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A secondary initial teacher training
Short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
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Introduction

King's College London works in partnership with around 170 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers training in English, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, modern foreign languages, religious education and science. All these subjects are available as postgraduate certificate in education courses and lead to qualified teacher status (QTS). At the time of the inspection there were 239 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 well designed training programme
- the subject directors' management of subject provision
- college trainers' modelling of exemplary practice in their teaching
- the systematic and effective monitoring and assessment of trainees' progress in meeting the Standards
- the well-designed and effectively implemented selection procedures
- the carefully devised and highly suitable assignments and tasks.

Point for action

- to establish a systematic cycle of programme-wide evaluation and improvement planning which is sharply focussed on impact and outcomes.

Points for consideration

- strengthening the capacity of the core management team to initiate and implement partnership developments and to rectify quickly shortcomings in provision
- utilising school trainers more fully in developing the course and raising the quality of the training
- improving the consistency of the scope and quality of annual subject reports and action plans.

The quality of training

1. The training programme is very well designed and is notable for its strong emphasis on research, reflection and subject pedagogy. The course fully meets the Requirements and enables trainees to progressively meet the Standards. Theory and practice are well integrated, underpinned by carefully devised and highly suitable assignments and tasks. Subject studies, professional studies and school experiences complement each other very well. All trainees have good opportunities to teach across the 11-19 age range. Arrangements are made for the few that have two 11-16 age range placements to have suitable sixth-form experience in an additional setting. Trainees' understanding of pupils' progression from Key Stage 2 to 3 is developed effectively through well-planned primary school experiences at the beginning and end of the course.

2. The professional studies programme is good; weekly lectures on highly relevant topics are followed up in mixed subject seminars led by trainees although the quality of these seminars is not consistent. Sessions are carefully chosen and planned to be both intellectually challenging and useful to trainees' practice in schools. These are complemented by the effective professional studies training provided in schools that is underpinned by well-devised school-based tasks. Although there is little cross reference between professional studies and subject handbooks, professional studies topics are often followed up well in subject sessions. For example, in mathematics the teaching of specific aspects of the subject is examined in respect to the professional studies theme for the week. However, this practice is not consistent across the programme.

3. Subject knowledge and pedagogy are thoroughly covered in the centre-based training and weekly sessions are clearly and comprehensively planned. Subject training achieves a good balance between the practicalities of the classroom and studying the work of educational theorists and researchers. College trainers model exemplary practice in their teaching. There are many examples of subjects effectively extending the range of trainees' experience. In English, for example, trainees benefit from the extensive networks developed by the subject director, while in modern foreign languages, trainees may teach abroad for a period on the Erasmus scheme. Subject mentors' work complements the centre-based training well, though a minority of trainees report that support from mentors is limited. While lesson plans and evaluations show trainees gradually honing their classroom management skills, there is less evidence of them putting into practice what they have learned about aspects of pedagogy such as assessment for learning and differentiation.

4. The training takes account of trainees' individual needs, for example, training sessions give them opportunities to develop their subject knowledge; this is particularly good in science. However, limited individual preparatory activities are set prior the start of the course, and in some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, there is scope for involving mentors more fully in developing trainees'

subject knowledge. The college works hard to ensure that trainees have a good balance of placement schools, although there are a few examples of trainees not having sufficient breadth of experience. The college's intranet is used by some trainees to gain access to course materials but this remains an underdeveloped resource for addressing individual needs.

5. Trainees are systematically and effectively monitored and assessed throughout the course. Good use is made by trainers and trainees of a well-designed professional development profile which enables all those involved to track trainees' progress towards the Standards. These profiles identify areas of strength and future needs and are used very well to identify training priorities at the start of the second placement. The conscientious attention paid to compiling the profiles by school-based trainers often make them models of good practice. Lesson observations by tutors, mentors and other staff are frequent and detailed, although not always sufficiently referenced to the Standards. Trainees discussions with their mentors on their progress are carefully recorded and end of placement reports are rigorous. Both are used well to modify subsequent training to ensure trainees meet the Standards. Assignments are very carefully marked and include valuable supportive and developmental comments. External examiners' reports confirm that robust and secure systems are in place to ensure the rigour and accuracy of the final assessment.

