

Institute of Education

(University of London)
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A primary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The Institute of Education works in partnership with more than 500 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a one-year full-time PGCE and a 5 term part-time PGCE. At the time of the inspection there were 200 full-time trainees and 110 part-time 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 course content and structure
- the good arrangements for meeting the individual needs of the trainees, in particular the tracking of progress in pedagogy and subject knowledge
- the good systems for monitoring trainees' progress towards the Standards
- the successful recruitment of minority ethnic trainees, and the use of interview tests to identify needs and to pre-course tasks
- the good leadership of core subject components
- the very effective procedures for monitoring policies on equal opportunities and race relations.

Points for consideration

- promoting greater consistency in the quality of school-based training
- ensuring that all lesson observation feedback includes more subject-specific comments
- ensuring that improvement planning focuses on the impact of actions upon trainees' teaching abilities.

The quality of training

1. The structure and the content of the training programmes are very good and meet the Requirements very well. There is a high level of consistency in the quality of provision between the full and part-time programmes. The large number of schools in the partnership enables trainees to teach a variety of age ranges within two schools. The content of the programmes is progressively challenging, clearly referenced to the Standards, and places a strong emphasis on trainees developing their skills as reflective practitioners.

2. The cohesion of the different aspects of the programmes is good. For example, the professional issues and pedagogy components link very well to subject components and school experiences. This provides trainees with a firm grounding in current issues, best primary practice and the educational philosophy and theory underpinning them. The *Every child matters* agenda, plus *Excellence and Enjoyment* and issues of diversity, such as the development needs of bi-lingual children, underpin the training programme and are evident in subject components. There is also a strong emphasis on the trainees using cross-curricular links and creative approaches to teaching and learning to improve their own and pupils' thinking skills, and promote good levels of achievement.

3. The Institute is mindful of the requirement of primary schools to teach a modern foreign language by 2010. It therefore offers graduates of French and Spanish, and those who have either of these languages as a substantial part of their first degree, modern foreign language placements in overseas partnership schools. Alongside such opportunities, trainees take on a specialism in special educational needs, teaching and learning in multi-lingual settings, or one of the foundation subjects. This begins to prepare trainees well for their expected future role as subject leaders. The range of, and access to, resources in information and communication technology is good. Trainees develop good expertise in using technology to support teaching and learning.

4. Overall, the quality of training is good. In the Institute it is at least good with some very good aspects, and school-based training is at least sound. Link tutors are well qualified and experienced and have a wide range of recent and relevant primary classroom practice. Many centre-based staff have published research in their areas of expertise and draw on this work effectively with the trainees. School-based tasks are grounded in the good quality training trainees receive at the centre. Tasks provide very good opportunities for trainees to put theory into practice and to reflect on their experiences.

5. A strength is the way the Institute meets the individual needs of the trainees. Trainees undertake tests in English and mathematics at interview which lead to pre-course tasks for successful candidates. The trainees' performance in these tasks alerts the Institute to areas of subject knowledge that require improvement. The outcomes are shared with course tutors. At the start of the course, prompt and effective assistance is given to trainees who experience difficulties. The use of peer

mentors, for example linking a mathematics graduate with a non-specialist, is good and appreciated by trainees.

6. Trainees' professional development and school experience portfolios are instrumental in the effective tracking of their progress. The portfolios draw together all the evidence from school and centre-based training. Trainees' progress in meeting the Standards is well documented. The use of joint observations by school mentors and link tutors is developing but currently inconsistent. Lesson observations and weekly reviews provide trainees, mentors and link tutors with an overall view of the trainees' progress in meeting personal targets and specific Standards. Link tutors moderate judgements at the end of each school experience. School-based mentors and university tutors provide trainees with constructive feedback on their teaching. Class teachers and school mentors give helpful guidance to trainees on how to improve their skills in classroom organisation and strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. Subject-specific guidance on how trainees can apply their subject knowledge and assess pupils' learning is stronger in English than in mathematics and science. The quality of support from school-based mentors is generally good though the high turnover of mentors and class teachers, and their large numbers, inevitably leads to some variability.

7. Marking and assessment criteria are clear, rigorous and thorough. An appropriate proportion of assignments are second marked. Feedback on assignments is detailed, constructive and subject-specific. The submission of draft assignments and the resulting feedback is helpful in alerting trainees to how improvements could be made.

