

# University of East London



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A primary initial teacher training  
short inspection report  
2006/07

Managing inspector:  
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Additional Inspector

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## Introduction

The University of East London works in partnership with around 180 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a PGCE in the 3 to 7 and 5 to 11 age ranges; ten trainees on this course follow a flexible route and 11 are specialising in a modern foreign language. At the time of the inspection there were 220 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 coherence between the various elements of the course
- thorough coverage of diversity and inclusion, and the principles of *Every Child Matters*
- explicit attention to the Standards in all elements of the training
- good recruitment of mature trainees and trainees from under-represented groups
- good internal moderation of judgements on trainees' progress and achievement.

## Points for consideration

- using information from interview tests to provide individually tailored pre-course activities
- sharing information on trainees' subject knowledge with school mentors.

## The quality of training

1. The course is well planned to meet the Requirements in full at a good level. The content and structure of all aspects are well designed and very well referenced to the Standards. This ensures that trainees gain good knowledge, experience and understanding of teaching and learning in the key stages for which they are being trained. There is a good balance between central and school-based training. Cross-curricular elements and professional studies are embedded throughout the course as are the principles of *Every Child Matters*. This focus on *Every Child Matters* is a strength of the course, along with provision for English as an additional language, inclusion and diversity.

2. The course is coherent; the National Curriculum, Guidance for the Foundation Stage and the Primary National Strategy are well covered and reference to the Standards is explicit throughout. Most tutors teach across professional, core and foundation subjects and therefore have a good understanding of the course as a whole. Centre-based tutors also fulfil the role of professional tutor and as a result have close links with partner schools and a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in trainees' teaching. Directed tasks and assignments are rooted in classroom practice so that a clear link is established between taught sessions and practical teaching. For example, the first assignment involves exploring the benefits of cross-curricular teaching and learning through planning for an out-of-school visit.

3. Tutors bring a good range of experience and expertise to the course. They provide well-planned training which is clearly focused on addressing the Standards and provides a good theoretical basis whilst also modelling good primary and early years teaching strategies. Training sessions are positively evaluated by trainees who have a high regard for the tutors and welcome the opportunities to be active participants and share the results of directed tasks. School mentors facilitate the successful completion of school-based activities and furnish trainees with good quality feedback which identifies strengths and weaknesses, provides subject-specific advice explicitly linked to the Standards and sharply focused targets for improvement. Mentors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and are well supported by very good documentation and training. Trainees have good access to essential resources through a well equipped library and a dedicated internet site.

4. Individual needs are generally well met and appropriate support provided through the very detailed course plan, use of the initial core subject audits and explicit expectations and timetabling contained in the handbooks and on the web site. A strong feature of the course is the use of study groups for collaborative learning, peer support and extension and challenge for more able trainees. Good use is made of the language diversity of the trainees to enhance the work on English as an Additional Language and inclusion. Mentors and professional tutors provide good support for individual needs during placements, although mentors do not always have full knowledge about subject knowledge development needs. They

carry out regular observations and give trainees useful, specific and developmental feedback.

5. Monitoring and assessment of trainees' achievements and progress towards achieving the Standards are rigorous and comprehensive. Initial audits are used in the university to identify areas of specific weakness, provide support and track progress. Trainees are regularly given individual targets for improvement and complete daily reflective logs and weekly evaluations which focus on their own learning. They keep useful records of evidence to demonstrate their progress against the Standards. The range of assessed activities provides a good balance between written tasks, research and practical work. Assignments and tasks are well designed and rigorously marked to provide secure evidence of progress in subject knowledge and pedagogy. The programme of lesson observations and school-based meetings is rigorously fulfilled. Arrangements for the final assessment of trainees are clear and well understood by trainers and trainees.

## Management and quality assurance

6. Recruitment and selection procedures are good and ensure that the university recruits well-qualified trainees, many of whom have previous experience of working in schools. The university is very successful in recruiting trainees from minority ethnic groups and who are males. A higher than average proportion of trainees drop out of the course, though all these are interviewed and their reasons for doing so are usually personal rather than unsuitability for teaching. The university provides good information to prospective applicants, particularly through its web site. The interview arrangements are carried out consistently and rigorously, taking full account of the equal opportunities and race relations policies. The university tries to involve partnership school staff in interviewing and succeeds in doing this in around a quarter of cases. Trainees take English and mathematics tests at interview, though these are used mainly to screen out unsuitable candidates and do not lead to any individually tailored pre-course activities. However trainees are sent a pack of materials before the course begins which includes sample subject audit tests and reading activities.

7. The course is well managed. The programme director leads a committed team of tutors very well. Communications within the partnership ensure that school staff are aware of how the trainees are progressing and what they are required to do at each stage of the course. The good day-to-day management is supported well by an effective committee structure. Partnership school staff are appropriately represented on committees, as are trainees. Committees take important decisions and clear minutes record their discussions. School staff are involved in course management and development as well as in the delivery of training, for example, training in how to teach physical education is provided for all trainees by one partnership school.

8. The criteria for choosing partner schools are well considered and clearly set out in the course documentation. The process for deselecting schools is fair and when necessary it is carried out sensitively. All partnership staff have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the university tutors work closely with school mentors to ensure that the school and university-based elements of training are complementary and coherent. Resources in the university are good and easily accessible to trainees. Schools are well resourced and encourage trainees to make full use of what is available.

9. The arrangements for mentor training are good and a high proportion of teachers in partner schools are at one of the three stages of mentor training set out in the London mentor training framework. Attendance at mentor training is boosted by strategies such as providing training on Saturdays for which attending mentors receive payment. Visiting university tutors bring any mentor who cannot attend training up-to-date; regular joint observations by university and school staff enhance mentor skills as well as ensuring consistency of judgements. Appropriate systems, such as induction for new staff and observation of training sessions by senior staff, ensure that university tutors are well trained to carry out their work effectively.

10. The university takes very seriously the monitoring of policies on equal opportunities and promoting good race relations. Data on diversity are analysed well and appropriate arrangements are in place for recording any racial incidents. A new module on diversity and equal opportunity has been introduced and great care is taken in allocating trainees to placement schools. Training in equal opportunities is mandatory for all university staff.

11. Internal and external monitoring of training is good. Senior staff observe tutors teaching and give effective feedback. University tutors visit schools to observe trainees frequently, and do a joint observation with school mentors at least once during each assessed school experience. Appropriate arrangements are made for second marking of assignments. External examiners' reports are suitably detailed and the university responds quickly and positively to any areas for improvement which they identify.

12. The arrangements for evaluating the course are good. Trainees evaluate each module and they also have representatives on committees who feedback any concerns to the university staff. Mentors communicate their views at mentor training sessions or when tutors visit schools. Evaluations lead to course improvement, either immediately or through the annual review process; for example, the assessment load and structure were recently changed because of trainees' evaluations. Trainees have a strong voice through their group representatives and feel valued and well supported.

13. The annual review and enhancement procedures are very thorough. The annual report is based on a broad range of evidence from trainees, tutors, mentors and external examiners. This leads to comprehensive and well-designed action plans which are carefully executed. The annual review for each year refers in detail

to the previous year's plan and how well it has been achieved. The provider has a good sense of how it performs compared to similar providers.