

Secondary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on

South Bank University

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London
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A full inspection report
2005/06

Managing Inspector:
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Introduction

South Bank University works in partnership with 16 schools to provide secondary (11-16) initial teacher training (ITT) training in mathematics. At the time of the inspection there were 18 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

- the quality of the central training and communications with partner schools
- the commitment to equality and diversity and to preparing trainees to work in challenging inner city schools
- the commitment to improvement through evaluation.

Points for action

- raising trainees' expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour
- improving the quality of trainees' planning and assessments of pupils.

Points for consideration

- providing trainees with individual guidance to prepare them for the training
- ensuring a tighter focus on the Standards in the monitoring of trainees' progress
- ensuring professional support for any new tutor is embedded firmly in the arrangements for quality assurance.

Standards achieved by trainees

1. Trainees consistently treat pupils with respect, demonstrate good professional conduct and are committed to becoming effective teachers of mathematics. They attempt, through their teaching, to meet pupils' interests and needs; for example, a lesson on probability used dice games to motivate and interest individuals in the class. However, trainees' expectations of pupils' achievements and of their behaviour are sometimes too low.
2. The trainees evaluate their teaching consistently and honestly. Most lesson evaluations consider the learning and progress of pupils and the best are closely focused on this; for example, one trainee regularly recorded the precise mathematical learning that had taken place in a lesson, and also made a note of what pupils failed to understand. Some evaluations focus on behaviour management and do not address learning.
3. Trainees make a contribution to school mathematics departments by attending relevant departmental and school staff meetings; a few make more valuable contributions by using their understanding of inner-city issues to support developments in the teaching and organisation of the subject.
4. The trainees have secure mathematical knowledge to teach the subject in Key Stages 3 and 4. They know and understand the content of the National Curriculum in mathematics and that of the Secondary National Strategy. While they have been shown how to use a range of innovative teaching strategies, their understanding of how to use these with demanding classes is not well developed. Trainees have good knowledge of information and communications technology (ICT) and use it well to support their teaching.
5. Trainees plan their lessons in detail and cross-refer their teaching and learning objectives to school schemes of work and to national criteria. Learning objectives are clear and relevant and shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson, but planning too seldom takes account of the needs of individuals or groups in a class and trainees are not skilled at identifying how they will monitor and assess the learning that takes place in lessons.
6. Trainees' teaching is satisfactory, and they are usually successful in managing the behaviour of challenging classes. Trainees form positive relationships with pupils and when they work with small groups or individuals their teaching is productive and enables pupils to make progress. Questioning is not used well to promote learning. Questions are usually addressed to the whole class rather than used to probe the understanding of individual pupils and pupils who call out answers are praised. While this approach gives encouragement to pupils who respond quickly to questions, it does not help the trainees to discover how well the ideas are understood by the class as a whole.

7. Trainees mark pupils' work regularly, but the marking is often minimal and comments are not sufficiently constructive to enable pupils to know how to improve. They keep records of prior assessments in their mark books, which they use to inform planning. They have good knowledge of National Curriculum levels and know where individual pupils are in relation to these and what progress they are expected to make. All trainees have attended parents' evenings and been involved in reporting to parents.

The quality of training

8. The mathematics course is structured well; it provides opportunities for trainees to teach the full 11-16 age range in two schools, to visit a primary school and to observe post-16 teaching. Similarly, the content of the training is relevant and focused on developing trainees' knowledge and skills for teaching the subject. The content of the professional studies course is good; it covers topics of particular relevance to teaching in challenging inner city schools. Throughout the course, there is a strong focus on inclusion and equality of opportunity. Explicit links are made to the Standards in course documentation and relevant tasks and assignments link the central and school-based training.

9. Central training in mathematics is of high quality. It is planned well, relevant to the needs of the trainees and delivered by a knowledgeable tutor who has recent, substantial experience of teaching mathematics in inner city schools. Subject training is supplemented by training in the Secondary National Strategy, delivered by local authority advisers, and this, too, is of good quality. In spite of the difficulties of establishing a partnership for this new course, trainees are placed in strong mathematics departments. Mentors and professional tutors in the schools provide at least satisfactory training, understand their roles and responsibilities and carry them out effectively.

10. The course director knows the trainees well and plans the training sessions to meet the subject needs of groups and individuals. Trainees do not undertake a formal subject audit but they are required to work through revision exercises in a secondary mathematics text book in order to ensure adequate knowledge of the curriculum. This, combined with school experience and the good range of course content in central training, ensures that trainees' knowledge and understanding of the mathematics curriculum are good. Trainees receive good training in the use of a range of ICT to support their teaching and in the wider responsibilities of teachers, such as supporting pupils with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language.

