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A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The University of Manchester works in partnership with 125 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers training in business education, design and technology, English, mathematics, modern languages and science. At the time of the inspection there were 213 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 stimulating and intellectually demanding nature of the training
- the very well established partnership, which includes a wide variety of schools who work collaboratively, and make an excellent contribution to the training programme
- the outstanding quality of course documentation, which very effectively supports all those involved in the training
- the excellent communication between the university and school-based trainers
- the highly effective quality assurance procedures
- the first-rate leadership and management of the programme, at whole course and subject levels.

Points for consideration

- developing a tracking system that clearly shows the impact of the programme on trainees' achievements.

The quality of training

1. The stimulating and intellectually demanding nature of the training is a significant strength. All trainees follow a well-planned Educational and Professional Studies (EPS) programme, which is continuously revised and developed to ensure its relevance. There is appropriate coverage of key areas such as *Every Child Matters*, personalised learning, assessment, equality and diversity, and particularly notable is an excellent unit on the global dimension in education. Lectures are followed up by mixed subject seminars. In some cases, this may happen immediately after a lecture; in other cases, seminars are appropriately planned for a later date, when trainees might be expected to have experienced the topic in schools. This provides a strong base for discussion, and supports trainees' progress well. Examples of innovative practice include one EPS session that requires trainees to download a podcast and presentation, as preparation for a seminar. Highly knowledgeable specialists make a first-rate contribution to the EPS programme.
2. The pattern of three placements is very effective, and is popular with trainees. Trainees return to their first school for their final placement. This allows them time to reflect on their early school experiences and share good practice with their contemporaries. This structure is also popular with school-based trainers, who comment that they are able to gain a real sense of the trainees' progress when they return to school for the final placement. Trainees benefit greatly from their placements in contrasting schools, where they gain valuable experience of teaching across the full age and ability range in a variety of contexts.
3. The course is extremely coherent. The Record of Achievement and Development document is key to cementing all aspects of the course together, and is much valued by trainees, mentors and tutors. Meetings between trainees and mentors, lesson observations and summative reports are all carefully timetabled and recorded in the Record of Achievement and Development document. In schools, mentors and senior co-ordinators use the Record of Achievement and Development document very effectively, together with other information provided by the university, to create training programmes which complement centre-based training.
4. Assignments reflect a well-judged balance of theory and practice. A variety of different tasks ensures that trainees develop a range of skills; for example, in addition to their teaching and professional practice assessments, trainees complete two subject assignments, a research assignment and a reflective journal. These are complemented by a number of highly relevant and focused school-based tasks. All assessed work encourages trainees to think about their practice in a wider educational context, and to relate what they do to the work of established educational writers.
5. University based training is very highly rated by trainees, who praise the way that their tutors model good practice and professional values. Examples of effective practice include teaching to small groups of peers supported by video analysis, which stimulates very high quality detailed discussions. In business studies, tutors teach the same topic in two contrasting ways and invite discussion. English trainees assess

each other's assignments and redraft them. Tutors declare their objectives and invite evaluations of their sessions, and trainees' feedback is overwhelmingly positive. The university encourages schools to play to their strengths in the delivery of the EPS programme, with a number of local arrangements allowing trainees to visit schools with, for example, particularly good provision for pupils with learning difficulties, or those for whom English is an additional language.

6. Trainees speak very highly of their school placements and of their mentors. Senior co-ordinators are active in supporting trainees in schools and ensuring that their training is of a high standard. Tutors and mentors work hard to respond to the needs of individual trainees. As far as possible, placement choices take account of the trainees' capabilities and past experience. The training is flexible enough to adapt to trainees' changing needs as the year progresses.

7. Subject booster and enhancement courses are praised by trainees, and are effective in extending their subject knowledge. Evaluations show that science trainees, for example, value the extra help given with the science subjects with which they feel least confident. In modern languages, there are a number of classes and tasks to enhance trainees' language skills. In all subjects, knowledge and skills are thoroughly audited and assessed at the beginning of the programme, and subsequent monitoring ensures that trainees develop their subject expertise throughout the course. Trainees who fail to make adequate progress are identified early, and a range of measures is available to support them and their mentors. Care is taken to ensure that the support given is appropriate and sensitively targeted.

