

Anglia Ruskin University



Bishop Hall Lane
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1SQ

A primary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
Patricia Pritchard HMI

© Crown copyright 2007. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date are stated.
Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Introduction

Anglia Ruskin University works in partnership with 700 schools to provide primary initial teacher training courses. It offers a three-year full-time undergraduate route, a two-year part-time undergraduate progression route and a one-year PGCE. Undergraduate trainees may opt for a primary, early years or modern foreign languages pathway. Postgraduate trainees may opt for a primary, early years or modern foreign languages pathway. At the time of the inspection there were 379 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 structure, content and coherence of university-based training
- the leadership and management of university-based training
- the identification and use of external expertise to enhance the training
- the focus on the *Every Child Matters* agenda and creativity
- the attention paid to meeting trainees' individual needs
- the selection of high calibre trainees.

Points for action

- improving arrangements for allocating trainees to schools so that trainees start their placements on time and have good opportunities to teach across the whole age range for which they are being trained.

Points for consideration

- devise strategies which encourage headteachers to take a more active role in influencing course development
- ensure trainees receive subject-specific feedback following lesson observations
- clarify the intended impact, in terms of trainees' teaching skills, of improvement plans.

The quality of training

1. The newly restructured courses have been well planned to meet the Requirements. The National Curriculum, Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and the Primary National Strategy are thoroughly covered. The content of the courses is up-to-date and takes account of recent developments, such as coverage of the Rose report on the teaching of early reading. The *Every Child Matters* agenda and creativity in the curriculum are strong features. Development of trainees' subject knowledge is good and there are good opportunities for trainees to consider different teaching strategies.
2. Links between theory and practice are strong. Tasks and assignments follow on logically from university-based training and provide good opportunities for trainees to undertake first-hand research. Most tasks and assignments are well staged during the training. There is a high level of coherence between all the elements of the central training programme. This is because the modules have been planned collaboratively by the team of tutors who deliver the training. The tutors have a thorough knowledge of the course content and they have paid very good attention to linking subjects. The creativity module is particularly effective in providing opportunities for trainees to develop their understanding of how to make links across several subject areas. Information and communication technology is very well integrated into the training programmes.
3. The quality of university-based training is good. Tutors are well qualified and have recent primary teaching experience. Modules are well planned and are closely linked to the Standards. Trainees appreciate the training because tutors model primary practice well. Sessions are delivered with a good blend of improving subject knowledge alongside developing pedagogy to help trainees learn how to teach. As a result, they are able to plan, deliver and assess lessons, and complete assignments successfully. A suitable range of lesson observations is undertaken and trainees receive helpful feedback which is referenced to the Standards. Trainees are set targets, although these are not sufficiently subject-specific.
4. University-based training ensures trainees are well prepared to teach in their chosen age groups, and school experience placements cover the required key stages. However, not all trainees have good opportunities to teach and observe across the whole age range for which they are being trained. For example, some trainees on the Early Years courses have no experience in a nursery setting and some trainees on the primary courses have only limited experience in Key Stage 2.
5. Good attention is paid to tailoring training to meet individual needs. Assessments are used effectively at interview to assign appropriate pre-course tasks to individuals. Once training has begun, good use is made of subject audits to prepare personal development plans. Individual and group tutorials, and weekly mentor meetings during school experience provide further useful opportunities to check progress against targets and to set new ones.

6. A suitable range of summative and formative assessment activities is built into the course structure. These activities enable trainees' progress towards the Standards to be tracked effectively. Assignments are well marked and annotations on texts provide helpful guidance on how to improve. However, errors in standard English in mathematics and science assignments sometimes go unchecked.

7. Trainees have access to a good range of resources. Dedicated rooms for several subject areas, such as mathematics and science, have good facilities. The library is well resourced with academic texts and children's literature, although the availability of teaching resources such as reading schemes is more limited. The virtual learning environment is a powerful resource but it has yet to be fully exploited as a tool to support teaching and learning.

