

University of Brighton

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A secondary initial teacher training
inspection report
2007/08

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Introduction

The University of Brighton's faculty of education and sport works in partnership with 506 schools to provide secondary initial teacher education (ITE) courses. It offers a four-year bachelor of arts (BA) course with qualified teacher status (QTS) in physical education and a two-year BA course with QTS in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics and science. Postgraduate training is offered in art and design, dance, design and technology, English, ICT, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, religious studies, science and business education leading to a one year postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) with a professional graduate certificate exit award. It offers, in addition, a two-year postgraduate conversion course in design and technology, ICT, mathematics and science. At the time of the inspection there were 650 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 in 2007/08, with the judgements from the scrutiny of further evidence submitted to Ofsted in February 2008.

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 1

Management and quality assurance: Grade 1

Key strengths

- the high quality of the management at faculty of education and sport, academic school, course and subject level
- improvement planning which is based on a wide range of evaluative data and which results in specific and measurable targets
- the quality of trainees recruited
- the content, structure, cohesion and effectiveness of the training
- the commitment to inclusion and diversity
- the excellent support for individualised learning
- the quality of trainees' reflection on their teaching and on its impact.

Points for consideration

- developing the monitoring role of the professional tutor with particular reference to the target setting process
- involving school-based subject tutors more in the recruitment and selection process.

The quality of training

1. The quality of training is very good. The structure and content of the training programme are planned carefully to ensure trainees meet the Standards. The content is very comprehensive and regularly updated with a good balance between theory and practice and ensures progression in trainees' knowledge, skills and understanding of teaching. The two school placements are timely and carefully planned. Liaison between placements is very effective. A thorough induction period for each placement makes sure that trainees feel part of the whole school and not just the subject department.
2. Strong partnerships, supported by good communication systems and documentation, ensure that there is very good coherence between school and university based aspects of the course which is well understood by all trainers and trainees. Education studies topics are followed up throughout the course, initially through reflection in cross subject groups and then with practical subject application directly linked to what trainees do in schools. Subject route leaders link their own programmes closely to education studies. Central and school-based studies are broadly linked; timings are not explicit, which allows flexibility for schools working with a range of providers. The development of trainees' classroom skills is supported very well by tasks and assignments that encourage them to link theory and practice. Professional tutors and mentors are often involved supporting trainees as these are completed.
3. The central education studies programme offers intellectual challenge and remains firmly rooted in the practicalities of teaching and current educational initiatives. Good use is made of partnership school staff and other visiting lecturers to reinforce the practical nature of the training. Teaching frequently models good practice. For example, a series of lectures about learning styles clearly demonstrates appropriate methods of teaching. Very good use is made of the trainees' progress and outcomes against the Standards to inform successful improvements in training.
4. Subject sessions are practical, stimulating and up-to-date. Topics are revisited regularly and explore effectively concrete ways of applying knowledge to classroom practice. A good phased introduction to lesson planning in all subjects ensures that trainees are well equipped to start their first school placement. In English, for example, a particular strength is that trainees are taught to be flexible in their approach to planning lessons.
5. Trainees develop very well as reflective practitioners, particularly in identifying the impact of their teaching on students' learning from early on in the course. Peer observation is a valuable tool for effective self evaluation. It encourages trainees to take responsibility for their own progress, as well as extending their experience. Many trainees use the virtual learning environment regularly and effectively to share resources and experiences. The online diary in dance is used creatively by trainees and subject staff to confirm that their subject needs are being met in schools.

6. High quality mentoring gives trainees confidence and supports them very well in achieving the Standards. Mentors are enthusiastic and conscientious in their dealings with trainees. Lesson observation feedback is detailed and increasingly subject focused as the course progresses.

7. The provider is particularly very good at meeting trainees' individual needs. Variations in their previous experience and subject knowledge are dealt with very successfully through individualised support. Central subject training, particularly in art and dance, celebrates and capitalises on the varied pre-course experience of trainees. Trainees and mentors use the individual training and development plan (ITDP) successfully to follow through the initial subject audit and find opportunities to develop skills and subject knowledge. As one trainee says, 'the whole course has been about becoming an individual, becoming autonomous and being able to identify my own professional needs, and then being supported to achieve them'.

