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# Anglia Ruskin University

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A secondary initial teacher training  
short inspection report  
2006/07

Managing inspector  
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## Introduction

The Anglia Ruskin University works in partnership with 118 schools to provide initial teacher training courses for the 11-16 age range in art and design, English, history with citizenship, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. At the time of the inspection there were 129 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 short 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

Management and quality assurance: Grade: 2

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

## Key strengths

- the very good coherence between the central generic training and subject training
- the course structure, which builds trainees' expertise and confidence progressively
- the high standard of the course handbooks and documentation
- trainees' very good access to web-based resources and online discussion facilities
- the good communication and collaboration between the university and schools.

## Point for action

- widening the range of evidence used to inform the evaluation of the programme.

## Points for consideration

- strengthening the guidance given to trainees early in their training on lesson planning
- ensuring that school-based mentors receive information about trainees' individual needs to help them prepare for the first placement
- making more explicit the university subject tutors' role in assuring the quality of the school-based training
- giving schools more detailed feedback on the quality of training they provide.

## The quality of training

1. The structure and content of the programme are designed well to enable the trainees to meet the Standards. The content of training programmes is comprehensive and is regularly updated to reflect current national issues, such as Every Child Matters. Innovative work across different subject disciplines is highly valued by trainees and promotes their understanding of their subject in the context of the whole curriculum. The involvement of external speakers from schools, the local authority and national organisations contributes to the relevance of the course.
2. The university encourages the trainees to develop their own style for planning lessons and it provides good examples to assist them. However, some trainees get insufficient direction and guidance when they are in school and consequently their lesson planning during the first school placement is superficial.
3. The course structure is good. It builds trainees' expertise and confidence progressively throughout the year. School placements and central training are sequenced well, providing trainees with suitable opportunities to observe and teach pupils of differing abilities across the full age range for which they are being trained. Trainees usefully undertake a primary placement at the start of the course. However, this is insufficiently focused for trainees to develop their understanding of progression from Key Stage 2 and to prepare themselves for the first placement, which has an emphasis on teaching in Key Stage 3. Trainees are eased into work with examination groups progressively, based on individual readiness and need.
4. The coherence between the different elements of the university-based training is a strong feature of the programme. Several themes introduced in general professional studies are developed explicitly in curriculum sessions. Cross-curricular discussion groups led by a subject tutor contribute to course coherence and the trainees' understanding of whole-school issues for different subjects. There are clear links between central and school-based subject training. Trainees have good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of professional studies during school placements.
5. On the whole, the course meets trainees' individual needs well. The process starts at interview. Pre-course tasks are used well to prepare the trainees for the start of the course. The opportunity for trainees to choose the professional or postgraduate accreditation enables trainers to match the course more closely to trainees' preferences. Trainees' subject knowledge is enhanced well. In science, the very good provision is particularly effective for trainees who are recruited with specialist degrees not closely allied to science disciplines on the curriculum. In modern languages, extension courses address individual needs swiftly. In some subjects, including art and ICT, trainees use their strengths to lead workshops for the benefit of others. However, school-based mentors do not receive enough information about trainees' individual needs to help them prepare for the first placement.

6. Training in schools is mostly effective and mentors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Most weekly meetings between mentors and trainees are effective in reviewing progress and setting targets. The Standards are used consistently in course documentation and well presented to enable ease of reference by trainees and trainers.

7. Assessment procedures contribute well, on the whole, to training. Lesson observations focused on specific Standards are particularly effective in gathering evidence of trainees' progress. However, entries in a minority of trainees' personal development portfolios include little detail to indicate progress and are insufficiently referenced to the Standards.

## Management and quality assurance

8. The very effective marketing of the programme and rigorous selection procedures ensure that all courses recruit applicants with good potential to achieve the Standards. The interview of each applicant conducted by the university subject tutor and an assessment carried out in a partnership school are effective in revealing strengths and weaknesses in applicants' knowledge of their subject, secondary education and their personal qualities. Trainees have diverse backgrounds; for example, about a fifth of all trainees are from minority ethnic groups and many others have considerable experience of work outside education. For the first time, there was a high withdrawal rate in 2005/06; the university has thoroughly investigated the reasons, most of which are personal or health-related, and taken prompt action to increase the already good level of personal and professional support available to trainees.

9. The good communication and collaboration between partnership schools and the university contribute to the consistent and coherent practice and good quality training across the partnership. The efficient working of the university's partnership office, the informative partnership newsletter, the regular school visits by university tutors, the annual meetings of the school-based and university-based tutors and an annual conference are viewed by the schools as valuable features of an effective and improving training partnership.

10. The partnership operates over a large geographical area with a wide range of schools, many of which also work with other teacher training providers. The secondary partnership steering group plays an active part in the review and development of the programme. Effective communication within the partnership ensures that schools not represented at meetings are well informed and consulted about any changes. A recent re-organisation of the management and staffing structure at the university is well designed to strengthen the university's capacity for and focus upon partnership working.

11. The partnership agreement is succinct and well understood in the schools. Subject handbooks are of a high standard and function well as a single source of

reference for both trainees and trainers. Trainers' roles and responsibilities are outlined clearly within documentation but the role of the university subject tutor in assuring the quality of the school-based training is not explicit or understood by all schools. New mentors are well supported in developing their role. The introduction of an innovative mentor training framework leading to accreditation at Masters level has created a good opportunity to evaluate and develop the role of more experienced mentors.

12. The training programme is resourced well. In addition to the excellent library and resources centre at the university, trainees have very good access to laptop computers and to an extensive range of web-based resources and online discussion facilities.

13. The quality assurance procedures support the management of good training. Aspects previously judged to be good or effective at the time of the last inspection remain so. Subject tutors maintain regular contact with the trainees during tutorials and training sessions at the university and, increasingly, through online discussion. They visit trainees during school placements, moderate the judgements about trainees' achievement of the Standards and take prompt action in response to any concerns. Through these visits, tutors are able to assess the quality of the school-based mentoring, broad details of which are then included in their annual subject reports. In addition to the information gained during tutors' visits, the university maintains a very useful database of contextual information on each partnership school. There is scope to draw together these various sources of information to produce a more coherent and detailed picture of the quality of training within individual schools.

14. Self-evaluation has improved since the last inspection as a result of more detailed analysis of recruitment and benchmarking data. The variability in the quality of trainees' lesson planning identified by this inspection indicates the need for the partnership to extend still further the range of evidence used. At present the evaluation of the programme is not informed by year-on-year analysis of trainees' standards and too much reliance is placed upon trainees' evaluation of their training and too little on experienced professional judgements. The university recognises this weakness and is in the process of completing an analysis of trainees' achievements over time.

15. The over-reliance on trainees' views, and the lack of measurable criteria to judge the impact of actions, limit the effectiveness of improvement planning. The annual monitoring report and the new partnership development plan outline a clear vision for the future direction of the partnership. However, subject action plans are not focused sharply enough on urgent priorities, including some of those raised by external examiners and by inspection. Schools benefit from trainees' evaluations of their school experience but do not receive other formal feedback from the university on the quality of training they provide.

16. The internal and external moderation of the assessment of trainees is thorough and effective. Very good support is provided for trainees at risk of failure.