

Bradford College



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A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
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Introduction

Bradford College works in partnership with about 50 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers one-year PGCE courses in mathematics, modern foreign languages, information and communication technology (ICT), citizenship and science as well as Key Stage 2/3 science and vocational education in applied science, applied business, health and social care, leisure and tourism and applied ICT. All courses provide training for teaching the 11-18 age range, with the exception of vocational education, which is 14-19. At the time of the inspection there were 112 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: 3

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- rigorous selection procedures
- very good links between the college and partnership schools
- coherence between elements of the training programme.

Points for action

- improving the quality of training in modern foreign languages
- improving the analysis of data that is used to inform action planning
- ensuring that all tutors, mentors and trainees have a full understanding of the procedures for assessing trainees.

Points for consideration

- reviewing the quality assurance role of the ITT co-ordinator
- providing external subject-specific advice to improve subject provision.

The quality of training

1. The structure and content of training are good, except for modern foreign languages, where there are significant weaknesses. The central training is supported well by effective school-based training. Placements are well managed to give trainees a good range of experiences, including Key Stage 2 and post-16 provision. Teachers and other visiting speakers are used well in delivering aspects of professional studies and subject training. Training in subjects includes current developments such as the Secondary Strategy and changes to examination specifications. There are limitations in the modern foreign languages course. It does not provide sufficient time for important aspects of the subject including assessment, the teaching of grammar and cultural awareness.
2. The different elements of the training cohere well. The range of issues covered in the centre-based professional studies programme is appropriate and links effectively to aspects of the subject training. School-based professional studies programmes complement the other elements of the training well. The programme of school-based activities helps to effect consistency of training across schools. Communications between tutors and mentors are very good and tutors are prompt in responding to mentor concerns. The quality of the large majority of subject training is good. Tutors draw well on their subject knowledge and model good practice in their own teaching; sessions are interactive and engage trainees well. Pastoral care and support provided by tutors and mentors is very good.
3. Trainees' individual needs are addressed well in the majority of subjects. As part of the selection procedures those trainees with specific needs are set pre-course tasks or offered places conditional on gaining wider experience. Enhancement courses in mathematics and science are used very effectively to ensure that trainees have good levels of subject knowledge before beginning their training. Programmes are available to support weaknesses with literacy and ICT and extra, targeted support has been provided for trainees who need help with mathematics. The use and follow up of subject audits is more effective in some subjects than in others. This is done particularly well in science and citizenship where gaps are identified and met within the centrally taught college programme. The follow up to audits and action plans is less effective in vocational education and modern foreign languages where it is not always clear how weaknesses in subject knowledge are being addressed.
4. The progress of trainees is regularly monitored during the course through lesson observations and reviews. Trainees have regular, weekly meetings with their subject mentor to review progress and set targets. Lesson observation feedback from subject tutors and mentors is often very good, although feedback from a minority of mentors and teachers is poor. In addition, not all mentors complete the required number of formal lesson observations. Some mentors' comments are largely descriptive and lack clear judgement or points for improvement. Summative profiles of trainees' progress are thorough and provide good information about strengths and weaknesses for the second placement school. Problems with

individual trainees' progress are quickly identified and action taken by subject tutors. This includes extra visits and individual action plans for trainees, where needed.

5. Procedures for assessing trainees against the Standards and for moderating assessments and assignments are satisfactory. All trainees have some lessons jointly observed to help tutors moderate mentor judgements. Tutors work well with mentors and help them to develop their assessment practice through mentor meetings and school visits. Tutors formally quality assure the work of mentors, however they do not always spend enough time in school to carry out this role effectively. There is inconsistent practice and understanding in mentors' recording of progress against the Standards at the end of the first placement. As a consequence, there is confusion about the progress trainees are making against the Standards.

Management and quality assurance

6. Selection procedures are designed well to meet the Requirements. Recruitment is close to, or above target in all subjects with particularly good recruitment in physics and chemistry, aided by the college's science pre-course enhancement programme. Candidates are well informed about selection procedures and the nature of training programmes before attending interview. Procedures for monitoring the policies for equality of opportunity and race relations are effective and the college has been successful in attracting high numbers of applicants from minority ethnic groups. Interviews include a good range of challenging activities used to identify suitable candidates. Mentors contribute to selection interviews and the whole process, from initial application to preparing for the interview is supported by helpful guidance documentation. Candidates' subject knowledge and experience are identified and recorded at interview along with strategies for addressing any gaps, such as by attending a pre-course literacy workshop or a subject enhancement course offered by the college.

7. Partnership arrangements are effectively managed. School partners are represented on the programme steering committee and ITT co-ordinators and subject mentors are regularly consulted at mentor meetings and through formal evaluation procedures. The partnership has responded to the points for action and consideration of the last inspection report; for example, link tutors now regularly undertake joint observations with subject mentors to assure the quality of school-based training. There has been less progress regarding the monitoring role of the ITT co-ordinator and the quality of whole-course improvement planning.

8. Most subjects are led and managed well. However, the management of the programme overall has been negatively affected by recent college restructuring. Some key leadership roles have been carried out in an 'acting' capacity and recruitment to some permanent posts has only recently been completed. Programme leaders and the college management are aware of the difficulties posed by the restructuring, and plans are in place to return to a more effective and

appropriate management structure for September 2007. With the exception of modern foreign languages, subject course evaluation and review are satisfactory, although some subjects do not include sufficient action planning related to current developments in their subject. Although a great deal of evaluative data is collected by programme leaders, this is not always comprehensively analysed to inform planning.

9. The introduction of a partnership and placements tutor has had a very positive effect on the development of the partnership. The tutor has very good knowledge of the schools and plays a pivotal role in strengthening partnership links and assisting in the training of new mentors. The very good communications between the college and schools are being further enhanced by the use of a virtual learning environment and other electronic communications. Schools are suitable venues for training and the partnership and placements tutor, in collaboration with the subject tutors, makes good efforts to ensure that trainees are placed in schools that match their needs. The quality of the placements is evaluated by trainees and mentors and there are clear criteria for the selection and de-selection of schools or departments. Training for mentors and ITT co-ordinators is good and generally well attended. New mentors who are unable to attend receive one-to-one training from a visiting tutor. Mentor training covers important topics such as observing lessons and giving feedback. There is an appropriate level of resources and these are deployed fairly to ensure trainees are supported in school placements as well as in their central training.

10. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. School-based training and the trainee entitlement are monitored during link tutor visits and through trainee evaluations. Centre-based trainers are observed by their peers and receive performance management reviews with line managers. When the training falls short of requirements, managers are generally effective in intervening to remediate matters. However, this has not currently dealt with the significant variations in the quality of feedback to trainees.

11. Whilst procedures for assessing trainees' achievement of the Standards are outlined in documentation, there is lack of clarity regarding the assessment of trainees' achievements at the end of the first placement. There are, however, effective systems in place to revisit interim judgments to ensure that the assessment information sent to a trainee's second placement school is fair and accurate. Consistency in the marking of assignments is secured by effective internal and external cross-moderation. External examiners provide well-substantiated verification of the accuracy of final assessment. However, not all subject tutors receive external subject-specific advice on how to improve their courses.