8. Assessment procedures are meticulous and thorough. Summative reports clearly identify trainees' strengths and areas for development, and are closely linked to the standards. Reports completed at the end of each placement give a concise account of a trainee's progress to date and clearly identify subsequent training priorities. Internal and external moderation arrangements are rigorous and effective. Judgements about trainees' progress are regularly monitored. There are very regular joint lesson observations by subject mentors and subject tutors, and senior co-ordinators also observe trainees' teach, alongside mentors. Clear criteria in the Record of Achievement and Development document help to standardise judgements. There are well-established procedures for moderation, of both teaching and written assignments, across subjects.

Management and quality assurance

9. Extremely thorough and high quality selection procedures result in the recruitment of very able trainees. Since the last inspection, publicity materials have improved, with emphasis on attracting trainees in the shortage subjects. These include a high-profile link on the main university student intranet to the School of Education web site. Targets for minority ethnic recruitment have been consistently met, although the provider is not complacent in closely monitoring the situation, with tutors involved in a range of initiatives designed to attract applications from under-represented groups.

10. Tutors begin to audit trainees' strengths and weaknesses at the selection stage, and this information is fed back to successful candidates in writing. Feedback to unsuccessful candidates includes useful advice on areas for improvement. Pre-course tasks are suggested according to need. An initial assessment is made of trainees' ability, and this data is used in conjunction with data in the Record of Achievement and Development document to show trainees' progress.

11. The very well established partnership is a key strength of the provision. The diverse range of schools – from challenging inner city schools to independent institutions – ensures that trainees have the opportunity to experience teaching and learning in a variety of contrasting contexts.

12. There is a clear management committee structure, which enables trainees and representatives from schools to play an active role in programme development. The subject advisory groups, for example, allow subject specialists from across the partnership to consider course developments within their individual areas. Systems for gathering information from the various groups and drawing together issues are secure; the programme director is involved in most of the committees and maintains a comprehensive overview of the issues discussed.

13. Course documentation is of outstanding quality. All documents are extremely detailed and thorough. Handbooks also include examples of school-based training programmes. The structure of the Record of Achievement and Development document provides an excellent framework for the training programme. As a result of this, school staff have a very thorough understanding of the university's expectations. In addition, the university takes great care in ensuring that all trainers have the knowledge and skills necessary in order to carry out their roles.

14. The university actively encourages schools to work collaboratively. A major strength is the 'swap shop', a selection of online resources supplied by individual partner schools, which promotes the sharing of best practice across the partnership. The university has also carried out some excellent work in collaboration with two other local providers to help ease the burden on schools working with a number of different providers. This has resulted in the establishment of some common procedures and shared documentation. Partnership schools are extremely appreciative of this work, and school based trainers understandably feel that it makes their role far more manageable.

15. Communication between schools and the university is excellent; school-based trainers are keen to highlight this as a significant strength. Any enquiries are dealt with immediately. Mentors and co-ordinators are extremely impressed with the level of response and support when trainees begin to experience difficulties.

16. Quality assurance procedures are highly effective; the school liaison officers are key to the process, through at least one visit per year to each school. School liaison officers have established excellent working relationships with school staff, and maintain an ongoing purposeful dialogue. During visits to schools, they check all documentation and discuss aspects of the training with the senior co-ordinators, who

report that the process is extremely rigorous. They also report that the senior liaison officer gives first-rate advice on further development, and refer to the visits as 'quality enhancement'. Schools are provided with feedback on the quality of their work, and they very much appreciate this. School liaison officers keep detailed records and as a result university staff know the partnership schools very well.

17. Senior co-ordinators are fully aware of their responsibilities in terms of internal quality assurance, including supporting subject mentors and ensuring that all of the university's requirements are met in terms of trainee entitlement. Joint observations help to ensure that trainers are consistent in their assessments of trainees. The structure of the Record of Achievement and Development document supports trainers in carrying out the required number of observations and meetings.

18. The course is constantly evolving in response to national initiatives and feedback from all of those involved in the training. Actions taken are monitored very thoroughly. Leadership and management, at subject and whole course level, are outstanding. The team at the university work extremely well together. The programme director maintains an accurate overview of the provision and co-ordinates actions very effectively. As a result, self evaluation shows that the provider is aware of the strengths of the provision, together with possible areas for future development. The provider has made good progress in developing the use of data to inform judgements, although tracking systems to show the impact of the course on trainees' achievements are in the early stages of development.

19. All information gathered from monitoring the quality of provision across the programme, including an extensive range of evaluative material and the views of trainers and trainees, is used very effectively to produce improvement planning of exemplary quality. There is particularly strong coherence between action planning at whole course and subject levels. A very strong commitment to continuous improvement is clearly evident at all levels.