

University of the West of England

Faculty of Education
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol
BS16 1QY

A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
James Sage HMI

© Crown copyright 2007. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date are stated.
Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Introduction

The University of the West of England works in partnership with 88 schools and colleges to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers training for the full secondary age phase (11-18) in art and design, design and technology, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science (biology). Trainees are assessed against the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in two key stages, normally Key Stages 3 and 4. It offers training for the 14-19 age range in business education. At the time of the inspection there were 193 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: 1

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- the content and structure of the course
- the coherence between the different elements of the course
- leadership and management in the university
- the strength of the partnership and the relationship with schools
- the quality and clarity of documentation
- the rigour of course review and improvement planning.

Points for consideration

- improving the consistency of feedback and target setting given by some new mentors
- clarifying the quality assurance procedures where both school-based senior professional tutors and some subject mentors are inexperienced.

The quality of training

1. The content and structure of the programme are strong features. The comprehensive course handbook is outstanding. The content of the course is continuously reviewed and kept up-to-date; for example, in the very good attention given to *Every Child Matters* and to developments in 14-19 education. The new model for professional studies ensures that these are treated thoroughly in the central programme, integrated very well into all subject areas and embedded in work in schools. This is one example of the excellent coherence between the different elements of the course. Schools are given clear guidance on the training they should provide and how this reinforces and develops central training. Assignments are designed well to reinforce this strong coherence and to develop trainees' understanding of key aspects of teaching.
2. As well as keeping the course up-to-date, the university, working with partnership schools, strives continuously to improve the quality of training. University tutors work together to share good practice and to develop collaborative approaches to training, such as the links between English and geography, and between art and design and science. In schools, mentors in different subjects often work together to exchange approaches to school-based training. The university makes excellent use of the training schools in the partnership to foster this work. Very good use is made of the expertise in partner schools to deliver high quality training. The university works extensively with schools in challenging circumstances and makes full use of the particular expertise these schools offer; for example, in inclusion and in approaches to teaching and learning. A significant feature of the programme is the level to which the training in both professional and subject studies is informed by tutors' research and extensive links with schools and local authorities, such as through work on continuing professional development and supporting schools that have been in special measures.
3. There is a carefully planned approach to the training. Early training establishes 'the big picture' followed by regular revisiting of key themes, with school-based training matched carefully to the pace at which trainees make progress. Very good attention is given early in the programme to demanding aspects of teaching such as behaviour for learning and assessment for learning. These are then developed through trainees' first-hand experiences during school placements and their reflection on their progress. Completed assignments and feedback from the first school placement indicate that many trainees already have a secure understanding of these issues and have good ideas about how to apply them to their teaching.
4. Trainees' placements are chosen carefully to be complementary and to ensure that all trainees have a good breadth of teaching experiences. The personal tutorial, which takes place between the two school placements, is used well to ensure that all trainees have clear targets for the second placement. The last phase of the final placement is used well to provide a range of experiences to further trainees' professional development and to cater for different interests. Very good attention is given to those trainees who opt for the 14-19 route through focused training based on individual training plans.

5. University tutors provide trainees with high quality feedback on their teaching. However, the quality of written feedback and target setting by mentors in trainees' first placement is too variable. Much is good and some outstanding, but that provided by a small minority, particularly new mentors, does not provide trainees with clear indications of how to improve their teaching. Whilst subject knowledge auditing is detailed and thorough, and leads to clear action plans, written feedback on trainees' teaching often has insufficient focus on the application of subject knowledge.

6. Assessment procedures have a well-placed sequence of progress checks and review points. These procedures are understood by all and managed well.

Management and quality assurance

7. Selection procedures are rigorous and result in the recruitment of good quality trainees; targets are met in all subjects, except modern foreign languages. Creative marketing is used to attract good fields of applicants. The university works hard to recruit trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds, although there is significant variation in the effectiveness of this across subjects. The university is very careful to identify individual needs at interview and then provide well-focused support. There is a comprehensive range of pre-course development activities in all subjects. Many are matched well to the needs of individual trainees. Trainees with diverse backgrounds are recruited, in particular to business education and design and technology. Whilst a range of strategies is used to take account of this in design and technology, in business education the delivery of the course topics is insufficiently differentiated to take account of this diversity. Foreign nationals recruited to the languages course have very carefully planned individual support, often making use of expertise in schools.