Management and quality assurance

8. Selection procedures are rigorous and result in the recruitment of well qualified trainees. The interview day is well planned to assess candidates' suitability for teaching. Candidates sit English and mathematics tests which are fit for purpose, and they participate in group and individual interviews. Consistency between interviewing panels is achieved through the use of a bank of set questions and the completion of standardised recording sheets. The retention rate for all courses is high. The partnership consistently meets its targets for recruiting from minority ethnic and under-represented groups. Procedures for ensuring that all trainees are suitable for working with children are implemented rigorously. The partnership is committed to reviewing its recruitment and selection procedures, and has drawn up a development plan which identifies pertinent priorities and actions; for example, the plan sets out ways to review the effectiveness of setting post-interview targets.

9. The management of the training within the university is good. The head of initial teacher training and the programme leaders provide clear strategic direction. There is a strong team approach to leading and managing course development, and to ongoing improvement, which involves subject leaders and tutors. The committee structure is well conceived and based upon a sound rationale. The primary programme committee has a clear remit to design, deliver and review the training programme, and is highly effective in fulfilling its aims and responsibilities. The successful restructuring of the curriculum, with its emphasis on the *Every Child Matters* agenda, and the introduction of the Early Years pathways are good examples of its effectiveness. The rationale behind the formation of termly staff/student liaison meetings is also good. Trainee representatives have good opportunities to meet staff to discuss their training and any concerns which affect their well-being.

10. The steering group provides a useful forum for university and partnership school staff to share good practice and discuss revisions to the course. However, although, in theory, a lot of schools are represented on the steering group, in practice, few headteachers attend regularly. Therefore, the opportunities for

schools to influence course development through attendance at steering group meetings are limited.

11. The partnership agreement sets out clearly the roles and responsibilities of all trainers. There are transparent financial arrangements between the university and schools. The partnership is effective at identifying external expertise to contribute to the delivery of training. For example, a number of headteachers contribute to the *Values and Pedagogy* module and this enriches the course. A very good initiative is the secondment of two headteachers to teach mathematics and science, and modern foreign languages.

12. The university is fortunate in recruiting a diverse range of schools in Essex, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. However, there have been problems allocating trainees to schools this year. Too many trainees, on the undergraduate and postgraduate routes, started their intermittent serial days late because they had no schools to go to. Systems for tracking trainees' placements are also not fully developed. The records give insufficient information on the year groups taught. This leads to some trainees not having a good breadth of teaching experience across the whole age range for which they are being trained. The partnership is well aware of the issues and has set in motion a strategy to address them, including the appointment of a partnership academic officer. A promising start has been made with collecting information about the individual characteristics of partnership schools in order to inform the placing of trainees.

13. Mentors have access to a well planned, skills-based training programme. Differentiated and accredited mentor training is offered via a modular programme which can lead to certification or credits towards a master's qualification. The university arranges specific subject mentor training sessions and this is a good development. New mentors are well supported. However, expectations regarding the updating of training for experienced mentors are not explicit and not all schools are aware of the training that is on offer. Staff development has a high profile within the university. Tutors are enabled to attend a wide range of training activities to match their individual training needs and the corporate needs of the university.

14. The quality assurance of the training is good. The monitoring of equal opportunities and race equality is very good. The university ensures that action is taken to address any areas of weakness. Course leaders closely monitor the quality of training. Peer observation of training sessions works well. In schools, the first lesson observation is a joint observation between the link tutor and school mentor. This is very good practice and consistently implemented. Internal and external moderation procedures are also secure. External examiners' reports provide helpful feedback on the quality of training; the university responds promptly to issues raised.

15. There is extensive evaluation of the training programmes by mentors, tutors and trainees, and firm evidence that the evaluations influence course development. For example, more training in the foundation subjects has been programmed in response to trainees' evaluations. There is now scope for more statistical analysis of

responses and for disseminating the outcomes to trainees and schools. The self-evaluation document audits provision against the Requirements and Standards and is well presented. It incorporates much useful detail and description but lacks incisive judgments on the strengths and weaknesses of provision.

16. The annual monitoring reports are comprehensive, draw upon a wide range of evidence and incorporate action plans for the next academic year. There are clear links between priorities for action and the content of the monitoring reports. Targets and measurable outcomes are clear and monitoring arrangements are well defined. However, the intended impact in terms of trainees' teaching skills is less clear. The university has addressed the issues from the last inspection report effectively and is making good progress in benchmarking its provision against that of other providers.