

Liverpool John Moores University

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Inspection dates	16 – 20 March 2009
Lead inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw AI

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Reference no. 080190

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist inspectors in accordance with the *Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008-11)*.
2. The inspection draws upon evidence from all aspects of the provision to make judgements against all parts of the inspection evaluation schedule in the framework. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the training in supporting high quality outcomes for trainees and the capacity of the partnership to bring about further improvements. A summary of the grades awarded is included at the end of this report.

Key to inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

The provider

3. Liverpool John Moores University works in partnership with a large number of schools to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) in both the primary and secondary phases. There is also provision for those wishing to teach across Key Stages 2 and 3. The university's ITE provision is secured within the faculty of Education, Community and Leisure and includes a wide variety of routes including undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
4. The university also operates in partnership with three further education (FE) colleges to provide in-service training for teachers and trainers from settings across the FE system. These colleges are within relatively close proximity to the university. The university also provides training within the wider Lifelong Learning Sector, predominantly small to medium enterprise training providers. A range of courses is provided in line with the qualifications framework for those working in FE.
5. The university is in close geographical proximity to a number of other providers of ITE, which means that there can be considerable pressure in terms of recruitment and in securing quality school placements for trainees in some subject areas. However, the partnership is long established and generally stable, and some secondary subjects, such as art and design and physical education, are over-subscribed with offers of placements from partnership schools. The partnership includes schools representing a wide range of types and community settings. Many are based in areas of significant social and economic disadvantage, and face challenging circumstances in meeting the learning needs of their pupils. The university is committed to capitalising on the opportunity to work with such schools, as well as those in less challenging circumstances, in order to provide breadth of

experience for its trainees.

6. Over recent years the provider has worked with a number of organisations in piloting innovative work in ITE, including the Student Associates Scheme, the Primary French ITE project, Vocational Diplomas and Mentor Recognition and Accreditation in partnership with the Teaching and Learning Academy.

A commentary on the provision

7. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:

- university staff know their trainees well and respond effectively to their personal needs. Where possible, the provider takes care in matching trainees to school, college and work-based placements that have the potential to meet their individual training needs, broaden their experience and enable them to make good progress
- the provider's approach to innovative practice in ITE across the provision is at least good, and in some cases outstanding
- collaborative work with personnel elsewhere in the university has led to the development of high quality policy documents on equal opportunities. The impact of these can be seen in some particularly good work carried out with trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those with disabilities
- the provider has begun to establish closer links between primary, secondary and FE provision with a view to building on best practice. This is reflected in actions such as the formation of the cross-phase partnership group, which reflects a fresh approach to management across the provision.

8. The following areas require further development to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:

- the consistency of school-based training on the primary and secondary programmes, particularly in relation to feedback and target setting provided by mentors
- the quality of improvement planning, particularly in secondary provision, which does not always include clear success criteria and is not consistently linked to outcomes for trainees
- the attention given to tracking the achievement of identifiable groups, particularly on the primary and secondary programmes.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

9. Liverpool John Moores University works in partnership with 106 schools to provide primary initial teacher education (ITE) courses. It offers a four year BA (Hons) degree with a focus on the core curriculum; a four year BA (Hons) degrees with primary French; a four year BA (Hons) degree with early years and a one year PGCE in Early years. At the time of the inspection there were 211 trainees.

Key strengths

10. The key strengths are:

- the very good quality centre-based training
- the collation and use of lesson observations by course leaders to make changes to the programmes to better meet the needs of trainees
- the strategic use of resources to enable the large majority of trainees to reach their potential
- the ability of senior leaders to adapt the course to meet national developments and initiatives
- the trainees' skilful reflection on their own practice and how this impacts on learners' progress.

Recommendations

11. In order to further improve trainees' progress and attainment the partnership should:

- improve the consistency of school-based training to enable all trainees to make outstanding progress
- improve the centre and school-based training for trainees following the Primary French specialism
- improve the consistency of assignment feedback.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

12. By the end of the programmes the attainment of the trainees is good. A representative of a neighbouring local authority, which employs some of the trainees, confirmed they are well trained and they are reflective, able practitioners. Most trainees have good subject knowledge, particularly of the National Curriculum and of the Rose review into the teaching of early reading, and Year 4 trainees, in particular, were able to discuss different forms of phonics teaching and identify strengths and weaknesses of these. A group of Year 4 trainees were also able to conduct an excellent discussion into how the Williams review into the teaching of mathematics could and should influence classroom practice.