Management and quality assurance

6. Effective management and quality assurance have maintained the overall quality of training and the promotion of good outcomes which were evident at the time of the last inspection. Key points for action and consideration raised in the previous inspection have been addressed; for example, the re-establishment of the teacher education committee and the development of strategies to gather evaluations on the programme from school-based trainers.

7. Selection procedures are carefully designed and implemented well. Prior to their application, trainees can access comprehensive and accurate information about the programme, including subject specific training, which enables them to make informed choices about accepting a place on the course. Clear and suitable criteria are used to assess applicants at interviews which are conducted thoroughly and consistently within and across subjects. Tasks set are effective in evaluating the trainees' subject knowledge and their suitability for becoming a teacher. Their written and spoken English is also checked well. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, the involvement of teachers in the selection process is limited and inconsistent across subjects. Additionally, while in interviews trainees are given guidance on areas they should address if they are successful in their application, the use of individualised pre-course development tasks is limited and not systematic across subjects.

8. The college is successful in recruiting high calibre trainees across all subjects who show a clear ability to meet the Standards. It is committed to attracting trainees from minority ethnic groups and has exceeded the Teacher Development Agency target for this. The recruitment of minority ethnic trainees is undertaken mainly through advertising in relevant publications though the college's reputation accounts for much of its success in this respect. An inclusive approach to recruitment is evident in publicity materials and programme documentation.

9. Individual subject courses are managed effectively. Documentation explaining their organisation and operation is of a high quality and the great majority of trainees report that their training is managed proficiently. The partnership as a whole is generally managed well; guidance to trainees and schools about training and assessment requirements is comprehensive and clear. Communication between the college and schools is effective overall, particularly the communications from the school liaison officer. The course director is aware of the strengths and areas for development of those involved in the training and suitable support is provided for new staff.

10. The partnership agreement is well-constructed, understood by schools and implemented effectively. Criteria for selection and de-selection of schools are appropriate and placements are organised to ensure contrasting experiences. Partnership schools are very suitable venues for providing training; many are of a high quality. The training of mentors and professional tutors for their roles ensures that school-based provision is usually effective. Where schools fail to provide suitable training or support for trainees, alternative placements are found and, if necessary, schools are deselected from the partnership.

11. Since the last inspection, effective strategies have been employed to increase the active involvement of schools in the partnership and to involve more central tutors in management decisions. Attendance at mentor training sessions has increased as a result of the inclusion of professional development activities for teachers. The use of teachers to contribute to central training sessions has also been increased. The course director has strengthened and extended the involvement of subject directors and other tutors in the programme management committee and in identifying programme wide ways of improving the management of provision.

12. However, the limited capacity of the small core management team, particularly in respect of the time they have to carry out their roles, restricts their ability to initiate and implement developments in the partnership or to rectify quickly shortcomings in provision. For example, while the teacher education committee now meets more regularly it still has too few representatives from schools. Opportunities are missed to utilise school trainers fully in developing the course and raising the quality of the training.

13. The college has comprehensive race equality and equal opportunity policies and action plans. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in the programme and appropriate procedures are in place to deal with racist incidents which are rare.

14. Within subjects, the quality of training is monitored effectively. Subject directors ensure good quality central sessions and regularly check the sufficiency of school-based training through information gathered from schools and discussions with trainees. College tutors' visits to schools in the second placement provide for more rigorous and systematic evaluation which has been strengthened recently by guidance from the core management team. Central meetings with mentors provide good opportunities to gather their views though this is limited by low attendance. Trainees are given plenty of opportunities to evaluate provision through formal questionnaires and their peer subject representatives. However, while central monitoring systems effectively check trainees' entitlement they are less strong in measuring the quality of provision.

15. Procedures for monitoring and moderating the assessment of trainees are highly effective. Assessment procedures are well-devised and clear. Internal and external moderation of both course assignments and trainees' achievement of the Standards is rigorous and implemented consistently. All subjects have a specialist external examiner whose valuable judgements are acted on.

16. A growing range of evaluative data is used to judge the quality of the programme and benchmark it over time. Subject directors mostly use this well to inform course development and improvement planning. However, annual subject course reports and action plans vary in scope and quality. The college has yet to establish a systematic cycle of programme-wide evaluation and improvement planning which is sharply focussed on impact and outcomes. This is restricting the sharing of good practice to even out the inconsistencies across subjects, to remediate shortcomings speedily and to raise the quality of provision.