

Primary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on

Langdale Early Years SCITT

Northumbria University
Coach Lane Campus
Benton
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE7 7XA

A full inspection report
2005/06

Managing Inspector: Chris Nye HMI

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Introduction

The Langdale Early Years SCITT works in partnership with the University of Northumbria, North Tyneside Council and 15 schools to provide a primary initial teacher training (ITT) course. It offers a one-year postgraduate training programme in the early years age range (3-7 age range) leading to a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) which is validated by the University of Northumbria. At the time of the inspection there were 30 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 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 and coherence of the training which effectively links theory and practice
- the close links that exist between partnership schools, the university and the local authority
- the quality of management at all levels
- the quality of guidance documentation for trainers and trainees
- the training in professional values and practice.

Points for consideration

- improving the trainees' ability to set clear learning objectives
- improving the trainees' ability to give focused written feedback, particularly to more able pupils
- improving the training of newly appointed mentors
- helping school-based mentors to provide clear feedback to trainees on the quality of their teaching.

Standards achieved by trainees

1. The trainees demonstrate very high levels of commitment to raising the achievement of pupils. They are positive in their approach towards their own professional development and demonstrate very good attitudes towards their teaching. They listen to advice and are honest and analytical in how they review their teaching. They modify their planning to take account of previous lessons and the outcomes of assessment. The trainees are flexible in adapting their lessons in response to the pupils' changing learning needs.

2. The trainees have good subject and pedagogic knowledge and understanding. They have a good understanding of the National Curriculum, the Foundation Stage curriculum and the national strategies. They adapt their planning to meet the needs of pupils well; for example, they use the Year 3 National Numeracy Strategy objectives to meet the needs of more able Year 2 pupils. They make suitable cross-curricular links and have a very good understanding of child development. As a result, lessons are interesting, well paced and motivate pupils.

3. Most trainees plan their lessons and series of lessons well, although some trainees do not make the learning objectives sufficiently clear. In some lessons, learning objectives are too complex and, because they are not broken down into achievable steps, they do not clearly identify the learning to be achieved in the lesson.

4. The trainees effectively use a wide range of teaching techniques and strategies to help pupils make progress. They organise and manage their classes well. A strong feature is the very good relationships that exist between trainees, pupils and other adults in their placement schools. Trainees are aware of how to maintain a positive working atmosphere in their classrooms. They make very good use of voice control, musical instruments and singing to attract pupils' attention calmly and to ensure that they remain on task, particularly those pupils who display challenging behaviour.

5. The trainees make good use of group and collaborative activities to enhance the learning. They use resources such as number fans imaginatively and make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. The trainees manage the work of teaching assistants well, particularly in supporting pupils with special educational needs or pupils with English as an additional language. They are skilled in using displays of pupils' work to celebrate the pupils' achievements and support their learning.

6. Most trainees devise appropriate techniques to monitor and assess the progress of pupils, and use this information sensibly in their planning. However, in some instances marking does not provide sufficient guidance on how to improve and as a result insufficient challenge is provided to pupils, particularly the more able.

7. The trainees are successful in ensuring that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. They are competent in supporting pupils with learning difficulties or those for whom English is an additional language. Teaching and learning activities are appropriately differentiated. The trainees' commitment to inclusion is evident in their attitudes and approach to teaching.

The quality of training

8. The structure and content of the training programme are well designed to meet the Requirements in full. They provide trainees with the appropriate experience, knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. A strength is the very good coherence between school-based and centre-based training. Cross-curricular links are well defined. This enables trainees to link their theoretical knowledge and understanding with their classroom practice.

9. There is good quality documentation to support the training and guide school-based tutors. The core subject handbooks provide a clear and helpful overview of the training. The provider has recently re-designed these to include more detail on the content of the courses. The written guidance to mentors and trainees is very good.

10. The overall quality of the school-based and centre-based training is good and often it is very good. Module leaders and tutors plan training very well. Trainers are experienced and well qualified with a very good knowledge and understanding of early years teaching as well as their own subject areas. The training inspires, challenges and supports the trainees. Trainers make full use of relevant information on trainees that is gathered at interview and through audits. The trainees are given good opportunities to observe and teach pupils across the full range of abilities and throughout the age range. As a result, the trainees' confidence is high and they make good progress towards meeting the Standards.

11. An effective feature is the proactive way in which trainers from the university, local authority and consortium schools work together closely to ensure good quality training. Relationships between trainers and trainees are very good; the trainees are well prepared for sessions and demonstrate an outstanding enthusiasm for their training.

12. Training in English, mathematics and science ensures that trainees gain a good understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1. A strong emphasis is placed on progression between the key stages. Clear links are made to the Standards and good use is made of the trainees' previous knowledge. For example, in science, the trainees with better subject knowledge are placed in groups to support weaker trainees. Very good cross-curricular links are made, such as in mathematics where a well designed school-based task links mathematics with literature and includes the

planning, teaching and evaluating of a mathematical activity around a story or rhyme.