13. Most trainees plan and teach lessons that are creative, stimulating and make good use of visual resources, such as interactive white boards, to engage learners. Trainees reflect skilfully on how well pupils have attained and made progress in their lessons and suggest ways in which they could improve their teaching to make pupils progress even further. Trainees teach and support pupils with specific difficulties well. For example, two trainees were observed giving good support when teaching two pupils with specific learning and behavioural needs. Ex-trainees and current trainees feel the university prepares them well to teach pupils with learning difficulties, and those for whom English is an additional language. Trainees have good relationships with pupils and become fully involved in school life.

14. The provider's recruitment and selection procedures are good. Interviews are rigorous and are designed to determine trainees' capability for teaching. As a result, there are few withdrawals, completion rates are high, and the proportion moving into employment is above local and national averages. The proportion of males on the different courses is below the national average, although there has been improvement over the past two years as a result of a well-targeted recruitment drive. The proportion of trainees of minority ethnic heritage remains well below the national average. The provider recognises a need to improve the collection of data about rates of employment and to ensure data gathered at selection are analysed and utilised in making strategic decisions relating to recruitment and selection policies and procedures.

15. Overall, trainees make good progress because of the very good centre-based training and good quality school-based training. The university measures and tracks trainees' progress between the third and fourth year placements on the undergraduate courses and has begun to track trainees' progress on other routes. The content and structure of the courses are well designed to enable trainees to meet the Standards. For example, in the undergraduate courses trainees' skills and knowledge are gradually built upon over time leading to good progress. The course structure of the French undergraduate route, however, means that trainees following this programme are unable to learn the methodology of teaching primary French before being placed in a school. Trainees gain significantly in confidence in teaching French as a result of their experiences abroad, but for the majority of trainees

following this programme, the opportunities to develop their skills in teaching French during school placements is limited and constrains their progress.

16. Centre-based training is delivered by highly qualified tutors. Trainees and ex-trainees confirm that tutors model good practice, teach inspiring sessions and prepare them well for their teaching careers. Tutors are at the forefront of innovation. For example, the university has contributed to a DVD about the teaching of early reading, following the findings of the Rose review. Similarly, the university's mathematics department was featured within the recent Williams review. The quality of feedback from tutors to trainees on their academic work, however, is inconsistent. Some provide useful advice, linked to the Standards, that enables trainees to know what to do to improve. Other assignments are not returned to trainees promptly and some have comments and feedback that do not help trainees to make progress.

17. In the main, school-based training across the partnership is good. Lines of communication between the provider and schools are very strong. In many cases, school placements are personalised to meet the needs of the trainees. For example, following discussions with university staff, Year 4 undergraduate trainees are able to request a school with particular characteristics in order to enable them to address particular Standards. There is a diverse range of schools and trainees are able to experience teaching in a good range of settings and age groups; ex-trainees confirm that this has been the case in recent years. Most school-based mentors and class teachers are conversant with their roles in the training and assessment of trainees. This contributes to trainees' good progress. However, a few mentors do not provide effective training to enable trainees to make rapid progress. For example, in their feedback to trainees at the end of a lesson, they do not provide subject specific advice to enable trainees to get a clear idea about what they need to improve in that subject. This is particularly so in French. Systems to set and review targets are strong, but there is some unevenness in how they are applied. In a few cases, the liaison tutors' observations do not link well enough to the targets set for trainees in their weekly and daily reviews. This means that trainees are working on too many targets, which hinders their progress.

18. Resources are very effectively deployed to enable trainees to attain at a good level. The provider targets resources to support trainees who are meeting the Standards at a satisfactory level to give them further help and support in working to meet their potential. For example, the university has recently extended the school placements of the French specialist trainees and increased the number of visits made by liaison tutors. The university strategically deploys resources to tackle areas identified for development. For instance, in order to increase study space for trainees the university refurbished an unused area.

19. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There are no recorded instances of harassment, bullying or intimidation because of a trainee's background or their socio-economic circumstances. There is little difference in the attainment or the progress of different groups of trainees, except for those in primary French, although there are signs of improvement here. The provider recognises that equality and diversity issues needs to have a more prominent place in mentor training to ensure that the needs of all trainees are met.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

20. The provider has good capacity to sustain high quality outcomes and has a secure overview of its strengths and weaknesses. End of programme attainment over time is tracked and success is evaluated. Thorough self evaluation takes account of trainees' perceptions, external examiner reports, tutor evaluations and evaluations from school-based tutors. The university benchmarks itself effectively against other regional providers and providers nationally. All stakeholders are frequently invited to express their opinions about the training and this is used to improve outcomes for trainees. University-based staff collect, collate and use the information gathered from trainees' teaching of different subjects. This empowers subject leaders to amend the training and provide the exact activity to suit the needs of groups and individuals, and has helped increase the proportion of trainees graded good by the end of the programmes. The provider has begun to track progress in a systematic way, but as yet does not have trend or comparative data to inform improvement planning.

21. The provider evaluates school placements frequently. There is a good system in place for selection and de-selection of schools to help ensure that the quality of training is maintained. There is a comprehensive system for monitoring schools used by the partnership with clear lines of accountability. As a result communication across the partnership has improved and trainees have the opportunity to choose a placement to develop their subject knowledge. Similarly, through this process the partnership manager is able to monitor that trainees receive their entitlement in placement through a weekly email to liaison tutors.

22. Leaders have a track record of anticipating and driving change. In response to the Rose review into early reading and the review of the curriculum, the provider has introduced focused training sessions and amended the training in English and the foundation subjects. Trainees, as a result, are aware of the review's recommendations and its implications in school. In addition, they have a good knowledge and understanding about how to teach pupils to read, how to teach phonics through *Letters and Sounds*, and how to assess pupils' language comprehension and their decoding skills. The centre-based training is flexible. As such, new training can be incorporated into the course quickly to respond to new initiatives or research. For example, all tutors have been trained in the new systems of assessing pupils' performance and a consultant has worked with subject leaders to ensure it is embedded well into every subject. The provider uses some excellent trainers. They are highly qualified and many attend national and regional committees.

23. The annual monitoring of provision informs the development of both university-based teaching and the partnership. Senior and course leaders make good use of internal and external scrutiny to make year on year improvements to the provision. For example, the primary French route was identified as a low performing course in comparison to other routes, with fewer trainees meeting the Standards at a good or outstanding level. Consequently the provider has introduced some steps to

measure progress and to more strictly identify the reasons for this relative underachievement. Improvement planning is largely effective. A strength is that plans are working documents and actions taken are continually evaluated by senior leaders. There is a clear cycle of evaluation and review leading to improvement. Actions are prioritised, clearly defined, and emanate from detailed evaluations of the provision. Identified personnel are responsible for actions and there is an appropriate timescale.

24. The provider has responded to the point for consideration from the last inspection which was to develop systematic monitoring of school-based training, in particular the weekly tutorial. Joint observations and those undertaken by mentors from other schools help to ensure the accuracy of judgements about trainees. To a large degree this has helped secure improvements. The majority of mentors are accurate in their assessment of trainees' teaching. A small number of mentors, however, have a tendency to over grade trainees, and their written evaluations, lesson observations and reports do not always closely reflect a trainees' ability and potential.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

25. Liverpool John Moores University works in partnership with a large number of secondary schools and other educational establishments to provide undergraduate and post graduate initial teacher education (ITE) in the age ranges 9 – 14, 11 – 16 and 14 – 19. The Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) allows trainees to gain credit at Masters level. For the 11- 16 programmes the subjects offered are art and design, design and technology, modern languages, physical education (PE) and science. The centre also offers PGCE programmes for the 14 – 19 Vocational Diplomas with routes in applied art, applied ICT, applied science, engineering and leisure and tourism. 2-year PGCE pathways with QTS are also offered in ICT, physics, chemistry and mathematics to provide subject knowledge enhancement for trainees who do not have a first degree in these subject areas. At undergraduate level a four year BA (Hons) with QTS in physical education, sport and dance is available alongside a three year BA/BSc (Hons) with QTS in primary and secondary education. Trainees on the Key Stage 2/3 route undertake specialist subject training in either design and technology, mathematics, modern languages, science or PE, alongside the development of their primary curriculum knowledge.

