

# Liverpool Hope University

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Education Deanery  
Hope Park  
Liverpool  
L16 9JD

A primary initial teacher training  
short inspection report  
2007/08

Managing inspector  
Alan Torr HMI

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## Introduction

Liverpool Hope University works in partnership with 342 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a number of Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) courses. Trainees on the full-time PGCE programme follow one of two routes. They are trained to teach either the 3–7 or 5-11 age range. There is also a two-year part-time distance learning course in which trainees are trained to teach pupils in the 5-11 age range. The university offers, from 2007, a new four-year Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) with honours and with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in the 3-7 and 5-11 age ranges. There are two other routes into teaching via a three and a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree with honours and QTS in 3–7 and 5-11 age ranges. These are now being phased out. At the time of the inspection there were 987 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 next inspection of this provider will take place in accordance with the Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework.

## Key strengths

- the very good relationships and communication throughout the partnership
- the high calibre of trainees recruited
- the very good pastoral support for trainees
- the strong links between theory and practice exemplified by useful and relevant assignments and school based tasks
- the very good leadership in the science department and the provision of high quality training.

## Point for action

- identifying precise success criteria to provide senior leaders with an accurate view of the impact on provision.

## Points for consideration

- improving the rigour of annual reviews leading to high quality action plans
- improving the consistency and quality of feedback to trainees in assignments to always give helpful points for development, particularly in English and mathematics
- improving the use of pre-course information and tasks at the onset of the courses.

## The quality of training

1. All courses are well structured and their content enables trainees to meet the Standards. As a result, trainees gain experience and understanding of teaching and learning across the breadth of the key stages for which they are being trained. Professional studies elements are the backbone of the courses and give trainees a firm grounding in best primary practice. Cross curricular elements and the principles of Every Child Matters are embedded throughout. Good quality school placements and block experiences are well spaced to enable trainees to build on their prior learning and the training in centre-based sessions. Trainees teach a wide variety of age ranges in diverse communities.

2. Training programmes give high priority to the teaching of the National Curriculum and take appropriate account of the Primary National Strategy and relevant national initiatives. A strong feature of centre-based training, for example, is the use of recent and relevant research in taught sessions. Assignments and school-based tasks are relevant, purposeful and create a very good link between theory and practice. Learning outcomes, identified for most modules, are linked and referenced to the Standards. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a strong feature in all subjects. This enhances trainees' understanding of the effective use of ICT in teaching. For example, relevant use is made of data loggers and digital cameras with the emphasis placed on the support ICT gives to science teaching without replacing the emphasis on investigative skills. Trainees following the distance learning PGCE make good use of e-learning and the virtual learning environment to support their learning.

3. All elements of the programmes combine well to enable trainees to make progress towards the Standards. The connection between the professional studies, subject training and school-based training is particularly effective. Appropriate attention is given to the teaching of pupils with English as an additional language and to those with learning difficulties. The majority of tutors on the professional studies programme also teach in subject areas and visit trainees on placement. This provides effective links between school and centre-based training.

4. Tutors bring a good range of expertise to the course with many having relevant and recent experience in primary schools. This experience is supplemented effectively by using a number of experts and specialists in different fields of education. A strength of centre-based sessions is the modelling of good primary teaching, particularly in science and modern foreign languages. Trainees value the range of practical activities presented by tutors and the amount of high quality resources available for use on placement. School-based tutors are well trained and qualified to support trainees. They know their roles and responsibilities very well. Trainees' prior learning is taken into account in most schools and training is tailored effectively to meet their needs. Mentors provide helpful generic feedback to trainees on the quality of their teaching. However, feedback is not focused enough on giving good subject specific advice to enable trainees to develop their teaching and learning skills in English and mathematics. Individual targets are given at the end of

each observation and review meeting. These targets are sometimes too general and are not followed up in subsequent observations and meetings.