13. The foundation subjects are well covered. The training provides trainees with a broad and balanced knowledge and understanding of these subjects in the age range in which they are training to teach. A particular strength of the school-based training is the 'good practice days' which enable trainees to observe and discuss high quality and innovative teaching.

14. Training in professional values and practice through the 'Becoming an Early Years Teacher' module is very good. The excellent knowledge and understanding of trainers and the very good exemplification of theory and practice enable trainees to grasp challenging theories and see their relevance in the classroom. Good links are made to curriculum subjects, particularly English, and the training is enhanced by the very good use of ICT throughout the course.

15. Arrangements for assessing the trainees' progress towards achieving the Standards are mainly effective. Trainees regularly audit their subject knowledge and weaknesses are identified and resolved through self study, booster sessions and individual tutorials. Assignments and school-based tasks are well designed and support the coherence of the training and help to meet the individual needs of the trainees. However, during their school placements, feedback is occasionally not sufficiently focused on identifying the trainees' areas for development.

16. Arrangements for the final assessment of trainees are clear, accurate, and well understood by trainers and trainees.

Management and quality assurance

17. Recruitment and selection procedures are effective in identifying suitable trainees. Clearly defined selection criteria are applied rigorously throughout the process. A key strength is the partnership's success in communicating an inclusive approach to recruitment and in encouraging applications from under-represented groups, for example through taster days. As a result, the consortium has exceeded its targets in recruiting male trainees and those from minority ethnic communities. The interview process is imaginatively designed, makes good use of partnership schools and is very effective in identifying well qualified candidates who have the potential to meet the Standards. Common questions are carefully designed and there is a good level of consistency in recording candidates' performance at selection. Pre-course tasks and initial needs audits accurately identify trainees' needs and prepare them well for the training. The few trainees who have withdrawn from the course have been well supported and their reasons for withdrawal are fully investigated. The partnership carefully monitors the effectiveness of its selection procedures.

18. The management structure is well defined and operates within a clear remit. The management committee and four subcommittees provide coherent, consistent and effective strategic leadership and management across all the elements of the training. All partners are represented on the management committee and meetings are well run and attended. There are clear agendas which focus on improvement. The roles and responsibilities of all partners are well understood and based upon a rationale which is clearly stated in detailed and helpful documentation such as the partnership agreement. The programme managers play a pivotal role in both the strategic and day-to-day management of the programme, and, because they liaise well with all partners and know the trainees well, they are very effective. The role of the professional guidance tutor is particularly helpful in providing trainees with consistent guidance and support throughout the course.

19. The programme managers know the partnership schools well because of the close links that exist between the partnership and the local authority. Membership of the partnership is a sought-after privilege and the criteria for selection and de-selection are strictly adhered to. As a result, schools provide good bases for training.

20. Communication between all partners is very good. A helpful newsletter has recently been introduced and this provides notice of events and reports on the progress of the training. Queries and issues are swiftly responded to. Very good written and electronic guidance is sent to schools.

21. The trainees have access to good quality resources in the centre, including teaching rooms which are set up to exemplify good classroom environments, suitable teaching resources and extensive ICT equipment. The intranet provides good access to guidance and session notes, but is under-used as a means of sharing ideas and good practice between trainees. The allocation of resources to consortium schools is clearly explained in partnership documentation and there is good consultation on how funding as a whole should be devolved. For example, the provider has recently undertaken an audit of school-based resources to ensure equality across the provision. Equal opportunities and race equality policies are fully compliant with legal requirements and are rigorously monitored.

22. School-based mentors who have been involved in the partnership since its inception have been very well trained. However, training for newly appointed mentors, for example in giving feedback following lesson observations, has not been so thorough. Placement briefings and ongoing training is of good quality and utilises well designed training materials, such as videos of lesson observations linked to the Standards and to target setting.

23. The views of trainers and trainees are actively sought throughout the course, and outcomes are communicated to the quality assurance subcommittee. Module leaders and programme managers adjust the training when suitable, and there is an annual review day when all partners review the past year and plan improvements for the next cohort. Programme managers and professional guidance tutors play a valuable role in monitoring the quality of the school-based training and this is very

effective in ensuring a consistent approach across the provision. However, a peer review system for monitoring the quality of centre-based training when it is delivered by non-university tutors has only recently been implemented and does not yet indicate clear targets for improvement.

24. Internal and external moderation procedures are clear and effective. An appropriate sample of assignments is double marked and an element of co-operative marking also helps to ensure parity. Joint observations between supervising tutors are well established and help to ensure consistent and accurate judgements.

25. Assessment procedures are robust and systems to identify and support weaker trainees work well. The external examiner is well qualified and provides accurate and helpful reports which clearly identify strengths and areas for development. These are suitably responded to.

26. The development plan is of good quality because it clearly identifies appropriate actions within clear timeframes and quantifiable success criteria. Although subject action plans do not always contain clear and quantifiable success criteria which relate to outcomes for trainees, the overall development planning process is good, and is having a positive impact on the quality of the training.

27. The close links that the consortium has with other providers both locally and nationally are helping them to benchmark their performance against that of similar providers.