Key strengths

26. The key strengths are:

- the innovative course and partnership developments that respond well to local needs and national initiatives
- the good knowledge of, and response to, the personal development needs of most trainees

- good communication across the partnership
- good selection procedures that result in the recruitment of trainees from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Required actions

27. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment the partnership must:
- improve the quality and challenge of trainees' targets and track trainees' progress more rigorously.

Recommendations

28. To improve the quality of training across the partnership the provider should:
- use the outstanding practice evident in some routes and subjects to improve the outcomes for all trainees
 - ensure action planning and evaluation focuses on improving trainee outcomes.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

29. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good. The provider recruits well in all secondary subjects except engineering, despite the provider's best efforts. The ongoing recruitment drive to increase the proportion of minority ethnic trainees has been effective and the provider's data indicate that the proportion of minority ethnic trainees enrolled on secondary programmes almost doubled over the past few years. The proportion of trainees declaring a disability has also increased and is above both regional and national averages for the current cohort. Common documentation and agreed evaluation criteria to ensure a fair recruitment process operates across all secondary routes. This system has been adapted from the well established good practice in recruiting physical education trainees and is effectively supporting the recruitment of high quality trainees across the full range of secondary subjects. Information collected at the recruitment stage is being used to provide a base line evaluation of a trainee's potential but individual strengths and needs are not identified sharply enough at interview or the start of the course on all routes. The recent introduction of a three year, undergraduate Key Stage 2/3 course in modern languages and the development of 14 – 19 postgraduate courses in applied subjects are good examples of the provider's effective response to identified local and national needs.

30. Success rates on post-graduate courses are broadly in line with sector averages. However, the proportion of trainees who failed to complete the Key Stage 2/3 undergraduate course has been variable year on year and the provider

acknowledges that the completion rate over recent years has been too low. Data for current trainees in their final year on this programme indicates success rates have improved considerably due in part to improved recruitment strategies and programme developments to address trainees' concerns.

31. Attainment is good overall with outstanding attainment in post graduate art and design, applied art and the four-year undergraduate physical education programme. Most trainees make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. They are helped to achieve through the flexible use of resources, carefully selected placements and the ongoing improvements to training made in response to trainees' feedback. University-based staff, liaison tutors and other trainers know trainees well and respond quickly and flexibly to their individual needs. Support is good for most trainees but evidence from discussions with them, together with university surveys, indicates that a small minority do not feel that the academic support and guidance they receive is of good quality. As a result of scrutiny of all evidence, inspectors agree with these views. Developments to improve the quality and consistency of school-based training, including the Mentor Recognition and Accreditation Scheme and Learning Communities Scheme are strengthening links within the partnership and beginning to increase the quality and consistency of experiences that trainees receive. However, it is too early to evaluate the full impact of this work on outcomes for trainees.

32. A system to track trainees' progress has been recently developed but the data is not yet sufficiently robust to give an accurate evaluation of trainees' on-going progress across all routes. All trainees evaluate their own teaching and other aspects of their training and development. Reflective reviews at key phases in their training help trainees to identify their current strengths and areas to develop further. Targets set, however, both by trainees and their trainers, are sometimes too vague and do not accurately identify what needs to be done to improve further.

33. Trainees make good progress in developing their subject specific knowledge by using the outcomes of individual needs audits at the start of the course to build successfully from their subject knowledge starting points. This development is well supported by relevant school based experiences, individual study and centre based training sessions.

34. Effective lines of communication, helpful documentation and good working relationships with schools are significant strengths of the partnership. Liaison tutors play a key role in enhancing partnership working and communication by quality assuring the school based experiences of trainees and ensuring both trainees and mentors are well supported. However, the variation in the quality of school based training and support, and the less effective use of targets in a number of subjects, results in some trainees not making the good progress that they should relative to their starting points.