5. A standard set of tasks is given to successful candidates after their interview which they must complete before the onset of the course. There is inconsistency in how these are used by tutors to inform teaching programmes and to ensure that trainees' individual needs are met. Some trainees receive extra tasks to complete before the course begins, for example, by spending some time in school observing good teachers. Pre-course tasks are not used sufficiently well to enable trainees to make rapid progress in their training. There are a wide range of strategies to support trainees in developing their subject knowledge in mathematics and science. Marking of assignments is closely linked to the grade criteria. Assignments are annotated well, particularly in science. Tutors' feedback provides trainees with an indication of how they have performed. Helpful comments are sometimes included to aid trainees' progress towards the Standards. However, in English and mathematics there is inconsistency in the quality of feedback. Tutors know the trainees very well and provide valuable pastoral support; for example a trainee was able to take her child with her on a placement abroad.

6. Trainees' progress towards meeting the Standards is monitored well. Regular profiling sessions ensure they are on track to meet targets set by tutors. The Profile of Professional Development (PPD) is a comprehensive document which includes information about school placements, subject knowledge audits, lesson observations, end of school experience reports and QTS skills results. This enables tutors to accurately assess whether trainees have met the Standards. Retaining this information in one file ensures easy communication from one school experience to the next. In the new BA course, The Profile of Personal and Professional Development (PPPD) enriches the PPD as it challenges the trainees to reflect more closely on their classroom practice. Arrangements for the final assessment of trainees are clear and well understood by trainers and trainees.

## Management and quality assurance

7. The University is successful in recruiting high calibre trainees. This is as a result of highly efficient administration, significantly increased entry requirements and very effective selection procedures. High quality pastoral support is offered to successful candidates after interview, which then runs throughout their time at Hope. Trainees who need extra help with writing are referred to the writing centre before the courses start. Support services for trainees with a declared special educational need begin immediately after they have been accepted onto a course. Helpful feedback and advice on how to re-apply is given to candidates who are not offered a place. Withdrawal rates are very low.

8. The University's ethos and warm welcoming family-like feel is apparent in its website. The course prospectus and university website provide detailed and clear information for candidates. This, along with positive images in documentation and

successful taster days, careers fairs and workshops support the university's proactive approach to recruiting trainees from under-represented groups, particularly males.

9. Recent restructuring of the Deanery has strengthened leadership and management. The Dean leads a committed team of senior tutors who continually strive for improvement and act upon suggestions and recommendations from a range of sources. There is an effective committee and course leadership structure and leaders and managers at all levels have clear roles and lines of responsibility. The management of subjects is inconsistent. In science subject leadership is very good. The subject leader works well with the team of tutors to maintain and improve the quality of the training. In English there has been a period of instability with a significant number of staff absences. Effective provision has been made to cover absences and to ensure that the overall quality of the trained is still good.

10. Relationships between the university and schools within the partnership are very good. This enables school and university staff to benefit from each others' expertise. Staff in school have many opportunities for continued professional development and staff in university are able to keep their knowledge of good primary practice up to date. A high proportion of school staff attend the improved differentiated mentor training. A good feature is the rolling programme of subject specific training for mentors. Research by the university identified that teaching assistants in school are not always aware of the role of trainees and the university's training. Over-subscribed, innovative training was held at the university for teaching assistants about how to work and support trainees. Very good links, forged with national, European and international schools, broaden trainees' experiences and understanding of teaching and learning.

11. There is very good communication across the partnership. School-based staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the training, monitoring and assessment of trainees. Joint observations take place in most schools in the partnership. In some articulated schools this process goes a step further so that staff from other schools complete joint observations to moderate assessments and lesson observations.

12. The primary steering committee has a clear remit and works very effectively in evaluating provision and suggesting innovations and amendments to the courses. For example, they influenced the structure of school placements on the new BA degree in order that trainees were able to get a fuller view of the life of a school and of education. The committee has been enhanced by extending the membership to include representatives from local authorities. This enables the committee to have a clear understanding of the labour market for teachers in authorities.

13. Although quality assurance is still good it is not as strong as at the time of the last inspection. The university evaluates all taught modules and school placements. Tutors self-evaluate the provision by taking into account the views of all major stakeholders. Course annual reviews are based on summaries of these views but are insufficiently detailed to ensure that all recommendations are discussed and recorded. As a result, some important recommendations can get lost. Action plans

are written following the review process. They identify tasks to aid improvement but success criteria are not precise enough to provide senior leaders with an accurate view of how improvement measures impact on the training.