

# Kent and Medway Training

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A secondary initial teacher training  
inspection report

2007/08

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## Introduction

Kent and Medway Training is a consortium of 15 schools which provides secondary initial teacher training courses, all of which are for the 11-16 age range, with the exception of business studies which is 14-19. It offers PGCE courses in business studies, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. At the time of the inspection there were 28 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 revised report combines the judgements from a short inspection of the provision and of the management and quality assurance arrangements in 2006/07, with the judgements from the scrutiny of further evidence submitted to Ofsted in February 2008.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Main inspection judgements

Quality of training: Grade 1

Management and quality assurance: Grade 1

## Key strengths

- the very well-structured and comprehensive training course
- very good management with highly effective communication
- a high degree of commitment and involvement from all partnership schools, including at senior level
- very effective mentoring which meets trainees' individual needs very well
- rigorous quality assurance of all aspects of training
- a commitment to the continuing improvement of provision.

## The quality of training

1. The quality of training is outstanding. The course is designed very well to enable trainees to meet the Standards. Central subject programmes are comprehensive, referenced well to the Standards and reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain up-to-date. A successful feature of the mathematics and English courses is the provision of excellent training in transition issues. Subject programmes mostly offer regular opportunities for trainees to share their subject knowledge in central training sessions, but peer support is not yet developed fully across all subjects.
2. A recent innovation is the use of full training days early in the course for the development of subject knowledge. This has been particularly successful in modern languages and science, where key areas are explored in depth. A range of expert practitioners from schools contributes to training in all subjects, ensuring that trainees experience a wide range of perspectives.
3. In response to issues raised in previous inspection reports, the training programme has been successfully adapted and significantly improved. The Secondary National Strategy is now firmly embedded in all subject training. Trainees demonstrate at a relatively early stage of the course how well they understand the importance of identifying clear learning objectives and of lesson evaluation. Improved lesson planning and evaluation forms have contributed to this understanding. They also plan very well for the successful involvement of support staff in their classrooms.
4. The professional studies programme is comprehensive and trainees respond very positively to the training sessions. A full and detailed handbook gives an overview of the programme and focuses clearly on coherence between generic and subject-specific topics; for example, lesson planning and an introduction to the National Curriculum are closely linked. However, occasional changes to the professional studies programme in the course of the year result in some erosion of these links. Relatively new topic areas, such as *Every Child Matters* issues, are covered very thoroughly in the central programme, but are not yet embedded in all the subject programmes. Training in information and communication technology provides good opportunities for trainees to use it as a tool to support teaching and learning.
5. School placements are planned well to ensure that trainees have sufficient access to classes in both key stages and also experience contrasting schools, for example with respect to the gender and ability of pupils. Very good arrangements are made for trainees to support pupils who have English as an additional language. Business studies trainees have good opportunities to focus on the 14-19 curriculum, while also gaining appropriate knowledge of Key Stage 3. Trainees receive high quality support from their placement schools. Subject mentors link their training closely to the central sessions. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in the provision of guidance to schools. Handbooks now contain detailed

information on the subject studies sessions, and also include preparation and follow-up tasks which trainees complete with their mentor's help. This results in a high degree of consistency of practice across schools. Good ongoing communications between lead subject mentors and mentors in schools bring coherence to the training and have resulted in a strong focus on subject knowledge development.

6. Trainees' individual needs are met very well through close collaboration between all those involved in training. The subject knowledge audit, subsequent individual action plans and the review process are well established and the participation of mentors secures robust support and guidance for trainees. A range of opportunities is exploited well to develop trainees' subject knowledge, for example independent research and regular testing.

7. Trainees undertake a range of well selected assignments which support the taught programme very effectively. These are appropriately sequenced and clearly link theory and practice, contributing fully to trainees' development. Assignments are marked, standardised and moderated with rigour, and trainees receive very good formative feedback from this process.

8. The monitoring of trainees' progress against the Standards is thorough. Schools make good use of the range of feedback forms available to observers in different contexts. Feedback is regular, has subject-specific targets and is cross-referenced to the Standards well. A strength is the fact that trainees are observed by a wide range of professionals and so gain different perspectives on how they might improve.