11. Trainees' progress is regularly monitored, although the quality and impact of such monitoring are variable. School-based tutors carry out regular lesson observations and meet weekly with trainees to discuss and review progress, but the focus on the trainees' achievement of the Standards is not systematic. While targets are set regularly, they are not always checked or followed up. Trainees are

expected to complete a record of achievement and to make regular entries to show when Standards have been met. Some do not keep these records up to date and are unclear about the evidence they will require to demonstrate meeting the Standards. The course director meets with trainees at strategic points throughout the course to review and monitor progress. He is also in very frequent contact with mentors and is aware of the progress trainees are making, or of where there are difficulties. He intervenes to ensure trainees gain additional experience, if necessary.

12. Assessment against the Standards is accurate at the pass/fail border. The course director carries out joint observations with mentors; professional tutors also observe trainees as part of their quality assurance role. An external examiner visits a small number of trainees. Cause for concern procedures are in place and are used effectively.

Management and quality assurance

13. Selection procedures are strong and only trainees with relevant qualifications in mathematics are recruited. The university has a strongly inclusive approach to recruitment and this year selected a small number of trainees with weaknesses in communications skills. Voice and literacy workshops are available to support such trainees. In all, 2 of the 21 trainees who began the course had withdrawn by the end. A further 2 interrupted their training.

14. The provider has far exceeded their target for the recruitment of minority ethnic trainees; over 60 percent of trainees on the mathematics course are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Women are underrepresented on the course, although the balance has improved since last year and is beginning to compare with that of other London providers. A very broad age range is recruited with a substantial proportion of mature trainees. Following interview, verbal feedback is given to all applicants. General guidance on preparation for the course is given to those who are successful. Insufficient attention is paid to individual subject needs in preparation for the course.

15. Mathematics is a new subject and the only secondary subject offered by the provider. After a slow and hesitant start, a formal partnership with schools has been developed. The schools are mostly in the inner city and some of them are in very challenging circumstances. The mathematics departments are strong and therefore provide appropriate placements for the trainees. School-based staff are beginning to contribute to wider aspects of the training, for example, all selection interviews this year include a mentor or professional tutor from a partner school, whereas last year no school-based staff were involved in the interview process. Some mentors and professional tutors are prepared to make contributions to the central training and one school has agreed to provide demonstration lessons in effective teaching strategies for trainees. A partnership committee has been established and school-based staff are well represented on it. The committee has had one very productive

meeting. All schools have signed an appropriate partnership agreement. A revised agreement is prepared for next year and this makes clearer the expectations on mentors and professional tutors. Communications with the schools are good and improving.

16. The course director is new to managing a course of ITT. He has received mentoring and support in setting up and managing the training, but until recently this was not sufficient to establish the necessary formal structures for managing the partnership. The course director has worked mainly on his own this year, but another part-time mathematics tutor has now been appointed to share the workload. Senior members of the school of education regularly monitor and review his progress in managing and developing the course.

17. While mentors and professional tutors carry out their roles effectively, very few have attended the training offered. As a result, the course director has made visits to schools and provided training for individuals. The partnership agreement for next year makes clear the expectation on schools to send their mentors to central training events. Mentors are now committed to the course and report a greater willingness to attend training. Adequate resources are used to support the training. Schools are well resourced and provide good access to ICT for the trainees.

18. The university's equality and diversity policy is central in all documentation issued to partner schools and in preparing trainees to teach in inner city schools. The implementation of this policy in the schools is monitored informally by the course director who is informed by mentors and professional tutors if there is any form of discrimination or abuse of trainees. The school of education has carried out a survey of the experiences of minority ethnic trainees in its partner schools and is aware of the issues that confront those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

19. Procedures to monitor assessment processes are largely effective, although the systems for tracking trainees' progress do not always focus tightly enough on evidence for what has been achieved. The arrangements for internal and external moderation are satisfactory

20. Well established university quality assurance procedures are applied to the monitoring and evaluation of the mathematics course. All aspects of the course are evaluated systematically through trainee evaluations. Trainees are asked to grade the various elements of their training, including their experiences in the schools. Outcomes are collated and used to inform course reviews. A course board meets twice a year, with representation from the trainees on the secondary mathematics course. Its review of the progress of the course is thorough. The course director produces a very detailed annual course review which sets extensive targets and draws upon all the available evidence from course evaluations and outcomes. Action planning is good. Targets are set with agreed dates and success criteria; deadlines are met. Evaluation and improvement planning have made a noticeable difference to the quality of training and to the arrangements for managing the partnership.