

# University of Derby

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A primary initial teacher training  
short inspection report  
2006/07

Managing inspector  
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## Introduction

The University of Derby works in partnership with a large number of schools to provide primary initial teacher training courses. It offers a four-year, Bachelor of Education (BEd) course for teaching the 5-11 age range, with an option for some trainees to complete in three years. It also offers a PGCE for teaching the 5-11 age range, including a specialism in French, and for teaching 3-7 year olds. At the time of the inspection, there were 414 trainees on the BEd route and 134 on the PGCE route.

## 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 auditing and monitoring of trainees' individual needs throughout the course
- the range of the content covered in the training programmes and the emphasis on cross-curricular links
- the range of assignments and the close links between school-based tasks and assignments
- the very good selection procedures which result in the recruitment of good trainees, including those from under-represented groups
- the commitment of the primary team to course development.

## Points for consideration

- introducing specific requirements for trainees to be observed teaching the core subjects and setting clear expectations about the quality of feedback
- strengthening the role of university-based subject leaders in monitoring the quality of school-based training
- involving trainees more in monitoring the partnership's equal opportunities and race equality policies.

## The quality of training

1. The different elements of the courses combine effectively to ensure that trainees make good progress towards meeting the Standards. The content of the various courses is tailored very well, and there is especially good coverage of the Primary National Strategy, the National Curriculum and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Programmes are reviewed and changed to anticipate and reflect national initiatives, such as the *Every Child Matters* agenda. Tasks and assignments are dovetailed successfully to link university and school-based experiences. They provide good opportunities for trainees to reflect on their own practice and to demonstrate progress towards the Standards. The range of content is very good; there is a notable emphasis on creative opportunities, cross-curricular learning and the productive use of out-of-school learning experiences.
2. Courses are coherent and there are strong links, for example, between education studies modules and the core subjects. The use of information and communication technology to support pupil's learning is integrated effectively within all subject programmes. Focused attention is given to developing trainees' skills and abilities in planning, teaching and assessing pupils for whom English is an additional language and for those with special educational needs. Links between university-based sessions and the school-based training in the core subjects overall are satisfactory. There are inconsistencies in the way schools interpret the partnership's requirement about observation and feedback, and the role of university subject leaders in developing good quality, consistent school-based provision is underdeveloped. There is, therefore, variation in the quantity and depth of subject-specific advice on trainees' teaching.
3. University training sessions are well planned. Tutors model good primary practice and draw upon a suitable mix of theoretical and practical activity. Highly focused attention is given to meeting the individual needs of trainees, from the selection interview through to the completion of the career entry and development profile. Support is especially effective for those trainees with disabilities. Trainees have access to a good range of practical resources for teaching and make productive use of the University of Derby's online services as a source of ideas and research materials. The online services include a highly valued notice-board facility which keeps trainees up-to-date with their training.
4. There are very effective systems to assess, track and develop subject knowledge and for supporting trainees to apply their knowledge to support children's learning. All trainees audit their subject knowledge in English, mathematics and science and this helps them to focus their study on their areas of weakness. Those trainees with weak subject knowledge are supported well to bring their knowledge up to the required standard through self-study tasks, additional taught sessions and peer tutoring.
5. The arrangements to monitor trainees' progress during the course are organised well. Written feedback on assignments effectively highlights strengths

and areas for development. Texts are annotated with helpful comments, and errors in standard English are noted.

6. Trainees receive regular feedback on the quality of their teaching. Feedback reports generally provide helpful evaluative commentaries, and most make clear references to the Standards. Although some commentaries on lessons include references to the subject being taught, the targets set for trainees are often insufficiently subject-specific. At the completion of school-based experiences, mentors, school link teachers and trainees collaborate to formulate targets for action that take good account of prior experience and which are matched closely to individual needs.

7. Trainees are responsible for providing evidence to show that they have met the Standards, and most perform this task well. A highly valued and locally agreed framework for assessment helps trainees and schools to reach a common and consistent interpretation of the Standards.

## Management and quality assurance

8. Selection procedures are very good. The partnership has a number of initiatives designed to recruit trainees from under-represented groups. The partnership has a good record of accepting those with disabilities, such as blind or profoundly deaf trainees.

9. The partnership continues to seek ways to improve its selection process in order to appoint trainees who are likely to succeed. All candidates are given feedback and unsuccessful applicants are advised of areas they would need to address if they wished to re-apply the following year. The mathematics and English tests are used successfully to filter out candidates without the required basic skills.

10. This large and diverse partnership has been strengthened by the increased number of teachers from schools contributing to the centrally taught programmes. In addition, the partnership development group brings together headteachers and university staff to work on collaborative projects. Communication between the university and partnership schools on operational matters is good and email is used well as a means of communication. The use of the trainees' intranet is developing well to involve trainees and mentors more in sharing resources and discussion groups.

11. The partnership handbook contains details of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the partnership. Descriptions of the roles of the university and school link tutors, however, do not make clear their responsibility for assuring the quality of school-based training. They conduct joint observations of teaching with mentors and check trainees' files but do not directly observe the school-based training to assess its quality. Nevertheless, since the last inspection, there is much more consistency of practice in the work of university link tutors.

12. There is a clear rationale for the governance of the partnership. At the time of the last inspection there was some lack of strategic focus but this has been addressed with a rationalisation of the committees and more involvement of schools. There is effective partnership development through the regular meetings of the school link tutors, and changes to the course structure and content are discussed and acted upon where possible.

13. Systems to monitor the assessment of trainees are good. For example, mentors are actively encouraged to cross moderate their judgements and to make joint observations with school link tutors. University link tutors carefully assess trainees' progress in school and moderate assessments within and across schools. Procedures to monitor and support trainees who are in danger of failing are well designed.

14. Mentors are expected to attend training and the partnership monitors this very well. Since the last inspection school experience guidance for mentors has been updated and improved. Mentors are encouraged, through a useful self-grading sheet, to evaluate their own performance. Even so, some mentors still view their role mainly in terms of assessing the trainees. Information about the quality of schools is collected from both trainees and university link tutors. This is then discussed at university link tutor meetings and actions are taken to improve the quality of mentoring. The handbook specifies how schools are selected and deselected. In practice few schools are deselected; the partnership has a stated aim of trying to minimise this through support. The partnership also monitors compliance with its equal opportunities and race equality policies but trainees are not engaged sufficiently in this process.

15. The primary team is committed to improving the quality of the programmes. Each aspect of the provision is reviewed regularly and action plans are monitored. Module booklets are reviewed in order to ensure consistency and monitoring draws on observations by staff, trainees' evaluations and external examiners' reports. Evaluative reports are written at module and programme levels, leading to action plans that are checked. Subject action plans are good though they do not show how the impact of subject training is to be measured against trainees' outcomes. Benchmarking of course outcomes, against similar courses, is better developed than at the time of the last inspection.

16. The initial teacher training team is reflective and self critical; the partnership has a strong commitment to self evaluation. Subject and programme leaders respond well to changes and look to continuously improve the quality of their training.