

Leeds Trinity and All Saints

Leeds Trinity and All Saints
Brownberrie Lane
Horsforth
Leeds
LS18 5HD

A primary initial teacher training
Short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
Sonja Øyen HMI

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Introduction

Leeds Trinity and All Saints works in partnership with around 300 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a four-year primary education BA Honours degree with subject studies selected from English, history, physical education, science and theology. Trainees also specialise in either Foundation and Key Stage 1 or Key Stages 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection there were 572 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: 2

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- the very good training in the development of trainees' subject knowledge
- the productive partnership with schools over a wide area and, particularly, with several Catholic dioceses
- the clarity of the documentation to guide school-based training
- the quality of the training for school-based tutors
- the support for trainees within a caring college atmosphere.

Points for consideration

- linking the content of training sessions and examinations more explicitly to the Standards
- reviewing the balance between examinations and practical experience in the assessment arrangements
- using evaluation data more rigorously to identify ways in which the course might be improved
- ensuring that action plans focus on the intended outcomes for trainees.

The quality of training

1. The good quality of training has been maintained. The structure and the content of the training programmes meet the Requirements well and enable trainees to meet the Standards.

2. The courses in professional studies, curriculum studies and subjects are progressive and coherent. The professional studies modules cover key issues in teaching and learning at a theoretical level, which is drawn upon by the subject teams whose focus is more practical. Subject knowledge training is very good notably in the core subjects where trainees gain a secure grounding in what they need to teach as well as developing much practical knowledge. Courses are highly relevant to current practice in schools and up to date in important aspects; for example, the recent development of an exchange programme and studies in French, German and Spanish alerts trainees to national developments in the teaching of modern foreign languages in the primary phase.

3. The time spent in schools, along with the changing focus of each placement, allows sufficient opportunities for trainees to gain practical experience of teaching and assessing the performance of pupils of different abilities, in their preferred and other age ranges. The pattern of placements allows trainees to get to know two schools well and to observe and teach in different classes. The centre-based modules prepare for and build on trainees' school experiences. Sessions in English and professional studies make good use of school-based tasks as sources of study during taught sessions. In mathematics, the link is less clear between directed tasks, school placements and taught modules.

4. College trainers are well qualified; they have recent, relevant primary school experience and some are engaged in current classroom research. Good use is made of staff from partnership schools to deliver sessions. Trainees report that centre-based training models effective classroom practice in the use of information and communication technology and the mix of different teaching and learning styles. The evaluations of modules show that trainees welcome the lively, interactive approach of their tutors and the opportunities for practical work. However, sessions are not always differentiated sufficiently to challenge trainees nor related explicitly to the Standards.

5. The quality of school-based training is good. School-based tutors are conscientious in managing trainees' classroom experiences and in tracking their progress in meeting the Standards. Very good quality documentation helps to structure the work of trainees and school-based tutors. Trainees' good progress in meeting the Standards in class management reflects the good support and guidance of teachers and school-based tutors.

6. Support for trainees is good and a strength of the provision. The small, friendly college community ensures trainers and trainees know each other well. Trainees who are experiencing difficulties in school or in college are supported sensitively.

The Skills Support Service leaflet highlights 'writers in residence' who can support individuals in developing their writing skills and there is very good guidance for schools on how to support dyslexic trainees. The on-line virtual learning environment is a good means of communication between staff and trainees.

7. Although there are secure mechanisms to assess trainees' achievement against the Standards in college and school-based training, they are not always used to best effect. In school, the structured observation notepads, performance records and weekly reviews combine well to give a good overall view of the trainees' progress in meeting personal targets and specific Standards. The completion of the notepads varies in quantity and quality. Trainees receive much constructive feedback on their skills in planning lessons and in managing the pupils, but less on how well they have taught the subject content of the lesson.

8. Progress tutors meet regularly with trainees to guide them in evaluating their progress, applying for their first teaching posts and in completing their career entry and development profiles. In the best cases, trainees' professional development portfolios draw together evidence from school and centre-based training and document well trainees' progress in meeting the Standards.

