

University of Winchester

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A secondary initial teacher training
Full inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The University of Winchester currently works in partnership with ten schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers training in religious education on a part-time eighteen months to three-year flexible course. One single inspection visit was undertaken to make judgements about all three of trainees' standards, the quality of training and the management and quality assurance of the provision. During this visit the achievements of trainees at different stages of the course were considered. At the time of the inspection there were fifteen trainees on the course, from two different starting points; five will complete at the end of the autumn term 2007 and this group was inspected to make judgments about trainees' standards. This group is the first cohort to be recruited onto the course by the provider.

Because of the small number of trainees involved in the course, there is no separate report on the Standards achieved by the 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)*.

The report draws on evidence from trainees at different stages in their course with much from scrutiny of those from the initial group of trainees.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Main inspection judgements

Quality of training:	Grade: 2
Management and quality assurance:	Grade: 2

The provider will receive its next inspection in accordance with the Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework.

Key strengths

- the quality of the central training
- the personal and professional qualities of the trainees
- the involvement of a range of stakeholders
- the close monitoring by senior management.

Points for action

- ensuring that subject mentors have a good understanding of their role in the 'personalised training' model
- ensuring that tutors' visits to schools are used both to support the work of subject mentors and to provide the opportunity for quality assurance.

Points for consideration

- improving trainees' understanding of the links between their intended learning outcomes and the assessment of pupils' progress and achievements, and of the use of these assessments in their lesson evaluation and future plans
- achieving a more effective balance between breadth and depth in trainees' subject knowledge and subject pedagogy
- improving the quality of subject-specific feedback on trainees' teaching
- extending trainees' use of focused observations of other teachers linked to specific training targets during the long final placement.

The quality of training

1. The course is structured well to support trainees' progress on this flexible route. There is an effective combination of central training for all trainees, based around a set of well-conceived modules, and 'personalised training'. The latter is delivered through the sequence of school placements and driven by an initial needs analysis and a well-designed individual training plan. The individual needs analysis is usefully undertaken during a period in school at the start of the course. The training model is fully understood and managed well by the trainees, who are well organised and use initiative to ensure that training meets their needs. Trainees are expertly supported by the subject tutors. The training model is less well understood by school-based subject mentors, largely because of inexperience as the course is in an early stage of development.

2. Training in the taught modules effectively combines the development of trainees' subject knowledge with training in how to teach religious education, and integrates well key aspects of professional studies, such as the implications of Every Child Matters. The training sessions are set within a clear conceptual framework, use lively, varied and stimulating presentations, model best practice well and are a strong feature of the course.

3. The training gives significant emphasis to trainees' subject knowledge development and to monitoring their progress. This is entirely appropriate given trainees' different starting points and is a key factor in the design of this flexible course. This subject knowledge development uses a good range of approaches, including the university's virtual learning environment and other web-based resources. Central training makes strong links between this development of subject knowledge and subject pedagogy. As a result of this good training, all trainees have developed their subject knowledge to a point where they can teach confidently and competently across the 11-16 age range. They can explain how they would teach particular topics in religious education using a range of innovative and creative approaches to best meet the needs of the pupils, and to engage their interest and enthusiasm. The trainees are less secure in explaining why some approaches are more effective than others, based on their awareness of how children learn and develop understanding in the subject. This is due, to some extent, to variations in the quality of feedback about subject-specific pedagogy given to trainees following observations of their teaching. The course gives due recognition to the local agreed syllabus, but needs to balance this more effectively with a broader range of essential subject knowledge content for all trainees, whilst encouraging greater depth in particular areas for some.

4. The first short school placement, organised by the provider, enables trainees to gain sufficient teaching experience to contextualise the subsequent training in teaching religious education and professional studies. Throughout the course trainees also undertake a series of self-directed placements, matched to their individual aspirations and to their training plan. This works well, and the balance between trainees deciding what they want to do and directed placements linked

tightly to the individual training plan is monitored carefully. Trainees undertake a wide range of interesting and informative placements in post-16 institutions, special schools, primary schools and other educational settings. All involve extensive observation and, often, some practical teaching.

5. The final, long, assessed placement provides good opportunities for trainees to demonstrate the full range of Standards. Their progress is monitored carefully through frequent tutor visits. Training throughout this final placement is based on individual training plans, rather than a set programme, and ensures that all elements combine well to secure trainees' progress. This successful approach is dependent on the ability of the trainee to take control of their training, and use their own critical analysis and initiative to make it work for them, and the ability of the mentor to respond to the needs of the trainee and judge carefully what is required to ensure good progress. Providing high quality feedback and target setting for trainees is a crucial aspect of this approach. Mentoring is at least satisfactory, much is good and some outstanding, resulting in all trainees making good progress. An area of inconsistency is the use of focused observations of other teachers linked to specific training targets. As the course develops and schools become more familiar with the individualised training approach, there are already signs of improvement in how they adapt existing programmes in professional studies.

