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A primary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The University of Brighton's faculty of education and sport works in partnership with 294 schools to provide primary initial teacher education (ITE) courses. It offers four-year BA courses with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teaching 3-7 year olds or 5-11 year olds; a one-year primary postgraduate course; and a flexible postgraduate course for teaching either 3-7 or 5-11 year olds. At the time of the inspection there were 683 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 framework.

Key strengths

- the content, structure and effectiveness of the training which encourages reflection and ensures high quality outcomes
- the excellent management of the partnership and courses
- the very good cohesion between school and university based training
- the excellent support for individual trainees through personalised learning
- the high quality guidance, training and support documentation
- improvement planning which focuses on achieving measurable outcomes for trainees.

Points for consideration

- improving the consistency of partnership schools' contributions to monitoring and assessing trainees' progress.

The quality of training

1. The very good quality of training seen at the last inspection (2004-05) has been maintained and improved across all five courses. Particular strengths are in the preparation to teach the core subjects, the cohesion of the training modules, the personalisation of the training and the emphasis given to developing the trainees' reflective and evaluative skills.
2. The structure and content of the training programmes fully meets the Requirements. The *Every Child Matters* agenda permeates all training, the content of which encompasses the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Training to teach reading features prominently in the course design. High priority is given to the development of the trainees' subject knowledge for teaching. The programmes for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) achieve a very good balance between personal, professional and pedagogical elements.
3. The university-based training is consistently of a very high standard. Tutors are experienced and well qualified, and have a thorough practical understanding of primary education. A variety of seminars, workshops, audits and assignments engage the trainees and effectively promote their progress towards QTS. Much care is given to ensuring that the trainees have a coherent view of the various elements of their training. The educational studies modules provide linked themes that are applied to their planning and preparation for teaching subjects. For example, in subject training, close attention is given to important topics such as assessment for learning, inclusion and diversity. From being a relative weakness in the 2004-05 inspection, cohesion has become a strong feature.
4. The quality of school-based training is good with a high degree of coherence with university-based training. The teaching placements appropriately reflect the phase for which trainees are being prepared to teach. Trainees observe good teaching, discuss their planning and teaching with experienced and skilled teachers and are encouraged to develop their own practice.
5. Personalised learning is a very strong feature of the training. This is achieved through skilful use of subject audits, the monitoring of individual responses and progress and the good relationships between tutors and trainees. Personal and professional support is effectively provided by a dedicated tutor. Additional help is given to trainees with special needs by the university's disability and dyslexia team. The trainees highly value the personalised nature of the training.
6. Very good systems are in place for monitoring, assessing and accelerating the trainees' progress towards QTS. The partnership documentation specifies very clearly the expectations at each stage of the training and includes sharp descriptions and criteria for assessing progress. Assignments are carefully and constructively marked. Rigorous internal moderation promotes accuracy and consistency across all training routes. A significant sample of assignments is double marked. The assessment of the trainees' developing teaching skills is undertaken by school

mentors. The school of education has rightly identified the need to improve the quality and consistency of target setting and monitoring of trainees' progress by mentors. Joint observations are conducted at least once on each placement and some moderation of the mentor's assessments is undertaken by collaborative work between class teacher and head teacher. However, this is not yet a consistent feature across the partnership.

Management and quality assurance

7. The management and quality assurance of the partnership are outstanding. Recruitment and selection procedures are very rigorous and effectively identify suitable trainees from a wide range of backgrounds. The quality of information and guidance provided to potential applicants is excellent. The school of education has been particularly successful in recruiting trainees from black and minority ethnic groups and from under-represented groups. This is because of the strong commitment to inclusion and the very effective monitoring of the equal opportunities and race equality policies during the selection process and throughout the provision.

8. The interview process is very well organised and well-briefed staff from partnership schools are involved. They make a very positive contribution to the selection process. A strong feature is the moderation system and method of recording the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. This ensures that very detailed, accurate and helpful advice is given to successful candidates to help them prepare for their training as well as to unsuccessful candidates. Robust systems are in place to ensure that essential qualifications and suitability to teach checks are carried out. As a result, high calibre trainees are selected, withdrawal rates are low and the number of trainees completing their training to a good or better standard is high.

9. Recent changes to roles and structures and the excellent management of the postgraduate and undergraduate courses, subject training and partnership arrangements have led to considerable improvements in the efficiency and the effectiveness of the training. Trainees and partnership schools are well represented on management committees and boards and these have a strong focus on improvement. Communications and links between managers, trainers and trainees are excellent. As a result, problems are swiftly identified and resolved. The quality of written guidance, particularly the partnership handbook and supporting materials, is outstanding. Training is very well resourced. The trainees particularly value the interactive website, well equipped library and curriculum support materials.

10. Procedures to ensure that trainers have the knowledge, skills and understanding to successfully discharge their roles are well established and effective. University-based tutors collaborate very well in the planning and delivery of training. Very good systems are in place to ensure that tutors benefit from effective professional development and the induction for new tutors is very thorough. Partnership link advisers make a positive and significant contribution to further improving the quality of school-based training; for example through the development

of cluster training and support for partnership schools. The school of education recognises the need to develop this further so that there is more consistency in the involvement of partnership schools in promoting and assuring the quality of the school-based training.

11. School-based mentors are well trained and benefit from excellent support materials and documentation. New mentors take part in a half-day training session and all mentors receive very well planned twilight training prior to each placement. This includes helpful generic training on issues such as the new Standards, specific guidance on the placement and an opportunity to meet the partnership link adviser and trainees. Rigorous systems are in place to ensure that non attendance at these events is followed up before a trainee is placed in a school.

12. A wide range of monitoring procedures is well established and this is helping to ensure that very good quality training is maintained and further developed. Partnership link advisers are very effective in ensuring parity of judgement of trainees' progress whilst on placements. The accuracy and rigour of the final assessment for the award of QTS is provided by well established external examination procedures which culminate in full and constructive reports. External examiners confirm the accuracy and consistency of the school of education's assessment practices and outcomes.

13. The monitoring of outcomes and extensive evaluations by trainees, university and school-based trainers on all aspects of the training are used very well to inform a rigorous system of improvement planning. Academic health reviews at course and subject level ensure that suitable priorities for improvement are identified and progress towards achieving them is closely monitored. Excellent cohesion between the academic health reviews is achieved through the ITE action plan. This is very effective because it identifies well focused strategic priorities and has clear and measurable success criteria which impact directly on outcomes for trainees.