

University of Warwick



Coventry
CV4 7AL

A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The University of Warwick works in partnership with 121 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training courses. It offers training for the 11-18 age range in drama with English, English with drama, history, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, modern foreign languages, religious education and science; and for the 14-19 age range in business education. At the time of the inspection there were 255 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 strong leadership at all levels
- the high quality evaluation and improvement planning
- the quality of the partnership
- the rigorous quality assurance
- the coherence of the training
- the highly effective use of the expertise and resources in schools
- the attention given to the needs of individual trainees, beginning with the selection process.

Points for consideration

- providing trainees with written feedback that focuses on pupils' learning and on the overall quality of the lesson
- considering how all subjects can focus evaluation on trainees' achievements.

The quality of training

1. All elements of the secondary programme are developed continuously to ensure that they are up-to-date; for example, the very good attention given to developing trainees' understanding of *Every Child Matters* and of developments in 14-19 education. Particularly impressive is the way the course looks ahead to prepare trainees for future developments in teaching in order to set particular aspects into a wider context. This is demonstrated well by the approach to assessment for learning that is set within the broader context of developments in personalising learning.
2. The high quality training means that trainees are very well prepared for teaching. This reflects the very effective focus on classroom practice, supported by a thorough treatment of the related theory. Expertise in schools, and elsewhere, is used extensively and effectively in the training. Many school-based mentors are involved in central training and good use is made of a range of other experts. A significant number of tutors work part-time in schools and this provides relevance and credibility. Excellent use is made of the particular expertise and resources available in the training schools and specialist schools in the partnership. There is strong coherence between the different elements of the course through the progressive approach to key themes that link professional and subject studies. The range of very good subject-specific and professional studies school-based tasks supports this coherence. School-based mentors are provided with high quality guidance and they are clear about what is expected of them.
3. Many subjects use very creative approaches to training. This includes extensive work with groups of pupils, both in their schools and in the university. All of these activities have a very clear focus. In modern foreign languages, for example trainees work with Key Stage 2 pupils across a wide range of primary schools to develop their understanding of progression. They work with carefully identified: Year 9 pupils who come into the university in an activity that aims to encourage wider take up at Key Stage 4; Year 7 pupils on drama in the foreign language; and post-16 students in a specialist languages college. Similar activities are undertaken in other subjects.
4. Many developments in training are based on a very careful analysis of trainees' achievements in specific areas. In some subjects a specific issue identified was the quality of trainees' evaluations of their own teaching, including in both of the English and drama courses, modern foreign languages and religious education. Tutors in these subjects responded to this analysis well. Trainees are shown how to set learning objectives to focus more on pupils' learning. They are expected to set learning objectives for each part of their lessons in the first school placement, moving to objectives for whole lessons in the second placement. Trainees use a well-designed template and a set of prompts to support their evaluations of lessons. Some other subjects also evaluate aspects of trainees' teaching to identify aspects of the training that need to be improved, for example, in ICT where the focus was on assessing pupils' progress.

5. The recently revised professional development profile has many strong features. It is very well structured and supports trainees well in identifying the evidence required to show they meet the Standards. The profile is effective in ensuring that all trainees make good progress and that good attention is given to individual needs. The target setting process begins at selection and trainees are set individual pre-course targets and actions. There is a well-placed sequence of personal tutorials throughout the course; the early tutorials in the university are very effective in sharpening up the developmental targets set at the beginning of the course. Progress is very carefully reviewed between the two placements to ensure trainees have clear targets for the second placement.

6. Trainees receive extensive formal and informal feedback on their teaching. Much of this is of high quality and provides trainees with clear indications of what they need to do to secure further progress. However, written feedback seldom provides judgements on either the overall quality of the lesson or on the quality of pupils' learning. The oral feedback that trainees receive in lessons and in subsequent discussions is better. Several subjects have addressed the issue of feedback well by providing trainees with a notebook to record the oral feedback or to be used by teachers to provide less formal written feedback on a more regular basis.

7. There are strong procedures for internal and external moderation with extensive use of joint observations to support internal moderation. A set of grade descriptors provides a very useful mechanism to ensure consistency at the formal assessment points. Many trainees, and some mentors, also use these well to monitor their progress and to help set well-focused targets.

Management and quality assurance

8. Selection procedures are effective and lead to the recruitment of very good quality trainees and to recruitment targets being met. The rigorous procedures mean that all applicants are considered very carefully. The procedures for undertaking criminal record and other checks are rigorous. Application, recruitment and retention data are analysed very closely, with good attention given to trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds. Whilst withdrawal rates are very low, all cases are analysed carefully to improve selection procedures. The professional contacts scheme for minority ethnic trainees provides very impressive levels of support. The university makes excellent use of the student associate scheme to recruit trainees in some shortage subjects; this is particularly effective in recruiting to the mathematics course. There is a very large cohort of physics undergraduates currently on the scheme.

9. High quality management and quality assurance are extremely effective in maintaining high standards and in securing further development and improvement. There is very good quality leadership and management at all levels in the university. The university uses a 'consistency with individuality' model to share best practice,

whilst enabling different elements of the course and different subjects to develop innovative approaches, often matched to the particular requirements of the subject. There are extremely rigorous systems for evaluating the course and this leads to clear priorities for further development.

10. Schools have a very strong commitment to the university and the coherence of the partnership is impressive. Schools have excellent representation on the steering committee and are involved fully in strategic and operational management and planning. Communications between the university and schools are excellent, and supported well by regular visits to schools by link and subject tutors. There is universal praise for the partnership office. Schools appreciate the way in which they are encouraged to develop innovative ways of working. For example, one professional mentor uses a set of characteristics of different types of trainee to provide guidance to subject mentors about the nature and amount of support these trainees require. In another example, a training school makes excellent use of its training classroom to enable trainees to observe and discuss the lessons of a wide range of different teachers.

11. The strength of the relationship with schools supports a rigorous system for quality assurance. The basis of this system is: high quality mentor training, providing mentors with clear guidance and exemplification of the quality expected; the regular visits by the link tutor and subject tutors to provide very effective moderation and training; and the systematic use of joint observations. The excellent communications mean that concerns are identified quickly and interventions are rapid and effective. In schools, the professional mentor has a clear management and quality assurance role and this is performed well. In modern foreign languages and science, between the two school placements trainees provide an exhibition of their work from the first placement. As well as being a good opportunity for the two mentors to meet with the trainee, it serves as a useful benchmarking and training opportunity. Other subjects use different, but equally effective, approaches to ensure all mentors are aware of the quality required and that they have the skills to achieve this.

12. Self-evaluation is thorough, detailed and accurate. Managers base their course review and improvement planning on an extensive range of information. This includes a detailed analysis of trainees' evaluations; the views of schools; benchmarking; external examiners' reports; and the university's own surveys of former trainees working as newly qualified teachers, and of the head teachers in the schools they are working in. This leads to clear and detailed action plans for subjects and for the overall programme. A strong feature is that many subject action plans have a very good emphasis on improving specific aspects of trainees' practice. These plans have clearly identified strategies for both improving training and for monitoring impact. There is a very strong sense of continuous improvement within a culture of excellence. The 'consistency with individuality' approach within the university is an interesting manifestation of this philosophy. Through this approach, strong subjects become stronger because of very creative and innovative practice and good practice is making an improvement across all the subjects offered.

There is extensive sharing of the excellent practice in some schools to improve further the overall quality of the provision.