

University of Hull

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A primary initial teacher training
Short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The University of Hull works in partnership with almost 300 schools to provide primary initial teacher training courses at Hull Centre for Educational Studies and at Scarborough School of Education. It offers a three year BA/BSc Primary Teaching with five pathways (biological studies, English, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics and options), as well as a part-time BA Learning and Teaching with Primary QTS for those who complete the foundation degree. In addition, it offers two postgraduate certificates in education, one focused on the 3-7 year phase and the other 5-11. Twenty places on the 5-11 programme are for trainees who specialise in French or German (15 for French and 5 for German). At the time of the inspection there were 410 trainees; 103 at Hull and 307 at Scarborough.

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 outstanding support and very high level of commitment of all trainers to helping trainees to succeed
- the highly effective schools within the Hull and Scarborough partnership
- the very good training for mentors
- the high quality of training in English
- the highly effective interlinking of taught sessions and school based experience
- the robust procedures to evaluate all aspects of the provision.

Points for consideration

- clarifying the strategic direction for the partnership
- ensuring that the content of action plans is linked to specific outcomes for trainees.

The quality of training

1. The quality of training is at least good and has been enhanced since the last inspection. The structure and the content of all four training programmes meet the Requirements and enable trainees to meet the Standards.
2. The courses in professional studies, and in the core and foundation subjects, are progressive and coherent in all programmes. The modules in professional studies cover well how children learn and alert trainees to key issues in teaching. The strong emphasis on developing trainees' subject knowledge, particularly in English, mathematics and science, ensures that trainees gain a secure grounding in what they need to teach. Current issues such as the implications of the Rose Report, *Every Child Matters* and The Primary National Strategy are given due emphasis along with attention to diversity and English as an additional language. For those trainees following programmes to teach pupils aged 5-11, appropriate regard is given to work at Key Stage 3, especially in relation to their own and pupils' developing subject knowledge. Good opportunities also exist for these trainees to experience Foundation Stage settings. The programmes also alert trainees to national developments in the teaching of modern foreign languages (MFL) in the primary school. Postgraduate trainees who opt to take French or German benefit greatly from having their second assessed placement in a school in France or Germany.
3. The time spent in schools, along with the increased demands of each school experience, provides good, and often very good, opportunities for trainees to gain practical experience in planning, teaching and assessing the performance of pupils in their preferred and other age ranges. The taught modules inform and build on school experiences exceptionally well. Trainees apply what they know by carrying out carefully designed, structured school-based tasks which in turn become sources of study and reflection during taught sessions.
4. Full-time university trainers are well qualified. Many gain recent and relevant experience through work in schools; they also engage in academic research and publish their work. Many associate part-time tutors bring professional and management experience to their roles. Very good use is also made of the expertise and specialist knowledge of local authority advisers, advanced skills teachers, headteachers and class teachers from partnership schools to deliver particular sessions.
5. Trainees' evaluations of sessions and modules show a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the centre-based training at Hull and at Scarborough. Common strengths are the way that trainers model effective classroom practice, particularly in the use of information and communication technology, and how they vary teaching and learning styles. A good element in many courses is the development of critical reflection; for example, postgraduate trainees at Hull evaluated a lesson where the teacher managed a class well but taught science poorly.

6. The high quality of English training is a particular strength. Trainees gain a good grounding in how to teach reading and writing with a strong emphasis on the teaching of phonics. A good feature of the 5-11 postgraduate programme is that over half of the English course is based in a partnership school which enables trainees to work with small numbers of pupils to apply strategies introduced earlier in the session by the course leader.

7. The support for trainees is outstanding. The quality of school-based training is at least good and many elements are very good, including the communication between tutors and school mentors who share a commitment and personal willingness to invest in trainees. All are highly conscientious in managing trainees' classroom experiences, supporting their development and tracking their progress in meeting the Standards. The support is further enhanced by the Student Support Service and the on-line virtual learning environment. Well organised, clear documentation helps to structure and guide the work of trainees and school mentors. The module on assessment for learning, developed by school-mentors and taught while second year trainees are in schools, gives trainees pertinent guidance on different aspects of assessment, including how to mark pupils' work to help them to improve.

8. There are secure mechanisms to assess trainees' achievement against the Standards and external examiners confirm the accuracy of tutors' judgements. Assignments are marked to clear criteria with supporting comments on quality of content as well as trainees' academic skills. Effective moderation processes ensure that judgements about borderline assignments and teaching are secure.

9. In schools, mentors' and tutors' reports on trainees' teaching combine well with trainees' own evaluations to give a good overall view of the trainees' progress in meeting personal targets and the Standards. Trainees benefit from detailed, constructive feedback on their skills in planning lessons and in managing the pupils. Some of the written feedback on how well trainees have taught the subject content is exemplary.

