

# University of Manchester

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School of Education  
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A primary initial teacher training  
short inspection report  
2007/08

Managing inspector  
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## Introduction

The University of Manchester School of Education works in partnership with 150 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a one year post graduate certificate in education (PGCE). At the time of the inspection there were 108 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 1

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 high quality of leadership and management at all levels and in all aspects of the course
- effective self evaluation based on open and honest feedback
- rigorous selection procedures ensuring high retention rates and a consistently good profile of strong trainees who often gain employment within the partnership
- the development of trainees' subject knowledge by encouraging confidence from the outset
- trainees' understanding of their own progress and how well they are meeting the standards
- the high quality of the training programme in mathematics and science
- the strong partnership with schools offering good training opportunities.

## Points for consideration

- developing the partnership clusters in order to maximise the expertise of school-based staff in the delivery of training.

## The quality of training

1. The quality of training is at least good. Outstanding features include the high quality of provision in mathematics and science, and the rigour with which trainees' subject knowledge is fostered alongside their practical skills in teaching. The intensive, thoughtfully designed programme provides every opportunity for trainees to meet the Standards well.
2. The university has phased the programme to prepare trainees for their four placements which pose differing and increasingly challenging demands. In turn, the trainees' evaluations of their experiences feed into the programme, leading to further improvements and refinements. Every task, assignment and course element is linked explicitly to the Standards and is monitored closely. Trainees and trainers therefore have a clear picture of trainees' targets and progress in meeting the Standards, and where support is needed.
3. Sessions in professional studies provide core information which is developed and applied in subject courses giving strong coherence across the programme. The university regularly updates and revises the content to reflect practice in partnership schools as well as national and local initiatives. As a result, trainees are well versed in the principles of *Every Child Matters* and *Excellence and Enjoyment*. In English, there is due emphasis on the structured teaching of reading, drawing on materials from the Primary National Strategy. In mathematics and science, trainees gain a good awareness of common misconceptions and how to deal with them. The assessment of pupils' learning and progress is a recurring strand and trainers also alert trainees to intervention and extension programmes. Enrichment weeks provide trainees with the opportunity to strengthen the evidence that they have met particular Standards, such as knowledge of Key Stage 3 and provision for pupils who have English as an additional language.
4. The university draws well on expertise within the partnership and local authorities to contribute to course content and to lead some training, although the expertise of staff in the partnership clusters is not used to its full potential. In professional studies, trainees benefit from input by specialists and skilled practitioners who challenge their thinking as well as highlight effective practice.
5. A key strength of centre-based training is the focus on raising trainees' confidence to teach. In mathematics, the option for trainees to be in a high support group irrespective of mathematical competence has proved very successful in boosting self assurance. Trainees have access to high quality support materials online, particularly in mathematics and science, to plug the gaps in their subject knowledge identified in regular audits. Trainers also provide support sessions, individual tutorials and additional materials.
6. Trainees' evaluations support the judgement that there is inspirational central training in mathematics and science. There is a balance of theory and workshop activities so that trainees are equally knowledgeable about subject content

and ways to plan and teach it. Overall trainees are well prepared to teach English because of the content of the centre-based training and the practical help of school based trainers, who are clear about their role and conscientious in their support.

7. Observations of trainees' teaching are often very detailed and constructively critical with references to subject content. Joint observations and discussions with trainees provide a secure, accurate base for the reports and grades awarded in the two assessed placements. Trainees also receive good quality academic feedback on their assignments which are well timed to allow trainees to act on comments, sometimes from two markers, and improve the quality of their work. The introduction of weekly journal entries has strengthened trainees' focus on reflection.

## Management and quality assurance

8. Management and quality assurance of the course are outstanding. The school of education meet its target in respect of attracting males in to primary teaching and tries hard to recruit black and ethnic minority trainees. Rigorous selection procedures ensure the recruitment of high quality trainees. As a result, retention rates are high and employment of trainees in partnership schools is good. A series of fast track style assessment centres, involving well planned activities, allow candidates to demonstrate their potential to meet the entry requirements. Partnership headteachers, ITE coordinators and accredited tutors are all part of the selection process and receive appropriate training from the university particularly in respect of equal opportunities and race equality. Meticulous evaluation of applicants' feedback on the selection process leads to refinements each year. For example, current trainees were provided with a detailed breakdown of their interview audit with clear guidance as to how best to improve.

9. Leadership and management of the course are excellent. The partnership handbook sets out clearly roles and responsibilities and expectations. A strong partnership exists and an informative newsletter ensures that all are kept up to date on how well the partnership is performing.

10. Rigorous quality assurance visits by the partnership development adviser assess the suitability of prospective schools as well as checking on long established members. Unequivocal selection and de-selection procedures ensure that schools are good quality training venues and all school-based staff are accredited to work as tutors and receive regular training. The quality assurance and standards tutor provides a further effective check on strengths and weaknesses during trainees' school placements. A rich seam of quality data ensures trainees' individual progress is tracked thoroughly. Highly effective internal and external moderation procedures ensure that the assessment of trainees is rigorous, consistent and accurate.

11. Self-evaluation provides a sharp analysis of all aspects of the School of Education's work. Performance management is well established; university tutors undertake peer observation of centre based training and evaluate one another's work in schools. The external examiners' reports and internal evaluations are

analysed thoroughly to improve the quality of provision. All subject teams take a lead in developing and quality assuring training in their subject. Tutors undertake a detailed analysis of all feedback and are quick to respond to any emerging weaknesses. The primary advisory committee, which includes representatives from the school of education, partnership schools, trainees and newly qualified teachers, is pivotal in ensuring outstanding and effective quality assurance procedures which continually drive the improvement process.

12. All issues identified in the last inspection report have been tackled effectively. Race relations and equality of opportunity are now high profile in the work of the partnership. The partnership agreement contains detailed information on these policies and the school of education reports annually to the university's ITT steering committee on this. Action planning is now based on in-depth analysis of provision with success criteria focussed on improving trainees' teaching skills and academic success.