35. Increasingly innovative partnerships for example, local authority links and involvement in a trust school are being used well to enhance training opportunities. Work on paired placements for those training to become teachers of ICT is being carried out in collaboration with several other local providers, with the university

having produced materials to promote the initiative across all partnerships. Although early indications suggest that this initiative has a positive impact on trainees' progress, it is too early to judge its effectiveness overall.

36. The policies and systems to promote equality and diversity are strong and well communicated. Very few recorded incidents of bullying or harassment occur and on any occasion that they do, are effectively dealt with by the provider. All programmes contain components to ensure trainees are prepared for teaching in a culturally diverse society and placements are chosen carefully to provide a wide range of experiences.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 2

37. The provider has good capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees where they exist, and to take the actions required to secure improvements where necessary. There is an effective team of senior leaders who have a good understanding of current strengths and areas for development. Data is being collected from a range of sources including trainees, other partners such as mentors, surveys and external reports. This evidence leads to largely accurate and effective self-evaluation and provides a good basis for further improvement. Nevertheless, the focus on evaluating the impact of action on trainees' outcomes is not always sharp enough.

38. The provider's track record of anticipating change and responding to local and national initiatives is outstanding. Several innovative projects provide evidence of how development is successfully responding to the rapidly changing requirements for initial teacher education. Examples include the use of paired placements for ICT trainees, collaboration with other providers and organisations and leading developments in emerging areas of need such as applied routes at 14 – 19.

39. Planning and taking action for further improvement is good. Continuous improvement is seen in course developments, such as the inclusion of both a Key Stage 2 and a Key Stage 3 experience in each year for the Key Stage 2/3 undergraduate course. Recent developments, including the restructuring of the partnership management board to include representation of all three phases at meetings, is facilitating the sharing of best practice and supporting swifter action for improvement. The areas for development identified in the self evaluation document have been incorporated into improvement plans for all subjects and routes. While actions appear well chosen, success criteria are often not focused enough on improving trainees' progress and achievements. Nevertheless, the provider is clearly committed to ongoing development and has taken some decisive action with the aim of improving outcomes for trainees over recent years. The impact of such action is beginning to show in several areas, although it is too early for some other strategies to be fully evaluated.

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Context

40. The initial teacher education partnership consists of the university and three colleges of further education. Training courses lead to the award of the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) and a postgraduate DTLLS at Masters level. The university also works in collaboration with three training providers to deliver the 'Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector' (PTLLS) award. The qualifications meet statutory requirements and are endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK).

41. Currently 141 trainees are on the first year and 71 on the second year of the DTLLS provision. Approximately ten per cent of trainees are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Course modules are offered on consecutive days of the week which allows trainees with the flexibility to change their day of attendance if necessary.

Key strengths

42. The key strengths are:

- the particularly effective personal and specialist support that underpin trainees' good progress
- the good management of the partnership which leads to improvement
- the very good communication and collaboration between the university and partner colleges that takes good account of trainees' views to develop provision
- excellent use of resources, in particular the use of funding to improve subject specific training

Recommendations

43. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment the partnership should:

- ensure that the recording of trainees' targets is of consistently high quality so that trainees' progress can be monitored and evaluated more effectively.

44. In order to widen further the widening access and improve participation in training programmes the partnership should:

- actively promote the provision to and increase the recruitment of trainees from groups under-represented in teaching in the lifelong learning sector.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

45. The overall effectiveness of the partnership in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good. Trainees make good progress because of the strong personal support and guidance they receive from their tutors and mentors. Trainees with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress because of the strong specialist support they receive. Consequently all trainees gain in confidence and competence. Success rates vary from year to year. Retention rates have been low over time but retention rates for trainees currently enrolled on the DTLLS courses show signs of improvement. Only one trainee had withdrawn at the time of the inspection. Inspectors agreed with the providers' judgements on the quality of trainees' achievements, through joint lesson observations, scrutiny of trainees' work and marked assignments.

46. Trainees develop teaching skills that are at least good, and in some aspects outstanding. They embed numeracy and oral presentations well in their in-class tasks to support the development of their students' skills. Trainees play an active part in monitoring the progress of their students through individual learning plans, which help to ensure individual needs are adequately met. Scrutiny of trainees' files shows that although they plan to meet the needs of all learners, a minority do not confidently use a wide range of strategies to personalise learning or to assess how well learners' knowledge, skills and understanding are developing during their lessons.

