

Leeds Metropolitan University

Carnegie Faculty of Sport and Education
Carnegie Hall
Headingley Campus
Beckett Park
Leeds
LS6 3QS

A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
Sonya Williamson HMI

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Introduction

The Leeds Metropolitan University works in partnership with 30 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers the following courses in physical education: a four year undergraduate, and one year fulltime and flexible route PGCE. At the time of the inspection there were 179 undergraduate trainees and 26 postgraduate trainees, nine of these being on the flexible 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 coherence between the different elements of the courses
- use of school cluster groups to support high quality training
- trainees' individualised training plans during school placements
- the high quality physical education and information and communication technology (ICT) training resources
- the use of evaluation evidence to make improvement
- a clear commitment to widening participation.

Points for consideration

- improving link tutors' monitoring of the quality of professional tutors' work so they carry out their responsibilities better
- developing improvement planning at individual course level
- individualising feedback to schools about the quality of the training they provide.

The quality of training

1. Training programmes are designed carefully to make it possible for all trainees to attain the Standards. Since the previous inspection, the timing of school placements has been successfully reviewed to enable better opportunities for regular teaching, especially for undergraduate trainees. Good emphasis is now given to the early development of trainees' subject knowledge in the six activities and four aspects of physical education.

2. Training is focused on the progressive development of teaching skills and is explicitly referenced to the Standards. Particularly good attention is given to developing trainees' understanding of current initiatives in physical education and teaching pupils with special educational needs. Information on *Every Child Matters* is beginning to be included in training sessions. Training in the use of assessment has improved since the previous inspection, with greater emphasis on developing trainees' knowledge of the range of accreditation opportunities in physical education. Good use is made of staff expertise within partnership schools to support central training programmes.

3. Coherence is a strength of the course as modules in professional studies are explicitly linked to physical education. The good range of directed tasks ensures that centre-based training is followed up well in schools.

4. Trainees are prepared very well for school placements. All trainees have highly individualised training programmes during placements, based on their particular needs, and this is a strong feature of the course. Good use is made of reports at the end of school experiences to place trainees carefully in schools that meet their identified areas for development. Information provided by postgraduate flexible route trainees, about their previous work with children, is used well to set their individual training programmes. Careful tracking of teaching experiences now takes place to ensure that all trainees have sustained opportunities to teach the six activities and the full age range for which they are training; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Although very useful guidance is provided on extension activities for more able trainees, this is not fully utilised by schools.

5. Centre and school-based staff have very good subject knowledge and use this very effectively to model good practice in teaching. The use of ICT is a particularly strong feature of both central and school-based training programmes. The partnership has an extremely well developed system of cluster groups of schools to support training. Cluster managers have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the consistency of mentor training and the assessment of trainees. This is helping to ensure school-based training is of a consistently high standard. Also, the good use of grade criteria and descriptors ensures secure and consistent judgements on trainees' progress. Lead mentors, identified by their good practice, effectively share this within the cluster.

6. The assessment arrangements contribute well to training. A wide range of strategies is used for the assessment of trainees reflecting the assessment for learning opportunities available in schools. Assignments are relevant and help trainees make progress towards achievement of the Standards. Marking, annotation of work and feedback are comprehensive with useful comments to help trainees improve their work further. Assignments and directed tasks employ a good breadth of assessment methods. This successfully models good assessment practice for trainees.

7. Records of weekly mentor meetings include clear information related to trainees' teaching experiences and agreed targets based on the Standards. Lesson observations are completed comprehensively with relevant and pertinent comments linked to trainees' weekly targets. School-based tutors are meticulous in assessing and checking trainees' progress towards attainment of the Standards. All staff involved in training have a good understanding of the final assessment procedures. External examiners are used appropriately to ensure consistency of judgements, particularly at the pass/fail borderline.

8. The professional development portfolio is used extensively by trainees to provide evidence on the achievement of the Standards. Postgraduate trainees write highly reflective comments, set against each piece of evidence, about the impact on their teaching. However, this is a less well developed aspect of undergraduate trainees' portfolios.

Management and quality assurance

9. Very high course completion and employment rates and low withdrawal rates demonstrate the effectiveness of the selection procedures in identifying high quality trainees. Clear selection criteria are used for each stage. The different elements of the interview ensure applicants are clear about the professional, subject and personal demands of the course. The emphasis is clearly on applicants' practical and pedagogical skills and this is followed through into central training. The identification of applicants' strengths and areas for development and the communication of the need for them to undertake individualised developmental activities prior to starting the course are excellent. However, not all applicants to the flexible route are clear about how their training will be individualised.

10. There is clear commitment to widening participation. A very extensive range of targeted marketing strategies is used well to promote equal opportunities and race equality. These include the use of high profile physical education role models and projects with local schools and community groups. The strategies are designed well to promote high expectations and enhance career aspirations within minority ethnic communities. The choice of these strategies is well informed by university-based research. The monitoring of underrepresented groups, from application to employment, to improve selection systems and the support they receive, is excellent.

11. Central training is delivered in a very high quality learning environment with excellent facilities for physical education and access to ICT to support training. A range of appropriate committees supports the management and quality assurance of the courses well. Course leaders set clear direction for the development of the courses. The cluster meetings ensure good involvement of schools in course review and development. For example, mentors and professional tutors value the work of the teacher fellows, who are selected from partnership schools, since they bring current best practice in schools to the forefront of course delivery. Ideas are successfully disseminated through both link visits and cluster meetings.

12. Well documented procedures and carefully chosen criteria for the selection and withdrawal of partnership schools and departments ensures high quality placements. Schools provide good environments for training. Placements are planned well to meet trainees' professional and subject knowledge needs because the course leaders and school cluster leaders know their schools well. Cluster arrangements are very effective in ensuring the smooth running of the partnership. Communication between schools and the centre is good and has been considerably strengthened since the last inspection. Schools appreciate the swift response by the university to any issues raised and they feel able to feed back informally to the university via clusters. However, schools do not receive individual feedback on their own provision to celebrate good practice or identify areas that could be improved.

13. Module leaders have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities; new leaders are particularly well supported through buddying, liaison opportunities and peer evaluation activities. Mentors are trained well; they understand their roles and responsibilities and carry them out effectively. Mentor training is responsive to issues revealed through quality assurance procedures. This has led to improvements in target setting and meeting individual needs.

14. Link tutors have responsibility for assuring the quality of school placements. However, there is too much inconsistency in the way they do this. This means that the quality of the school-based professional tutors' work is not sufficiently monitored. As a result, there is inconsistency in the professional studies programmes provided by professional tutors, in their quality assurance of mentors' work and their oversight of trainees' progress.

15. Course development is very responsive to issues raised through evaluation procedures. For example, the introduction of the lead mentor role complements the work of link tutors. This has resulted in more individualised training for mentors. A wide range of benchmarking information is used very well to support quality assurance processes. Trainees have good opportunities to evaluate their training. However, while there is an overall improvement plan for secondary provision this does not include quantitative success criteria to inform judgements about the impact of actions on the quality of training. There are no improvement plans at individual course level to support course leaders in setting direction and to enable them to make more systematic responses to monitoring evidence.

16. Procedures for the assessment of trainees are secure since there is good quality assurance of mentoring and moderation of mentors' assessments through cluster meeting arrangements. Good procedures exist for cross moderation between clusters and joint observations between mentors and link tutors. External assessment arrangements complement these systems well.