6. The training places good emphasis on showing trainees how to plan lessons. As a result, trainees plan their lessons conscientiously and in great detail. Their plans show a good understanding of schemes of work and what needs to be taught, including the levels expected, and all plan for differentiation with some success. However, whilst all trainees include assessment strategies in their planning, their understanding of the links between the intended learning outcomes and how pupils' progress and achievements will be assessed is less secure.

7. Trainees are engaged in systematic evaluation of their own progress; this is a strong and important feature of the personalised training model used on this flexible course. The trainees are self-critical and good at evaluating their own performance; they can identify what went well and what needs to be improved in their lessons. This informs trainees' own target setting well. However, trainees' lesson evaluation is often not linked to the expected learning outcomes or to a reflection on the quality of learning. Subsequent lessons are then planned without a detailed consideration of the actual progress made by pupils.

8. Assessments of trainees' progress and achievement of the Standards are accurate and the pass-fail boundary is secure.

Management and quality assurance

9. There is a clear rationale for the course, based on the university's mission and on a well-defined local need for secondary religious education teachers. The

course is carefully structured to meet this need and to complement other provision in the region.

10. Although the provider does not quite meet its recruitment target, it recruits trainees with the qualities required to complete the course successfully. The trainees recruited are strongly self-motivated and self-sufficient; they are very articulate and have good communication skills. All are highly suited to the nature of the course, and are fully committed to teaching and to their subject. A wider range of recruitment strategies has been put in place to increase the number of applications so that the target can be met whilst retaining the rigorous application of the selection criteria and the high quality of the intake. There is evidence of this from the second cohort and current recruitment for the next starting point. The nature of the course enables the provider to be flexible in recruiting trainees from different backgrounds and with a range of qualifications. Well-designed selection criteria and procedures ensure that all trainees have the potential to become good teachers. The highly individualised nature of the training programme ensures that all trainees' progress is tracked closely and that there is robust monitoring of the provider's disability, equal opportunity and race relations policies.

11. The partnership is managed well. The close involvement of senior leaders results in close monitoring of all aspects of the provision and in high quality support for the course leader. There is an effective management structure with clear lines of accountability. The programme committee and steering group complement each other well, with the former taking account of internal university matters and the latter dealing with partnership matters. Both have strong representation from partnership schools. A particularly impressive feature of the provision is the involvement of a range of stakeholders including the local authority religious education development groups and subject adviser, advanced skills teachers and the local diocese. These links are used well to ensure that the provision remains focused on the identified intentions, reflects local and national subject developments, and builds capacity within the partnership. The formal partnership agreement and course documentation makes clear the expectations and requirements for all involved. It is less clear about the key role of subject mentors in the training model used, although this is already being addressed through focused mentor training.

12. Schools are selected carefully to provide strong religious education departments that have the potential to provide good training environments. Many schools in the partnership have extensive expertise in teacher training, although few subject mentors have prior experience. Sharing expertise and ensuring that all subject mentors fully understand their role in supporting individual trainees on flexible routes that involve extensive 'personalised training' is a challenge for the provider as more schools are required as the course develops.

13. The provider undertakes extensive evaluation to support the close informal dialogue between trainers and trainees. This enables managers to be responsive to needs. Course tutors make frequent visits to trainees during the final school placement to provide support for trainees and to monitor their progress during this key part of the course. Regular joint observations with subject mentors are used to

moderate judgments about trainees' progress and achievement. However, insufficient emphasis is given to supporting the work of subject mentors and to providing the opportunity for quality assurance during these visits.

14. The application of these procedures to the first group of trainees to complete the course led to the provider accurately identifying aspects of the provision that require improvement. These were in particular: planning a subject mentor conference in late summer prior to the final teaching placement to ensure all mentors fully understand their role in the training and to share best practice; exemplifying good practice in feedback and target setting for mentors through web-based resources; and introducing improved arrangements for school-based professional studies. The external examiner provides useful additional feedback on the provision as well as visiting a sample of trainees to moderate final judgements. The key priorities are clearly identified in the improvement plan, although, at this stage, schools are not clear about their role in securing these improvements. This will be a focus of a planned partnership conference.