Management and quality assurance

10. The overall quality of management and quality assurance is very good. Several features have been strengthened since the last inspection including the training for school mentors and the process of development planning. The university has consulted the partnership in extending its range of pathways and programmes in initial teacher training making it even better placed to meet local needs. This is well exemplified in the part-time top up degree which is proving attractive to teaching assistants. The university has refined procedures and shared expertise to ensure a high level of consistency in the quality of provision at Hull and Scarborough. The formation of a joint partnership executive committee does not detract from the individuality of both sites and the healthy scepticism of the teams in deciding which initiatives and practices to adopt.

11. Highly effective and well managed procedures ensure the selection of suitably qualified trainees, many coming from the locality. In the three-year undergraduate degree, the opportunity to take an options pathway has enhanced the programme's popularity, and subject study in ICT continues to draw a very high proportion of males. Despite moves to heighten the profile of the programmes, the proportions of candidates, and subsequent trainees, from under-represented groups remain low. Attractive documentation and links on the web sites give clear details of the content and structure of programmes and the different nature of the two campuses. The interviews are thorough and challenging. Interviewers place very strong emphasis on considering candidates' personal qualities and their experience of working with children, particularly for borderline candidates. Unsuccessful candidates are given helpful advice on what to do to enhance their chances if they wish to re-apply. Retention rates vary across the programmes but, overall, are higher than other regional providers. Nearly all trainees who stay the course gain QTS and the majority gain posts, frequently in partnership schools.

12. A strong feature of the management is the outstanding support and guidance given to trainees, often from before interview to long after they complete the programme. Arrangements are made to meet the needs of candidates with disabilities and to help others with personal concerns. Information from the interview feeds into the guidance sent to undergraduate trainees which helps them to prepare for the programme, and to audit and enhance their skills in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The pre-course day for all postgraduate trainees is an effective way to share expectations, meet tutors, including some from partner institutions in France and Germany, discuss assignments and initiate relevant clearance procedures.

13. The very strong partnership is structured in slightly different ways at Scarborough and at Hull to reflect the differing needs of the programmes. Both partnerships are very well managed and self-evaluating. Headteachers, who represent their regions on the partnership executive committee, refer to their vested interest in ensuring that the quality of training is of the best. Sensitive intervention when trainees and tutors identify concerns about the quality of training in schools, along with the increased involvement of schools in the development of training materials for mentors and trainees, fully reflect the shared ownership of the provision. Since the last inspection, the university has successfully approached schools to add good training venues and to introduce paired first placements as a means of widening the opportunities for trainees to gain experience in a range of settings, especially with younger children.

14. The three-year partnership agreement, common to all schools, sets out clearly terms of operation, funding arrangements and the roles and responsibilities of all trainers. The recent focus on strengthening the training for mentors along with a recognition scheme for class teachers, mentors, lead mentors, strategic mentors and partnership development schools, has substantially widened the pool of expertise, especially in the Scarborough partnership, and ensured higher consistency in mentors' work. Lead mentors are taking an increasingly active part in developing the training and in moderating the work of others. It is not clear how the

partnership intends to build on this potential and how it will assess the impact of the quality of provision, especially the value added for trainees.

15. Sensible management decisions have facilitated the working of tutors across programmes at both Hull and at Scarborough. As a result, the quality of training has been enhanced, especially in subjects and specialist aspects of professional studies. A large cohort of associate tutors, selected for their proven expertise and skills, work with the small number of full-time tutors in delivering the training and supporting the trainees. There are very good systems to induct new tutors through shadow marking, joint observations and guidance on the production of teaching material. The teams are quick to respond to identified concerns and are often creative in their thinking; a good example is the collaboration between tutors and mentors to compile and deliver a module on assessment in response to trainees' weaker performance against the Standards.

16. A wide range of robust quality assurance procedures provides reliable information on the effectiveness of the provision and how well policies are being implemented, including those related to equal opportunities and race relations. Module and programme leaders gain good quality information from extensive evaluation by trainees and trainers of the content of the training, the effectiveness of the trainers and the suitability of venues. Their interpretive reports include possible factors that account for the findings, and intended action to deal with concerns. External examiners' reports are similarly sharply focused and the constructive criticism about the structure, content and outcomes of the programmes has prompted changes in practice.

17. The university has a clear picture of how it compares with similar providers and uses information about trainees' academic and professional performance to highlight value added and to identify areas for improvement. While the self evaluation document is extremely detailed, thorough in coverage and accurate, it gives little focus to identifying the impact of the content or of the outcomes for trainees. The primary initial teacher training plan summarises the priorities arising from evaluations of all programmes but it too, like the action plans for programmes and subjects, omits clear, measurable targets and intended outcomes for trainees.