9. Mentors track trainees' overall progress very well, set regular targets and provide regular reviews. The provider recently moved towards the setting of learning objectives for trainees at their weekly mentor meetings; this ensures that targets are focused on what they need to know, understand and be able to do rather than on the actions they need to carry out. Assessment systems are well understood by all involved and support training very effectively.

10. A strong focus on the link between learning and assessment underpins all aspects of training from the outset; as a result trainees have a very clear understanding of what they have achieved and where they need to direct their energies in the future.

## Management and quality assurance

11. Management and quality assurance procedures have improved significantly in successive inspections. These have had a very positive impact on the quality of training, which now reflects a relentless pursuit of improvement in all subject areas.

12. Selection procedures are rigorous and result in the recruitment of high quality trainees. Information provided to applicants in the brochure and on the web site is

detailed, clear and accurate. Promotional materials are well designed and reflect a strong commitment to diversity. The provider has considerable success in recruiting trainees from minority ethnic groups, particularly in science and business studies.

13. Interview procedures are robust. Evidence from interviews is used very well to guide trainees prior to the course, and to target additional support very effectively from the outset; for example, recently one trainee whose first language is not English received written confirmation after interview that he would be given individual support in his first placement school. Gaps in areas of subject knowledge are identified at interview and used to plan appropriate school placements; for example in science, trainees with expertise in biology are placed in departments with particular strengths in physics or chemistry.

14. The very experienced and knowledgeable course director continues to lead and manage the provision very effectively. With the full support of the lead school, she engages all partners, developing teams which work across the partnership to support the ongoing improvement of training. The compact size of the partnership is exploited very well: individual strengths are built on, links developed and maintained, and a relentless drive for improvement prevents complacency. The active commitment of headteachers is a great strength of the partnership. They are fully involved through the committee structure and contribute to decisions on the possible extension of provision. One new school has joined the partnership since the previous inspection: very rigorous and well documented vetting procedures, including a visit by one of the partnership heads, have ensured its successful integration.

15. Communication within the partnership is highly efficient. Schools and trainees receive prompt and helpful responses to any queries. A recent development has been the establishment of a web site to extend subject support and to involve trainees in moderated online discussion. The appointment of an e-learning coordinator with dedicated time to develop this facility resulted in trainees using this to access advice, for example guidance on assignments.

16. Management of the professional development of lead mentors, and their tight-knit teams of subject mentors, is very effective. In addition to regular meetings, their own subject knowledge development is enhanced by involvement in externally funded projects; for example, science and mathematics mentors from a range of schools are involved in developmental projects, from which trainees also benefit.

17. The majority of lead mentors have been in post for some time. One new lead mentor has received a very effective induction: as well as shadowing the previous post-holder, she has benefited from working with a 'buddy' from a different subject area. Very effective teamwork, both within and across subjects, results in trainers having a detailed knowledge of trainees' progress.

18. The quality assurance of school-based training is outstanding. In addition to regular observation of teaching by their mentors, trainees are also observed systematically by the school's professional tutor and a member of the management

team. Lead mentors visit trainees on each placement: this results in a very good knowledge of individual departments and effective matches to trainees' needs. Very well-trained professional tutors manage quality very efficiently within their schools, and this has a clear impact on the effectiveness of mentoring. An exceptional feature of quality assurance is headteachers' active role within their schools, intervening on the rare occasions when ineffective training practice is identified.

19. A further strength is the work of the quality assurance support partner. He has had a very positive impact on the quality of mentoring, particularly on the training of new mentors. This has resulted in their acquiring rapidly a deep understanding of their role, thus producing a high level of consistent support across departments and schools. All these elements combine to provide very secure systems for supporting trainees and underpin high quality training. In the rare instances when there is cause for concern about trainees' progress, intervention is prompt, very well documented and very effective.

20. Trainees' evaluations of subject courses, induction arrangements and school placements are very well used by the provider to bring about future improvement.

21. Annual review and action-planning procedures are very strong, both at course and subject levels. This leads to the year-on-year improvement of all subject strands. Self-evaluation, both at course and subject levels, is detailed, accurate and honest. Course leaders are aware of the need to collect, analyse and act upon quantitative data, and they undertake useful benchmarking both within and beyond local provision.

22. The provider's response to internal evaluation and external examination and inspection is strong. Almost all issues raised in previous inspection reports have been addressed successfully, with clear evidence of impact across all elements of training. Planning for ongoing improvement is supported by very robust management and quality assurance systems.