8. Systems for monitoring trainees' progress against the Standards are rigorous. Mentors make very good use of the grade descriptors and this has ensured an improved level of consistency in assessment and high quality end-of-placement reports. Trainees' experience is tracked systematically and their progress is monitored regularly and graded. Judgements on trainees' progress are well moderated through joint observations with subject tutors. This results in an accurate assessment against the Standards, with a very high proportion of trainees attaining the highest grades. Trainees and trainers have a comprehensive understanding of the Standards and of the range of evidence they need to collect in order to demonstrate attainment. The personal development profile is used effectively to record this.

Management and quality assurance

9. Recruitment and selection procedures have been reviewed recently and are rigorous. They result in the recruitment of highly qualified, articulate trainees who are passionate about their subject but who are also well suited to the role of the teacher. Systems to ensure trainees are suitable to practise are scrupulously maintained. Marketing has been strategically targeted, particularly in shortage subjects and very good use has been made of external funding to increase recruitment in these subjects. This has been particularly effective in mathematics and science.

10. The university is strongly committed to extending diversity in terms of all underrepresented groups. The initial teacher education management works very effectively with admissions tutors to identify potential at application stage. The provider has been successful since its last inspection in increasing the number of trainees recruited from black and minority ethnic groups and has identified accurately the subject areas in which recruitment of trainees from these groups remains a challenge.

11. Common interview days provide a cost effective way of involving school based tutors in the selection process. At subject level, although there is some good practice in geography, ICT, business education and modern languages, involvement of school-based tutors is less consistent and opportunities for subject moderation are missed.

12. This is a very strong partnership with excellent leadership and management from a senior management team whose skills and roles form a coherent whole. The provider has acted well on the point for consideration in the last inspection report, on the use of the ITDP, as well as on its own subsequent areas for improvement. Management of the complex provision is very good. The head of school of education and the ITE coordinator have continually improved management systems and have ensured that good practice is shared across the provision. Subjects are well led by the route leaders who are very effective role models for their trainees. They foster a collaborative approach with their colleagues and also make very good use of expert practitioners from within the partnership and from subject networks. They also play a significant role in ensuring consistency of school based training by setting clear expectations, arranging monitoring visits and providing mentor training.

13. Induction for new central staff is very well managed. Experienced staff maintain their subject expertise by acting as external examiners in other institutions and through partnerships with subject organisations and networks.

14. The partnership coordinator has been particularly successful in improving the provider's knowledge of and communication with partner schools. This is resulting in increasingly appropriate placement of trainees; for example, the paired placements which have been used so well in mathematics. The external adviser who visits schools in order to gain a detailed picture of their strengths and potential areas for development is an effective addition to that growing bank of information. The partnership documentation supports consistency through the clarity of its expectations of partner schools and the shared information on the training programme. This documentation is reviewed regularly and guidance on significant changes included.

15. There are very good systems in place for the training of mentors. The introduction of twilight sessions has increased attendance and these sessions are very positively received. The training is comprehensive and this year has had an appropriately high focus on the new Standards. The quality of mentoring has much improved since the last inspection.

16. The course is underpinned by a very strong commitment to inclusion and diversity and this is exemplified in the promotion of equality in the training. University-wide policies are explicit and progress related to commitments the university has made to promoting and monitoring equality is regularly reviewed.

17. Systems for monitoring and maintaining quality are very robust. Impact of this rigour can be seen in improved trainee outcomes, the significant growth of numbers in mathematics whilst maintaining quality, and in the newly inspected

subject of dance where there is very effective monitoring. The work of the whole ITE programme is efficiently monitored by the senior management team which has a clear overview of the priorities for each course. The effectiveness of all individual elements of the training is monitored through trainees' evaluations. End of course evaluations are clearly tailored to elicit views on specific areas for development.

18. The work of link tutors and subject tutors combines effectively to ensure that trainees' experiences in school are monitored. Any issues with entitlement are managed promptly. Professional tutors are equally committed to improving teacher education and are adept at setting up systems to ensure that school-based training runs consistently and that mentors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Professional tutors are not, however, monitoring the work of mentors by scrutinising outcomes, such as the quality of weekly targets.

19. The provider listens well to its partners and is very open to criticism. The quality of self evaluation is very high and shows that the partnership has an accurate and in-depth knowledge of strengths and relative weaknesses of provision. There is excellent and increasingly sophisticated use of a very wide range of data for improvement planning. The subsequent action plans at course and subject level really support improvement: their targets are measurable, success criteria are specific and it is very clear what action is to be taken. Schools are appropriately and well involved in the improvement planning process. There is good evidence in the annual reviews that progress is consistently made against targets.