

University of Chichester

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A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The University of Chichester works in partnership with 200 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers training in English, history, mathematics, science, physical education, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. At the time of the inspection there were 305 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

- a loyal and well-established partnership with very good communication between partners
- good coherence across all elements of the course
- a strong emphasis on reflective practice
- the very good support offered by tutors and mentors
- good leadership and management at all levels
- the good use made of external examiners.

Point for action

- improving the consistency of mentors' judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of trainees as they progress through the course and about what constitutes the achievement of each Standard.

Points for consideration

- improving the quality of trainees' target setting
- ensuring the quality assurance process picks up inconsistencies, omissions and unsatisfactory practice in trainees' records
- making the self-evaluation document more usefully evaluative.

The quality of training

1. The structure and content of the training programme are carefully planned to ensure trainees meet the Standards. Two complementary school placements are well timed and facilitate links between central and school based training. The content of the course has been updated to ensure that it reflects the new Standards. Subject training programmes are up-to-date and take account of initiatives such as the new Key Stage 3 programme of study for physical education. There is a good balance between theory and practice. Timely and appropriate assignments are one of many ways in which trainees are encouraged to reflect on their experience.

2. All elements of the course complement each other well. Subject tutors follow up topics introduced in the professional studies programme at appropriate points. At the same time, clear guidance is given to professional tutors in schools so that school-based training programmes reinforce what trainees are learning at the university and ensure that key issues are revisited throughout the course. The reflective 'link log', which all trainees must complete daily, is a most effective way of helping them to think about the way in which the various elements of the training fit together. The virtual learning environment is an effective resource which is well used by trainees for research, retrieving course materials, sharing practice and general communication, but, as the university is aware, there are still some problems with access and reliability.

3. Both subject and professional studies programmes provide high levels of intellectual challenge. In subject sessions, trainers take care to model good practice, and sessions are interesting, stimulating and clearly linked to the Standards. Very good use is made of teachers from partnership schools and other visiting lecturers to enrich centre-based training. New masters' level tasks provide additional challenges for more academic trainees, and the university recognises that tutors have to be careful to ensure that tasks at this level do not detract from the need to meet the Standards.

4. In schools, supportive mentoring helps to give trainees confidence. Mentors know what they need to do to support centre-based subject training and help trainees develop their subject knowledge and professional skills. The regularity and quality of discussions between mentors and trainees are significant strengths. However, there is some variation across the partnership in the way in which targets are set for trainees and it is not always clear how areas for development are followed through from week to week.

5. Individual needs are met very effectively and trainees say that they feel very well cared for by trainers. A subject audit, completed by trainees at interview, is a helpful tool for identifying areas for development and is used effectively by trainees and mentors to fill gaps in trainees' knowledge and experience. Placements are carefully matched to the needs of trainees, and a self-appraisal action plan provides a useful personalised starter for trainees in their first school. Professional tutors manage and support their mentors well, meeting trainees regularly to review their progress.

6. The assessment of trainees is comprehensive, with evidence from a number of sources contributing to the final judgement. A particular strength is the deployment of external examiners to scrutinise evidence and observe a sample of trainees at the half-way point at the end of the first placement. Systems and documentation for monitoring and review of trainees' progress are well designed and judgements are all recorded in trainees' personal development profiles. Trainees' progress is monitored regularly and the pass/fail boundary is secure. Although there are clear procedures in place for tracking trainees' progress, schools are not always completing records adequately and there is inconsistency in the application of the criteria used to grade trainees' teaching and in the quality of evidence submitted as achievement against the Standards. Similarly, while the joint summative report at the end of the first placement is well supplemented by a thorough and up-to-date subject knowledge audit, these reports vary in quality and in their usefulness to second placement school-based trainers.

Management and quality assurance

7. Clear and accurate information is provided for potential applicants. The programme has met its targets for the recruitment of under-represented groups and, in a continuing commitment to equality of opportunity and widening participation, considerable efforts have been made to achieve a representative balance in each subject. The physical education department's development of strong links with a number of neighbouring sports colleges with large Black and minority ethnic representation is indicative of the high priority given to this objective. Determined efforts are also being made to address under-recruitment in design and technology, ICT and science through improved marketing and the rigorous following up of enquiries.

8. Selection procedures are good with the consistency of practice across subjects much improved since the last inspection. Agreed, common procedures are appropriately complemented by carefully devised subject-based tasks. Trainees report that interviews are very rigorous with clear selection criteria. Almost all interview panels have representation from the wider partnership and interviews for some subjects are carried out in schools. Trainees receive good support between acceptance and enrolment with a variety of pre-course tasks, booster courses and tailored support for their individual needs. Selection procedures are ensuring the enrolment of high quality trainees who, on completion of their training, quickly find teaching jobs.

9. The internal management structure of the secondary ITT provision is straightforward and effective and operational management is good; meetings are appropriate and well minuted. At the same time, there is good co-ordination between post- and undergraduate provision in physical education with both courses very well led and managed. This strong collaboration means that there are many opportunities for the sharing of best practice in physical education and systems of monitoring are of the highest quality. In science and design and technology, arrangements for the school-based subject tutors are well thought out and

effectively managed. Despite being off-site, the tutors are fully engaged with the course, the subjects are well resourced and the school-based subject training works very well. The provider is aware of the need to monitor the school-based provision especially closely and has contingency plans should any school fail to provide an acceptable quality of training.

10. The university has been successful in building and maintaining a strong, loyal and effective partnership. Good, informal relationships, which have often been built up between school-based trainers and the university over a number of years, help to foster the sense of a stable training community. The partnership agreement is a comprehensive, workmanlike document; roles and responsibilities are clearly understood by all partners and selection and de-selection criteria are clear. School-based professional tutors and mentors are consulted about course developments and some are members of the secondary programme board.

11. In schools, professional tutors and mentors do their work well. There is a comprehensive mentor training programme that all potential mentors have to complete before they receive a trainee. There are also regular and frequent briefings and meetings for both professional tutors and mentors. The feedback from schools about the quality of mentor training is very positive.

12. The university knows the strengths and weaknesses of its partnership schools very well. For their part, professional tutors and subject mentors report that centre-based staff are readily available for support and respond very quickly. School-based trainers value both the personal efforts that centre-based staff make to maintain regular dialogue and the promptly delivered link and subject tutor reports that they receive after visits. These visits make a significant contribution to the quality of mentoring and the trainees' experience and engender loyalty and an open approach to difficulties. Communications across the partnership are very good. Link and subject tutors keep close contact with schools and care is taken to involve the professional tutors in all visits, a practice much valued by schools. Trainees are aware of this good communication and report that schools and the university are working together to support them.

13. The commitment of trainers to continuous improvement is evident in the progress that has been made over the past few years, not least in the comprehensive response to previous inspections. The university considers carefully feedback from a range of sources. Outcomes of trainee questionnaires, data from a range of sources and feedback from schools are all rigorously analysed. Subject review and evaluation and action planning are clear and well focused and quality procedures are extremely well documented with judgements and outcomes meticulously recorded. However, the university recognises that the overall self-evaluation document is not yet sufficiently evaluative. The quality assurance process is not picking up some of the inconsistencies, omissions and unsatisfactory practice in the records kept by trainees and mentors.

14. Professional tutors, mentors and link and subject tutors cross moderate judgements about how trainees are progressing very effectively and joint observation is the norm. There is particularly good moderation across undergraduate and postgraduate courses in physical education.