47. Trainees value highly, and benefit considerably from the specialist subject mentor support. All trainees have a mentor working in the appropriate subject area. Trainees' progress is monitored carefully by both mentors and the trainees themselves; this is a key factor in securing trainees' good progress. A system for recording and tracking trainees' progress, identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection, has now been developed. However, the system itself is sometimes undermined by weak target settings. In some cases individual targets set for trainees lack specificity and are not measurable, consequently there is no clear baseline from which to accurately monitor and evaluate their progress.

48. The subject specialist mentors have specific training in lesson observation and in mentoring techniques, as well as being offered an accredited continuing professional development route at Level 2 to enhance their professionalism. This ensures that their feedback to trainees focuses specifically on how to improve their subject specific teaching skills. Observations carried out by other teacher trainers focus on the extent to which trainees develop their generic teaching skills. Feedback from lesson observations is thorough and supports trainees' progress. There are clear guidelines for observations, these are commonly understood and adhered to. Trainees plan their teaching well and show willingness to try out different teaching strategies. Trainees have a good awareness of their own progress and are able to describe the impact of this on their self-confidence. For a small minority of trainees, however, their meetings with mentors lack structure and formality. This is particularly the case for trainees who are not employed in partner colleges.

49. Recruitment and selection procedures are thorough and comprehensive. Newly appointed unqualified college staff are contacted quickly by the teacher training course teams. The university's collaboration with work-based training providers is exemplary and proving very popular with local employers. The positive links forged with training providers has led to carefully tailored provision to meet the needs of these providers as well as addressing workforce reforms. All potential trainees complete an initial assessment to identify the extent of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Where applicants do not meet specific course entry requirements they are referred for support before starting the course and trainees find this very useful. The additional learning support is effective and particularly appreciated by trainees with specific learning difficulties.

50. Training and assessment are effective in ensuring that trainees progress to fulfil their potential. Trainees are very positive about the centre-based training sessions. Teacher trainers model good and sometimes excellent practice which trainees are able to draw upon in their own teaching. The trainees receive good personal and academic support from their trainers and mentors and they report that tutors are very approachable. Tutorial support is readily available and trainees routinely discuss assignment work with their tutors. Written feedback following trainees' teaching observations and on their assignment work is detailed and constructive. This helps trainees to improve the quality of their work and make progress. Trainees are reflective and draw appropriately on evaluations of their teaching to improve their classroom practice..

51. Resources are deployed well to ensure trainees can make progress.. Government funding for reforms of the further education workforce has been used effectively to support new teachers and trainees and, in particular, the training of subject specialist mentors. This, in turn, has led to improved subject specific support which has been particularly effective in helping trainees to develop expertise within their specialist areas. Trainers are well qualified and experienced. Many are continuing their own professional development and studying towards higher education qualifications. Teacher training is delivered in well-equipped rooms, with good quality furnishings and appropriate ICT equipment, including interactive whiteboards. The university has a comprehensive collection of books and journals to support the delivery of teacher education for the lifelong learning sector, and a number of books and journals which are available to trainees from home electronically. Trainees also have access to library facilities on other university sites. They benefit greatly from their use of the colleges' and the university's well-developed virtual learning environment.

52. The quality of training and support across the partnership is good. Communication between the partner colleges and the University is strong. Representatives from all partner institutions meet regularly to discuss any issues and to review trainees' views. The trainees' voice is encouraged and this process has been effective in bringing about improvement. For example, following trainee feedback from year 1 of the course, the written assessment tasks have been rescheduled to reduce the assessment burden at critical times of the academic year. There is an extensive system of moderation and second marking of assignments.

Internal and external verification is rigorous. Moderation events are held at the university when all college representatives must attend together with the external examiner. There are co-observations of trainers and the university programme leader regularly checks the quality of feedback given by tutors and subject specialist mentors. Trainees provide formal feedback at end of module evaluations, which is carefully considered by managers.

53. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The programme caters well for diversity across the lifelong learning sector, including the specific needs of trainees working for a range of training providers. This has involved the successful delivery of the course on training providers' premises. An expansion of this programme is being actively pursued, focused on encouraging the participation of an increasingly diverse range of trainees. Curriculum content includes a focus upon equality and diversity and trainees are encouraged to reflect upon issues relating to these themes. Recruitment of males has increased considerably, and is now over 40% at two of the partner colleges. However, there is relatively limited effort at present to recruit trainees from other under-represented groups, in particular minority ethnic groups.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 2

54. The partnership has good capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to take the actions required to secure improvements where needed. Since the previous inspection, managers have taken steps to improve the proportion of trainees who stay on the course for two years and complete successfully. Retention rates for the cohort who started in 2008 suggest that action taken is now starting to impact. The quality of specialist subject mentoring has also improved and is now good. Self-evaluation undertaken by individual providers is based on reliable evidence, including feedback from trainees. Each group of trainees has a representative who is invited to attend the boards of study meetings each year. They are encouraged to give feedback to the team and invited to talk to the programme leader. The programme leader maintains regular contact with these representatives. All the trainees interviewed felt that their voice is heard and acted upon. Course review reports produced by the colleges are sufficiently evaluative. In its self-evaluation for the partnership as a whole, the university identifies clear priorities for improvement. Individual partners contribute to the overall partnership self-assessment. The university is increasingly taking account of trainee performance data to monitor and evaluate trends in outcomes for trainees. The use of data to monitor and evaluate the impact of equality and diversity policies on the recruitment of different groups of learners is underdeveloped.

55. Leadership and management of the partnership are good. Management has been proactive in anticipating change and respond to both local and national initiatives. The programme manager has responded creatively to workforce reform by forging new and productive links with training providers. This is having a positive impact in terms of raising the profile of work based learning, enhancing the skills

and qualifications of staff employed by training providers and widening participation in initial teacher education. The consistency of the quality of teacher trainers appointed by individual partners is assured by the programme managers' involvement in their recruitment and selection.

56. The university programme manager undertakes thorough reviews of the effectiveness of the allocation of resources and acts on the findings. All programme leaders and external examiners are actively involved in identifying actions to be taken to improve outcomes for trainees. The programme leaders within the partnership regularly meet with the university programme manager to review trainees' progress, and outcomes are used to improve the effectiveness of recruitment and the quality of training across the partnership. All members of the partnership and external examiners are involved in the moderation process.

57. Improvement planning is focused on key priorities and sets clear expectations for trainee outcomes. Following the previous inspection, the university programme manager and individual programme leaders have taken decisive steps to improve the quality of provision. Managers and trainers alike have shown a strong commitment and a great deal of determination in improving the quality of specialist subject mentoring. The whole system for mentoring has been revised. Mentors now have specific training for the role, and describe this training as helping them know exactly what is expected of them. The comprehensive mentor and mentee handbooks clearly state the expectations of the scheme. Trainees expressed satisfaction with their mentors, all of whom teach in the same specialist subject area as their mentees, and with whom they have regular contact, both formally and informally. Subject specialist mentors are clear about their role in developing the trainee's subject teaching, and sharply focus their observation feedback on this. Many subject specialist mentors from partner organisations have taken up the opportunity to continue their own professional development at the university.

58. Improvements over time indicate a consistent record of making decisions and driving continuous improvement within the context of the national reforms. This contributes to high quality trainee outcomes and progress. There is a constant dialogue between all members of the partnership. All improvement plans are communicated effectively across the partnership. The programme manager has increased the profile of this phase of teacher training within the university and has set clear expectations of all those involved in the delivery of initial teacher education.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Liverpool Community College
St Helens College
Riverside College, Halton

Summary of inspection grades¹

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

		Primary	Secondary	ITE for FE
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		2	2	2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	2	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	2	2	2
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	2	2	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	2	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2	2	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	2	2	2

* It is not possible to judge attainment for FE trainees as none have yet completed the training.

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Primary	Secondary	ITE for FE
To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?		2	2	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		2	2	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	1	2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		2	2	2

¹ The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted July 2008; Reference no: 080128.

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