

# Manchester Metropolitan University

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## A primary initial teacher training short inspection report

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Managing inspector  
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## Introduction

Manchester Metropolitan University works in partnership with over 1000 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a four-year undergraduate programme and a one-year full-time post graduate programme at the Didsbury and Crewe campuses. Post graduate trainees can specialise in a modern foreign language. At the time of the inspection there were 1056 trainees at Didsbury and 460 trainees at Crewe.

## 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: 1

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

## Key strengths

- the high level of consistency in the quality of provision at both campuses
- the high quality professional studies programme
- highly effective leadership
- the partnership with schools
- action planning and self-evaluation.

## Points for consideration

- developing the role of professional development schools in promoting high quality training
- ensuring that trainees receive subject-specific feedback from mentors.

## The quality of training

1. The structure and the content of the training programmes meet the Requirements well. There is a high level of consistency in the quality of provision on the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at both campuses. The schools in the partnership provide good quality placements and enable trainees to teach a variety of age ranges within diverse communities. The content of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes is progressively more demanding and clearly referenced against the Standards.

2. A significant strength in both programmes is the professional studies course which gives trainees a firm grounding in best primary practice. The trainees' understanding and experiences are further enriched by opportunities offered through the university's international links and its involvement in national and regional projects. Training is also enhanced by the effective use of partnerships such as the 'Futures4U' project aimed at raising aspirations of Year 5 pupils in a part of Manchester with high unemployment and disaffection. The *Every Child Matters* agenda underpins much of the training programme although this is not evident in all subject modules. There is also a strong emphasis on showing trainees how to improve pupils' thinking skills to promote higher achievement. School-based tasks link well with the centre-based training; they provide good opportunities for trainees to put theory into practice and to reflect on their experiences.

3. Training includes a number of strong features including significant improvements since the last inspection. The modern foreign languages postgraduate course includes a valuable placement in an overseas partnership school and incorporates training in the subject leader role. Undergraduate trainees can take an option course in modern foreign languages as well as the compulsory unit as part of the foundation subjects' course. The key analytical linguistic skills learnt as part of this work enhances trainees' ability to teach English as an additional language. The range of, and access to, resources in information and communication technology has been improved and trainees develop good expertise in using technology to support their teaching. The development of the Science Learning Centre North West and refurbishment of rooms on both campuses now enables all trainees to study science in properly equipped science rooms. High emphasis is placed on unpicking trainees' misconceptions in science and showing them how to foster pupils' investigative skills.

4. Centre and school-based training is delivered by well qualified and experienced tutors who have a wide range of recent and relevant primary classroom practice. Many centre-based staff have published research in their areas of expertise and this benefits their work with the trainees.

5. The professional development review is the key to the effective tracking of the trainees' progress; linking well the evidence from school and centre-based training. As result, trainees' progress in meeting the Standards is documented well. School-based mentors and centre-based tutors provide trainees with constructive feedback

on their teaching and in relation to specific Standards. Good use is made of joint observations by school mentors and link tutors at the interim review stage to moderate judgements. Lesson observations, weekly reviews and interim placement reviews provide trainees, mentors and tutors with a clear, cumulative view of the trainees' progress in meeting personal targets and specific Standards. Although trainees receive much helpful guidance on how to improve their skills in classroom organisation and strategies to manage pupils' behaviour, there is less emphasis in lesson observations and reports on how well subjects have been taught and how well pupils have learned.

6. The well-devised initial audit alerts the provider to areas of subject knowledge that require improvement. This information is valuably shared with course tutors, professional development review tutors and, in specific cases, to the university's learning support unit. Subject-specific feedback on assignments also provides valuable guidance on how trainees can improve. Trainees draw up action plans which are closely monitored by tutors. Prompt, effective assistance is given to trainees who have difficulties in written or oral communication.

## Management and quality assurance

7. Improvements since the last inspection have significantly strengthened management systems and quality assurance procedures to increase the coherence and consistency of provision. This focus on coherence leads to the promotion of high quality training and trainee outcomes. Given that both the undergraduate and post graduate programmes are delivered at two campuses, and the partnership with schools continues to expand, this is no mean feat. Much is due to the empowering leadership of the head of primary programmes and the effective collaboration of the teams who have a shared commitment to develop reflective, creative teachers.

8. Highly efficient administration and robust, effective selection procedures underlie the university's success in recruiting good quality trainees. Taster days and positive images in documentation support the university's active, successful approach to recruiting trainees from underrepresented groups. There is good support before and during interview for candidates with disabilities. A recent addition to the identification of individual needs is the pilot scheme to use a computerised analysis of the writing task, completed during the interview, which gives candidates specific feedback on strengths and weaknesses in their writing. Candidates not offered a place are given helpful guidance on what to do before they re-apply.

9. Schools are very positive about the highly effective partnership which continues to expand. The university is able to place trainees in a wide range of contexts from small rural to large inner city primaries. Through accreditation, many schools have gained professional development school status and several are playing an important role in training mentors. However, their role in supporting the promotion of high

quality training within their cluster groups and in the partnership as a whole is underdeveloped.

10. The high level of consistency across the partnership is underpinned by the comprehensive, well organised documentation that lays out clearly what trainees and trainers are to do. Helpful printed summaries, newsletters and regular cluster group meetings update mentors and class teachers on changes in the programmes and provide guidance on monitoring and evaluating trainees' performance and practice. Focus groups within the partnership have been influential in compiling helpful guidance, for example, prompts for discussion with trainees about their teaching. Partnership conferences are very well received and enable schools and the university to share good practice.

11. The primary partnership steering group fulfils its remit well in reviewing practice and in guiding policy. As part of this, the group is alert to the issue of how to determine the value added by schools in the overall programme; one cluster of schools is currently exploring measures to provide evidence for this. Recent innovations have added to the effectiveness of established systems to assure the quality of trainees' school experiences. Good examples are the letters sent to headteachers outlining aspects of good practice identified by trainees on placement, and the increased role of link tutors in monitoring the quality of training in schools. There are also robust systems to secure comprehensive feedback from trainees and schools on the content and quality of central and school-based training. This information is analysed by course leaders to the benefit of trainees. The immediate evaluation of sessions, such as those in mathematics, given on one campus can lead to changes before the same content is delivered at the other.

12. The primary programmes are very well led with a strong commitment to improvement. The leadership gives a clear strategic steer with a focus on enabling others to develop ideas. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are based on thorough analysis of evaluative data and firmly focussed on the impact on trainees' standards. Action plans indicate well where improvement is needed and how it will benefit the trainees. Similarly, the very detailed self evaluation document outlines well the impact of action on provision. The same high degree of thoroughness also typifies the work to benchmark the university against other regional providers. Trainee representatives also contribute to strategic planning. Support groups meet regularly to discuss the implementation of the equal opportunities policy, especially for trainees from minority ethnic groups.

13. Moderation procedures are firmly established. Procedures for internal moderation are robust. External examiners receive a detailed induction pack on procedures, policies and expectations and their reports are well balanced in identifying effective practice and points for development. A very useful audit of all the reports provides the basis for action.