Management and quality assurance

8. Good recruitment and selection procedures ensure that the Institute recruits well qualified trainees. The Institute has used a variety of successful approaches to recruit, beyond its target, from minority ethnic groups. It is also attempting to recruit more males than the 12% in the current cohorts. The drop-out rate is relatively low and all those who do leave are interviewed to determine why. All those trainees who seek teaching posts are successful and many get jobs in partnership schools. Good information is provided to prospective candidates through the web site and other means. The interview procedures are appropriate and are carried out consistently taking full account of the Institute's equal opportunities and race relations policies. The Institute has been successful in increasing the participation of partnership school staff in the interviewing process, and those who do this are well briefed on their role.

9. The courses are well managed. Each subject component is well led and the university tutors cooperate very well to ensure good quality training. Communications within the partnership are good and accessible documentation, effective relationships between university-based and school-based staff, and regular, well attended partnership days, when mentors and tutors meet, ensure that all

concerned know what is expected of them and of the trainees. A simple and sensible committee structure supports the management of the course. School mentors, tutors and trainees are members of the chief primary course committee, a well run committee whose deliberations and decisions are properly minuted. This ensures that school-based staff are part of decision making about course management and development. School-based staff also contribute to some training sessions at the Institute.

10. A very large number of schools are in partnership with the Institute, amounting to several hundreds in any one year. This, together with the relatively high staff turnover in many schools, presents a challenge to the Institute in maintaining a sense of common purpose and cooperation within the partnership; it meets this challenge very well. There are sensible and realistic criteria for the selection of partner schools including evidence of good quality provision; deselection criteria are also clear.

11. All partners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and of what is expected of trainees at different stages of the course. However, the large numbers of mentors and class teachers involved leads, inevitably, despite good mentor training and briefing, to variation in the quality of school-based training. Resources in the Institute are good and partnership schools are generally very well resourced; many see it as part of their role to train trainees in the use of these resources.

12. University tutors are given appropriate opportunities to enhance their skills, knowledge and understanding. New staff are inducted well in all aspects of their training role during their probationary period, and they are observed teaching by senior colleagues. Appropriate arrangements are made for peer appraisal. Arrangements for mentor training follow the London mentor training framework. Initial mentor training is followed up with regular partnership days where mentors and class teachers are briefed on procedures, informed of course content and assessment, consulted about the quality of provision, and involved in the moderation of their assessment of trainees.

13. The Institute has very effective procedures for monitoring its policies on equality of opportunity, and is strongly committed to promoting good race relations. Appropriate arrangements are in place for recording and reporting racist incidents. Data on diversity is thoroughly analysed and related aspects are referred to in annual reviews.

14. The internal and external monitoring of provision is good. University tutors visit schools to observe trainees teaching at least twice during each school experience, and during their visit they have a moderation role. This is effectively carried out through discussion with mentors and class teachers together with occasional joint observations. A system of joint observations by pairs of tutors helps to ensure consistency in tutors' assessment of trainees' teaching. Arrangements for second marking are appropriate.

15. Monitoring of trainees progress towards the Standards is good. Course outlines, assignment rubrics, and feedback and target setting after observations of teaching are all closely linked to the Standards. The trainees' school experience profiles record which Standards they have addressed or achieved as they progress through the course; the final school experience profile records trainees' achievement of each of the Standards. External examiners moderate trainees' written work and practical teaching. Their reports, which tend to be generic rather than subject-specific, are used by the Institute as evidence in annual reviews and any recommendations are carefully considered and, where appropriate, acted upon; this leads to improvement.

16. Course evaluation is good and reflects a strong culture of continuous improvement. Trainees evaluate each course component, their evaluations are analysed and acted upon either at once or, through the review procedures, the following year. Mentors' evaluations of training are sought at partnership days; tutors exchange views formally in the initial teacher education committee as well as informally on a day-to-day basis.

17. Procedures for annual reviews are good. The reviews of course components feed into the annual programme review. Reviews are based on a broad range of evidence and lead to action plans. These plans identify appropriate points for action which are usually successfully achieved but do not identify success criteria or the expected impact of the action on the quality of training or the performance of trainees.