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A secondary initial teacher training
full inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
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Introduction

London Metropolitan University works in partnership with about 80 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers training in citizenship, community languages, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and science. Training in physical education is to be re-introduced in September 2007. At the time of the inspection there were 116 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 highly effective leadership and management which have led to substantial improvements since the previous inspection
- the strong emphasis on inclusion and diversity which permeates the training and enables trainees to meet the needs of different groups of pupils very effectively
- the strong commitment to build a productive partnership with placement schools
- the success of the partnership in attracting trainees from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures to work in diverse urban settings
- the coherence and consistently high quality of university-based training
- the wide range of teaching strategies used by trainees to stimulate pupils' interest and involvement in lessons.

Points for action

- ensuring that the role of ITT coordinator in the management and quality assurance of school-based training is clearly defined and implemented consistently across the partnership
- ensuring that all trainees make effective use of a combination of formative and summative assessment strategies to monitor, assess and report on pupils' progress.

Points for consideration

- determining how to use information about the suitability and quality of school placements to enhance the quality of training

Standards achieved by trainees

1. Trainees are highly committed to teaching in diverse, urban settings and particularly in London. They provide pupils with very good role models and work hard to promote positive values and attitudes. They have high expectations of pupils and treat them with care and respect. Trainees make a substantial contribution to the life of their placement schools: for example, by participating in musical productions and organising charity fund-raising events. They build productive relationships with colleagues, often making a valuable contribution to departmental resources. For example, one mathematics trainee compiled a very helpful user guide for some software for drawing graphs.

2. Trainees evaluate their lessons conscientiously and frequently reflect on the progress they are making. Most trainees do this very well and have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their teaching. A small number of trainees tend to over-estimate their capabilities, because they do not focus sufficiently sharply on evaluating the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning.

3. The subject knowledge of trainees is good and they make effective use of the skills and understanding they have gained through their specialist degrees and broader experience. They share their expertise constructively with each other, particularly in music and citizenship. Trainees have a good knowledge of the National Curriculum and a keen awareness of the impact of the Secondary National Strategy on teaching and learning. They have well developed information and communications technology (ICT) skills which they use to good effect in their lessons. Science trainees are adept at teaching outside their specialist areas and modern foreign languages trainees are confident about teaching their second or, in some cases, third foreign language. English trainees are particularly skilled in handling media topics, but do not always focus sufficiently on developing pupils' listening and speaking skills.

4. Lesson planning is conscientious and detailed, usually incorporating a range of learning activities and a variety of resources. Learning outcomes are clear and, as trainees gain experience, increasingly precise. Trainees are skilled at planning sequences of lessons, showing a good sense of progression in pupils' learning and making very good use of a related written assignment.

5. Trainees use a good range of teaching strategies to stimulate pupils' interest and involvement in lessons. Modern foreign languages trainees make highly effective use of learning activities which alternate lively involvement in the lesson with quieter phases where pupils settle down to individual work. English trainees are particularly strong at organising group work and use film and drama very effectively to enhance teaching and learning. Mathematics trainees make good use of ICT to engage pupils' interest and support explanations and demonstrations in topics such as geometry and graph work.

6. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress are satisfactory overall, but is the weakest aspect of trainees' work. There are strengths in particular subjects. Science trainees make good use of assessment information when planning their lessons. English trainees provide constructive comments on pupils' work. Modern foreign languages trainees monitor pupils' progress well in lessons. However, few trainees combine all the essential elements of assessment well to monitor, assess and report on pupils' progress.

7. The trainees have made good progress in developing the skills needed to manage challenging pupils and classes successfully. Most trainees apply their placement schools' behaviour and rewards policies very well and create a positive and purposeful working atmosphere in their lessons. As trainees gain experience, they increasingly understand the links between pupils' behaviour and the suitability and relevance of learning activities. For a minority of trainees, this remains an area for development.

8. Trainees' commitment to meet the diverse needs of different groups of pupils is a strength of their planning and teaching. They have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Trainees plan extension work skilfully for more able, particularly in science. Trainees who teach mixed-ability classes have clear strategies, including deploying teaching assistants and devising imaginative resources, to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

The quality of training

9. The course is well structured and coherent, combining the strengths identified in the previous inspection with some substantial improvements and innovations. The content of the central training programmes is highly relevant with good coverage of the implications of *Every Child Matters*. Inclusion and diversity issues feature prominently and are a significant strength of the training programme. From the start of the course, when trainees are required to reflect on their own language and identity, the training encourages trainees to explore these key issues in depth and breadth. This enables trainees to develop a highly inclusive approach to their teaching so that they are able to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.

10. The first of two well designed written assignments makes an important contribution to the development of trainees' medium term planning through its sharp focus on progression in pupils' learning. This assignment is marked thoroughly and very full written feedback is given to trainees; this enables them to develop clear learning outcomes for pupils as they move on to their second school placement and models good assessment practice. More generally, the university training provides good coverage of assessment strategies but trainees do not build on this consistently well in their work in partnership schools.

11. There is a high degree of coherence between general professional studies training and the individual subject programmes. For example, a very successful university training session identified the links between citizenship and other areas of the curriculum. This was followed up in carefully planned group sessions where citizenship trainees led discussions for their peers in the other subject areas. University-based subject training is of consistently high quality. The sessions observed by inspectors all had good features and some were outstanding. Trainees value these sessions and are often inspired to follow them up in their placement schools.

