

University of Huddersfield

School of Education and Professional Development
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A primary initial teacher training
full inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
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Introduction

This is a new provider receiving their first inspection. The University of Huddersfield works in partnership with 43 schools to provide primary initial teacher training courses. It offers an Early Years course which prepares trainees to teach in the 3-7 age range, leading to the award of BA with qualified teacher status. At the time of the inspection there were 53 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 full 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

Standards achieved by trainees:	Grade: 2
Quality of training:	Grade: 2
Management and quality assurance:	Grade: 2

The next inspection of this provider will take place in accordance with the Framework.

Key strengths

- the attention to inclusion and diversity, ensuring equality of opportunity for all trainees
- the structure and content of the course, which give trainees a good grounding in early years practice
- the leadership of the course
- communications between the university, trainees and schools
- the training for mentors and the clear definition of roles and responsibilities within the partnership
- the assessment of trainees' teaching
- the schools' commitment and contribution to the partnership.

Points for action

- improving strategic planning and subject leaders' involvement in the future direction of the partnership.

Points for consideration

- ensuring trainees' lesson planning identifies clear and measurable learning objectives which are more closely linked to individual pupils' needs.

Standards achieved by trainees

1. Trainees have high expectations of the pupils they teach. An emphasis on the inclusion of all pupils ensures that activities are well differentiated according to the needs of specific groups. They know their pupils well. Trainees give willingly of their own time to assist in out-of-school clubs. For example, a trainee who is a qualified dance instructor ran her own dance club; another trained in the use of sign language so she could communicate successfully with a pupil. Many trainees attend staff meetings and school-based in-service training. Relationships among trainees, adults and pupils are good.

2. Trainees evaluate the effectiveness of their lessons in terms of their impact on pupils' learning. They are able to adapt their teaching accordingly in discussion with the class teacher. Effective planning indicates the Standards they are to address during the lesson and they evaluate the degree to which these have been achieved.

3. Trainees are confident and up-to-date in their subject knowledge. This is monitored successfully by the university from the early identification of needs at interview through to final assessment. Trainees have a good understanding of successful practical activities to promote the learning of phonics. They are aware of the revised frameworks for the national strategies as well as the Foundation Stage guidance and the *Every Child Matters* agenda. They research thoroughly the topics they are to teach. Use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning is very good. Trainees are prepared well to use the wide range of school-based equipment, particularly the interactive whiteboards. Where it is available in schools, more able trainees use control technology effectively to promote pupils' higher learning skills.

4. Planning is detailed although learning objectives are too broad; they lack clarity and are not sufficiently well linked to individual pupils' needs. Trainees assess the progress of the whole class but do not identify accurately the gains made by individual pupils. They are confident in deploying classroom assistants to work with groups of pupils, and work well with them to assess pupils' learning. Where pupils have additional needs or are identified as being particularly gifted or talented, they are supported and challenged successfully. Trainees often ensure that appropriate extension activities are set for higher attaining pupils. The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is further enhanced by the skills of those trainees who are fluent in the pupils' home language.

5. Trainees incorporate a good number of teaching strategies in their lessons. They combine knowledge gained in university-based training with the good practice they learn in schools. The result is that the organisation of groups and behaviour are managed successfully by trainees. Trainees use their good subject knowledge effectively, particularly in their use of questioning. They often wait patiently as very young children are encouraged to give full sentence answers. Resources and activities are well prepared and appropriate for the full range of abilities and of pupils' needs.

6. Assessment files show trainees' increasing understanding of how to assess pupils' work in terms of National Curriculum levels. Where appropriate, trainees make good use of the Foundation Stage profile. They complete detailed observations which lead to the identification of the next steps required to improve pupils' learning. Some trainees are adept at using digital photography to record the achievements of very young children. All trainees keep detailed assessment files on a small group of pupils, which assists in the preparation of reports to parents.

7. Trainees' classroom management and organisation are good. Behaviour is well managed, even in settings where some pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour. Positive praise and reward systems, in line with the placement schools' policies, are implemented successfully. Many trainees create stimulating work areas in the classroom either through displays, role play areas or writing areas. Most trainees participate in school visits and conduct risk assessments.

The quality of training

8. The course is well structured and its content enables trainees to meet the Standards. The order in which topics are approached is sensible. For example, there is a basic skills course in ICT early in Year 1. The training programme pays due attention to the core and foundation subjects. A strength is the integrated approach to early years education through modules such as Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Stage.