9. Trainees' achievement of the Standards relating to subject knowledge is rigorously assessed through self-assessment and examinations. The assessment of the trainees is well moderated and externally evaluated. However, in Years 3 and 4 of the course there is an imbalance between the emphases given to academic study leading to examinations and to the assessment of trainees' practical experience. The content of the examinations is not linked explicitly to the Standards.

Management and quality assurance

10. The overall quality of management and quality assurance is good. Recent changes in programme leadership and management have strengthened strategic planning and engendered growing confidence among tutorial staff to take steps to improve the provision.

11. Procedures to recruit and select trainees are good. This is exemplified by the attractive prospectus and web site, which indicate the benefits of a small campus with a Catholic ethos. The number of trainees from underrepresented groups and the number of men is increasing but the number of trainees from black and minority ethnic groups remains small and in this respect the college has not met its own challenging target. The effectiveness of the selection process and the training is reflected in the good completion rates, and the fact most former trainees remain in teaching posts after leaving the college.

12. Testimonials are used effectively in considering whether borderline candidates have the desired skills to be a teacher. Unsuccessful candidates have the opportunity of detailed discussion with the admissions tutor on why they did not

meet the criteria. A developing strength is the feedback and tasks given to support those successful candidates whose performance in the written test at interview caused some concern. All required checks including criminal records checks are carried out. Good communication with prospective trainees enables them to prepare for their studies before starting.

13. There is a very strong and expanding partnership with schools and the local Catholic dioceses. Since the last inspection, 89 schools have joined the partnership. The partnership has evolved through effective consultation and evaluation of practice. The annual meeting of the primary partnership liaison group representing all schools, and regular meetings throughout the year for school-based tutors, provide useful opportunities to discuss the effectiveness of procedures, the progress of trainees and also to develop training materials.

14. The partnership handbook outlines clear principles based on the needs of a novice teacher and the precise roles and responsibilities of trainers in schools and in college. Efficient administration and very good lines of communication are key factors in the confidence schools have in the college to uphold its side of the partnership. The work of the recently appointed school partnership manager and two school-based training managers has already had a positive impact in maintaining the current strengths and identifying areas for improvement. Refinements in the information held about schools, particularly about provision in the Foundation Stage, place the college in an even better position to tailor placements to trainees' needs.

15. Prudent appointments have strengthened leadership expertise as well as tutorial expertise in mathematics and the Foundation Stage. The restructuring of the management team has clarified roles and given all tutors areas of responsibility and accountability. Senior managers are challenging established practices and assumptions held of their impact and value. The introduction of a mid-module review has prompted some changes in practice, and the compilation of the new degree in Early Years education is being used well to debate format and assessment patterns in recognition of the limitations of the current degree.

16. The training of school-based tutors is a strength of the college's work. School-based tutors know what is expected of them and are given good guidance in how to work with trainees to promote their progress. They value greatly the opportunities for joint observations with college link-tutors to confirm and moderate judgements about the trainees' teaching and progress. Link tutors know their schools well; good communication ensures link tutors and school-based tutors work together to the benefit of the trainees.

17. The primary partnership steering group has oversight of quality assurance and quality control. It reviews progress in meeting agreed targets and steers programme development. The reports from college link tutors provide valuable feedback on the quality of training in schools and contextual factors to be considered in placing trainees.

18. Action planning is underdeveloped as a tool for improvement. The plan for the current year has actions arising from a review of provision and has success criteria related to improvements in the quality of the programme. The lack of focus on improving outcomes for trainees is compounded by the absence of clear and detailed plans from module teams to guide developments in professional studies, curriculum studies and also in the partnership. There are very good systems to review and evaluate practice. Copious data are produced from regular reviews and evaluations of modules, placements, procedures, policies and surveys. However, reports often over-emphasise positive aspects and miss opportunities to draw out possible implications from collated information. The annual quality assurance report for 2005, shared with the steering group, was extremely detailed but did not link explicitly with the five-year strategic plan.

19. Well established college and departmental procedures ensure that the assessment of trainees is rigorous and that judgements are accurate. External examiners confirm that academic standards are comparable with those in other institutions and that trainees' teaching shows they have met the Standards. The external moderation panel has visited more than 40 schools in the last four years and its reports usefully identify some points for development as well as aspects of effective practice.