12. There is a great deal of highly effective school-based training. The quality of mentoring has improved substantially since the previous inspection and is now good. Trainees are well supported by their mentors and the targets set at weekly meetings are helpful, clearly focused and systematically reviewed. There is an increasing emphasis on mentors and trainees working together to break down targets into manageable tasks and training activities. This is beginning to have an impact. For example, one trainee who was experiencing difficulty with pace in his teaching made a marked improvement after working in a structured way with his mentor and sharing a class over a sequence of lessons. While it is satisfactory overall, the range and depth of school-based professional studies training varies considerably. This is largely because the role of ITT coordinator is not yet fully developed. A few coordinators plan systematic training programmes, which are carefully linked with those required by other ITT providers, but this good practice is not yet established across the partnership.

13. The course is very successful in meeting the diverse needs of trainees. Mentors and other subject teachers provide trainees with frequent and helpful feedback on their teaching. This helps them to develop their subject knowledge and its application to teaching, as well as improving their class management. Mentors are also fully involved in helping trainees tackle issues related to their own language and cultural background. For example, one trainee from an overseas background received useful guidance from his mentor on his use of language when teaching his specialist subject; this helped him to make good progress over the placement. The first year of the two year courses in music and science is very effective in developing trainees' subject knowledge so that they are well prepared for the final year of the training.

14. Assessment procedures are comprehensive and clearly understood by all those involved in the training. The professional development journal is used well to track trainees' progress towards the Standards. A recently introduced programme of joint observations undertaken by university supervising tutors and subject mentors adds greatly to the accuracy and consistency of judgements about trainees' teaching. A strength of the course is the lively, mature dialogue between mentors and tutors as they assess trainees' progress. Arrangements for the final assessment of trainees against the Standards are very thorough. Trainees have a good understanding of what constitutes appropriate evidence and know how to present this to demonstrate that they have achieved the Standards. Internal and external moderation arrangements are rigorous and effective.

Management and quality assurance

15. Management and quality assurance are good. There has been a rigorous and effective response to the issues arising from the previous inspection and it is clear that the overall quality of provision has improved substantially.

16. Improved selection procedures are very effective in identifying trainees from an extremely wide range of cultures and backgrounds who have the potential to teach in this setting. Interview tasks are well-designed to identify suitable trainees and are carefully matched with the requirements of the different subjects on offer. Selection procedures are now benefiting from the more active involvement of school-based trainers and the overall quality of interview records has improved markedly since the previous inspection.

17. There are fluctuations in course completion rates from year to year, and between subjects; the overall rate is slightly below the London average. However, withdrawals are monitored very carefully and the reasons are often related to changes in trainees' personal circumstances which could not have been foreseen. Procedures in English have recently been re-designed to assess more rigorously whether applicants have the resilience and personal qualities to succeed in the course. There are early indications that this is leading to lower withdrawal rates in this subject.

18. Trainees are usually set pre-course tasks to help them prepare for the training, although there are variations in how systematically this is done across subjects. It is done particularly well in recruitment for the physical education course where tasks are highly appropriate and sharply focussed on trainees' individual needs.

19. Since the previous inspection there is a tangible and growing sense of partnership with placement schools. Schools are making a more active contribution to course development and improvement. There are well conceived plans to identify a team of expert mentors who will contribute to the evaluation and development of the subject programmes. While this work is at an early stage, there are signs of more productive and collaborative working. For example, expert mentors are making a valuable contribution to selection and interview procedures and to improvements in course design.

20. The employment of an external advisor, who is a former London headteacher, to visit schools and discuss partnership arrangements with headteachers, is enabling the university to develop a better understanding of their priorities and aspirations for initial teacher training. Combined with the visits carried out by university staff this is raising the profile of the provider in London schools. The number of schools who are now offering placements has risen markedly.

21. The university has established effective programmes of mentor training and development. Securing high levels of attendance continues to be a challenge, but

the increasing numbers of mentors who attend the training confirm its value and it is clear that this is having an impact on the quality of training.

22. There are first rate plans for the re-introduction of physical education; there were substantial weaknesses in this subject at the time of the previous inspection. The newly appointed course tutor has approached the task with determination and energy, making very good use of his previous experience of working with London schools to make a careful assessment of the suitability of physical education departments for trainee placements. Finding suitable secondary placements for trainees on the Key Stage 2/Key Stage 3 community languages course was a significant concern at the time of the previous inspection. The university has recognised that this will be an ongoing difficulty and the course will be discontinued at the end of the year. In the meanwhile, community languages trainees have been successfully integrated with modern foreign languages trainees for the secondary element of the course.

23. Since the previous inspection, supervising tutors are playing an increasingly prominent role in monitoring and enhancing the quality of school-based training. Their visits, together those undertaken by senior staff and the recently appointed external advisor, are enabling the university to build a cumulative picture of the individual features and suitability of schools and subject departments. Senior managers have yet to determine how this potentially valuable information should be shared with schools to further improve the quality of training.

24. Opportunities for quality assurance at a school level are missed because the role of the school-based ITT coordinator is not well-defined and does not include an explicit quality assurance element. This leads to wide variations in school-based professional studies training and is recognised by the university. A well conceived draft role description has been compiled and has elicited a very positive response from ITT coordinators, although it is too early for this to have had an impact on the quality of training.

25. Highly committed and effective leadership and management have been the key factors in establishing a powerful impetus for change and improvement. Re-structuring has strengthened the management team and the new arrangements are well-designed to provide a constructive blend of strategic and operational responsibilities. Staff changes have been well managed and there is very capable and committed team of course tutors who are working with a clear sense of purpose and direction. University staff are highly committed to continuous improvement and are increasingly confident in their work to build stronger partnerships with schools.