8. The management of the course and the procedures for quality assurance ensure high quality in most aspects of training. Course development is underpinned by a strong desire to continuously improve the quality of the training as well as ensure it is relevant to the needs of schools. Leadership of the overall secondary programme and of subjects is strong. Course leaders are supported very well by senior management, which provides a very strong overall framework and excellent direction and leadership. This ensures very high levels of consistency whilst allowing individual subjects and tutors to be creative and develop approaches suited to the subject. Innovation is encouraged, monitored carefully and managed well to ensure that wider implementation is effective.

9. The strength of partnership is an outstanding feature of the provision. The commitment of schools to the partnership is extremely impressive. All school-based trainers praise the quality of documentation, the clarity of guidance about their role, and the effectiveness of communications with the university. The relationship the university has with many of these schools goes well beyond initial teacher training. The strength of the partnership is also apparent in the university's recognition of what schools can offer. There is excellent involvement of schools in course review

and development through regular formal and informal contact with school-based trainers, and representation on the steering committee and the programme advisory committee. The introduction of the secondary partnership strategy group has usefully enabled schools to become more involved in strategic development.

10. Many examples of high quality collaborative work with schools indicate a strong desire to explore innovative approaches and ways of working with schools. A particularly impressive feature is the commitment to working with schools in challenging circumstances and recognising the special contribution these schools can make to training. The Bristol Educated Secondary Teachers initiative, which involves working with schools in very challenging circumstances, is an outstanding example of how the university matches the way it works with a school to its particular situation.

11. The university works hard to ensure that all trainers have the skills and understanding needed to carry out their role. The induction of one new tutor has been thorough and effective. All new school-based mentors and senior professional tutors are trained. Very good use is made of joint observations to moderate judgements and to provide training for mentors. The university continues to place considerable emphasis on improving the quality of mentoring and this has already had an impact. In some subjects, limited attendance by experienced mentors at subject meetings restricts the development of shared understanding of what constitutes good practice in the subject.

12. The systems and procedures for quality assurance are comprehensive. Senior professional tutors have a key role in maintaining the quality of training in their schools. The quality assurance provided by some senior professional tutors is outstanding. For example, the quality of feedback and target setting was high in schools where the senior professional tutor used a clear set of criteria to monitor them. Other professional tutors conduct joint observations with class teachers, recognising the importance of their training role. When the quality of training in schools is identified as being below that expected, a wide range of interventions is used. These interventions are triggered in a wide variety of ways and the response is rapid and effective. Subject tutors make extensive use of telephone and e-mail communication to keep in contact with trainees and mentors in schools to complement the visits they make. This enables them to identify concerns and intervene quickly. However, more attention needs to be given to the small number of cases where both the subject mentor and senior professional tutor are inexperienced, which can lead to monitoring focusing more on procedural matters than those to do with quality.

13. A wide range of evaluations is undertaken. Very careful and detailed analysis of the outcomes of these evaluations is used to identify what is working well and what is not. This analysis is usefully undertaken at school and subject as well as whole-programme level. The process where the school-level analysis leads to the link tutor's action plan, and the checking of these by the programme leader, is extremely rigorous. These action plans are used well by the link tutor working with

the school to secure improvements. This role of the link tutor is a strong feature of quality assurance.

14. Improvement planning and self-evaluation are comprehensive and rigorous and schools are closely involved in course development. Subject and programme course reviews and actions plans are thorough, very detailed and based on a range of evidence arising from the detailed analysis of evaluations and from external examiners. This is supported by very effective use of a range of other data; for example, those about recruitment, the Training and Development Agency's performance tables, and surveys of newly qualified teachers.