9. Course content is good. The National Curriculum, Primary National Strategy and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage are covered well. The principles of *Every Child Matters* are thoroughly embedded. The very good attention given to inclusion and diversity is another key strength. The course content includes sufficient emphasis on developing trainees' subject knowledge. Module documentation makes the links to the Standards explicit.

10. Assignments, directed tasks and school-based tasks cover relevant topics and are important features of the course. However, they represent an unduly heavy workload for trainees. Steps have been taken to alleviate this and introduce more practical elements into the assignments from September 2007.

11. The leadership of the course is effective and contributes to good levels of coherence between university-based and school-based training. Partnership school staff have a good knowledge of the content of the university course and of their roles and responsibilities as trainers. Good links between the various modules of the course are enhanced by the fact that some tutors teach on more than one module. The course is successful in linking theory and practice through assignments, tasks and training sessions.

12. The quality of the university-based training is uniformly good. Tutors make objectives clear and explicitly show how sessions help to address the Standards.

Tutors are well qualified and experienced. They model good primary practice. Trainees are interested and enthusiastic. They make intelligent contributions which are often linked to their experiences in schools.

13. School-based training is good. Mentors are good primary practitioners and demonstrate effective teaching. They provide the trainees with practically-focused seminars, for example, on assessment in the early years, which complement university-based work.

14. Trainees have access to a wide range of appropriate resources, including an accessible virtual learning environment. They are given good advice on using commercial resources and developing their own. Teaching areas contain displays devised by the trainees which show interesting ideas for school-based learning.

15. Most placement schools are also well resourced.

16. Arrangements to meet the individual needs of trainees are good. Trainees' progress is monitored effectively so that they are well aware of their progress towards meeting the Standards. Subject knowledge in the core subjects and ICT is audited early in the course and trainees are given appropriate support. Booster courses, tutorials and advice on independent study are designed to improve trainees' knowledge. A good feature is the help individual trainees receive from academic skills tutors when they need additional support. Trainees are set individual targets for improvement and update their individual action plans throughout the course. They maintain professional development files which show evidence of their progress towards meeting the Standards.

17. Arrangements for the monitoring of trainees' progress and the assessment of their work are good. Assignments are marked well and trainees are given developmental points as well as an assessment of the quality of their work. Procedures for second marking are appropriate. The assessment of trainees' teaching is a strong feature. School-based staff are very familiar with the Standards, and the good documentation ensures a consistent approach to assessment. The quality of feedback after lesson observations is good.

Management and quality assurance

18. The provider recruits good quality candidates, and retention rates on the course are relatively high. There are effective systems in place to ascertain the reasons for withdrawal. The university web site provides clear and accurate information for prospective trainees. The course meets its targets for recruitment from under-represented groups, such as males and trainees from minority ethnic communities. The provider adheres stringently to the university's race equality and equal opportunities policies in the selection procedures. The university makes good provision for trainees who are identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have any identified additional need. A recent candidate with hearing

impairment was able to use signing at interview and was successful in gaining a place on the course. Robust systems, including a Criminal Record Bureau check, are used to assess the suitability of all applicants.

19. The organisation of the partnership is effective. The documentation sent to schools, particularly the mentor handbook, enhances the very good communications between partners. The partnership agreement, compiled in collaboration with the schools, is understood and adhered to by all. It clearly sets out roles and responsibilities and demonstrates high expectations of all involved. The university sets out clearly the criteria for selection and de-selection of schools. Schools feel that they are valued by the university and are genuine partners because they are involved in selection, training and course development.

20. Communications between the university, trainees and schools are very good. A strong feature is the prompt distribution of records of trainees' performance and targets to their next placement. School-based mentors are well trained for their roles. Their commitment to the partnership is demonstrated by the high attendance levels at Saturday morning training sessions. The training focuses on appropriate areas, such as the evaluation of the quality of teaching. Training is reinforced when school-based mentors conduct joint observations with university-based staff during the second and third school experiences. Induction procedures for university staff are good. Newly appointed staff have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for development.

21. Trainees evaluate their training and school placements. Recently introduced peer observations have improved the previously limited monitoring and evaluation of the course. The external examiner's report is of good quality and makes good recommendations for improvement. The university benchmarks its performance against similar providers and has reflected on its own practice in the light of Ofsted reports on good quality providers. The provider takes evaluations seriously and makes changes accordingly. Rapid and effective response was made to the issues identified during the first inspection visit, for example; course modules were redesigned and new staff were recruited.

22. The course is well led and managed by the course leader. However, the partnership has been too reliant on the strengths of the course leader to provide guidance. Long-term strategic planning is not yet fully established. Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in determining the future direction of the training programme.