good overall relations, together with the analysis of statistics for recruitment and completion by ethnicity, gender and age, across the partnership.

Further information on strengths and areas for attention is contained in the substantial sections of the report that follow.

## Achievement of trainees

8. Trainees achieve generally good standards in their classroom teaching and they are never less than satisfactory. They are conscientious and very committed to the progress of their students. Lessons are evaluated carefully and trainees pay close attention to advice from tutors and mentors where allocated. Through these means they have often been able to improve their teaching and several have made impressive progress in developing the range of their teaching strategies and skills in classroom management.

9. The trainees have sufficient specialist expertise to teach competently, but a few have a narrow range of teaching and associated experiences, which provides little opportunity for them to develop expertise and experience over an appropriately broad range. The planning of lessons is conscientious and thorough, with considerable thought often being given to the organisation and management of lessons. Teaching objectives are usually identified clearly, but intended learning outcomes are often not identified as well and are sometimes expressed as tasks and activities for students, rather than in terms of what they will learn from these tasks and activities. Similarly, differentiated learning outcomes, addressing the varied learning needs of

students, are often not a strong feature of planning. Basic and life skills lessons generally identified differentiated learning outcomes better.

10. The organisation and management of lessons is generally good and most trainees use a broad range of teaching strategies effectively to interest students and ensure progression in learning. A few, nevertheless, remain over-reliant on a narrow range of strategies. Trainees generally provide clear explanations and instructions and most use questioning skilfully to test and develop understanding and explore issues. A minority still find difficulties with this technique.

11. Where trainees are teaching basic or life skills lessons they usually do this well. In other teaching, however, the development of students' basic and life skills is sometimes weak and in a few instances trainees are unclear about how to do this.

12. Trainees establish a good rapport with their students and usually pay careful attention to their learning needs, often helping to improve their confidence through praise and encouragement. This reflects strong personal support that trainees provide for their students.

13. Assessment is a less well developed area of trainees' teaching. Assessment criteria are generally used appropriately to assess achievement and trainees follow the policy of their specialist area closely in this regard. The diagnostic assessment of students' work in order to help them make progress is much more variable. Some trainees teaching basic skills classes and students with learning disabilities and/or difficulties do this well, but more generally assessment, while personally encouraging, is only sometimes diagnostic and seldom sets students learning targets.

## Quality of training

14. The content of the Cert Ed/PGCE courses is matched closely to the FENTO standards. The training programmes are generally well constructed to build on trainees' prior knowledge and experiences. They usually provide good opportunities for trainees to share their experiences, learn from each other and develop reflective skills, including relating theories of teaching and learning to their own teaching circumstances. There has been some mapping of the minimum core curriculum into programmes, but this requires further work to become embedded across the partnership. Trainers do not plan in the same systematic manner the development of trainees' specialist expertise. The structure of courses generally supports in-service trainees well in their progress. Pre-service trainees this year followed the same programme structure as the in-service course, which did not meet their particular needs very well, particularly at the start of the course.

15. Teacher trainers are committed, well-qualified and suitably experienced. Training sessions are generally well planned, with clear teaching

objectives and appropriate activities. Explanations are usually clear and questioning is often used well to clarify points and explore issues, while resources are used effectively. The best teaching is characterised by the effective use of a wide variety of teaching strategies, including information and learning technology (ILT), and a continuing interaction between theory, best pedagogical practice and trainees' own experience. Other teaching, while perfectly competent, is more mundane and the pace is sometimes a little slow.

16. The quality of specialist training and guidance through mentors is very inconsistent across the partnership and within each institution. There are examples of good training, but other examples where trainees have not had mentors or mentors have done relatively little. During the year the three institutions have put into place comprehensive plans for the development of mentoring, including mentor training.

17. The initial identification of trainees' needs is variable across the partnership. There are examples of careful identification of needs in relation to literacy and numeracy and of skills audits being conducted, but there are also examples where little has been done. Once on courses trainers often provide very good personal support for trainees and individual learning plans (ILPs) are used effectively in some institutions to track developing need and monitor progress. However, this process currently seldom involves mentors and so needs in relation to specialist expertise are less likely to be identified. The partnership has developed during the year a comprehensive set of strategies, including a key role for mentors to address these issues.

18. Trainees' coursework assignments vary in quality from adequate to excellent and so are inconsistent in the extent to which they consolidate and develop learning on training programmes and from practical teaching. Most assignments do this satisfactorily and some very well, but a minority lack rigour and fail to make effective use of relevant research. The lack of clear assessment criteria for most assignments was not helpful to trainees, but those are now being developed and have contributed to the generally more consistently good standard of later assignments.

19. The assessment of trainees' assignments is usually personally encouraging, but sometimes lacks rigour and does not often exemplify good diagnostic marking and target-setting. The assessment criteria developed during the year and used for later assignments have improved this somewhat, but it remains an area for further development.

20. There are some good individual assessments of trainees' practical teaching through lesson observations, with perceptive comments and helpful guidance, but these are not combined with guidance from tutorials and the assessment of assignments in a comprehensive, coherent strategy for monitoring and supporting trainees' development. However, the partnership,

drawing on its successful secondary school PGCE course, is developing a professional development profile for use next year to address this issue.

## Management and quality assurance of provision

21. The procedures for the recruitment of suitable trainees are generally well organised, appropriate and inclusive. Recruitment, selection and induction are increasingly well integrated with other aspects of management of the college, such as staff development and human relations.

22. The training programmes are generally well managed by the institutions responsible for them. Course leaders work closely with other teacher trainers to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding to their roles and how these contribute to the effective delivery of the programme. They are responsive to change and a notable feature of the inspection has been the partnership's capacity to respond rapidly and thoughtfully to issues raised during the inspection and begin to implement plans for improvement. One example of this has been the recognition of the key role of mentors in developing the specialist expertise of trainees. As a result, all institutions have begun implementing plans that will give mentors a significantly enhanced role for training and assessment next year. Other issues, such as improvements in monitoring and assessment and learning how to incorporate minimum core elements in lessons, are in hand.

23. The partnership is in transition from a loose confederation to a full partnership and this will not be completed until 2007, when all institutions will have common handbooks and teaching programmes. During the year, the university course leader has worked closely with colleagues from the partnership to establish a clear and appropriate management structure, improve moderation procedures and liaison between institutions, and procedures for evaluating the provision. These initiatives have established management structures and processes that reflect the move to full partnership.

24. Each institution in the partnership and the university has appropriate policies to ensure equal opportunities and the promotion of good race relations. The implementation of policies related to gender and disability has generally been done well, but less attention has often been paid to diversity until this year. The university has only begun the process of monitoring aspects of partner institution's provision in this area and has also not yet collected relevant statistics or analysed them.

25. Quality assurance procedures to ensure consistent judgements about trainees' assignments across the partnership are satisfactory and include appropriate internal and external moderation procedures. The procedures for the assessment of practical teaching are variable across the partnership and in some instances unsatisfactory. Changes introduced during the year have brought about significant improvements. There are now clear assessment



criteria for judging trainees' teaching, which are linked to the SVUK standards, together with moderation meetings and next year joint observations across the partnership are planned. Mentors are being trained in carrying out lesson observations and have a clearly identified role. A professional development profile is being developed, which tracks trainees' progress in practical teaching against the SVUK standards.

## Appendix list of colleges

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

- Bishop Burton College
- Doncaster College
- Hull College