

Northumbria University

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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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. The Northumbria University works in partnership with a wide range of schools and employers to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualifications to teach in the primary, secondary and further education sectors. The university works in partnership with approximately 200 primary schools and 48 secondary schools and 50 employers from both neighbouring local authorities and further afield. Schools are keen to be involved in the partnership.
4. The partnership is mainly located within six local authorities, but the university has close links with a small number of schools over a wider geographical area, particularly in the London Borough of Newham. Partnership schools have strong relationships with the university through links in primary education and early years education. This frequently includes classroom-based research and the continuing professional development of practicing teachers, as well as ITE.
5. The ITE provision in the university provides training for trainees from the full range of contexts the FE system and recruits trainees working across a range of private and public sector organisations, including the health service, police force and private training organisations, some in a voluntary capacity. The University is a designated Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT).
6. The university understands local needs and is involved in active research on both local and national issues. The university is considered by many of its partners to be at the forefront of current educational practice.

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

- excellent communication and support for trainees through innovative and personalised training
- high quality of the partnerships featuring a strong commitment to local and regional workforce development
- excellent leadership and management of the programmes where the ethos is focused on developing skilled, reflective practitioners
- focus on ensuring trainees' well being.

8. There are particularly strong features in some programmes that could be applied more widely:

- valuing and developing the subject specialists as practitioner bringing their unique skills and creativity to the classroom
- the use of partnership schools during the selection process.

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

- developing performance tracking systems to identify rates of progress for defined groups within cohorts
- underpinning the ambition for increased number of grade 1 trainees through even more effective use of data in development planning.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

10. Northumbria University works effectively in partnership with approximately 200 schools to provide primary and early years Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. It offers a three-year BA (Hons) in Early Primary Education; a one-year post graduate certificate Primary Education (PGCE); and a flexible one or two-year post graduate certificate in education (PGCE) Early Years and Primary Education. At the time of the inspection there were 464 trainees.

Key strengths

11. The key strengths are:

- the excellent communication and support for trainees throughout the partnership
- the innovative and creative university-based training programme which is highly personalised and produces very reflective trainees with an ability to enter into sophisticated discussions about educational issues
- the excellent quality assurance procedures which maintain parity between the teaching programmes and assessments of trainees
- the excellent use of resources which have a high impact on outcomes for trainees
- the highly flexible training programme and ability of programme leaders to adapt the programmes to take account of educational initiatives, developments, current research and thinking.

Recommendations

12. In order to increase further the proportion of trainees attaining the Standards at an outstanding level, the provider should:

- make better use of tracking data in order to evaluate trainees' progress for defined groups and at cohort level, and to sharpen success criteria in development planning.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

13. Overall trainees' attainment by the end of the programme is outstanding, reflecting a trend of gradual improvement over the past three years. Trainees studying for the full time and flexible PGCE attain particularly well. Trainees and

former trainees, overwhelmingly agree that the University and school staff are very supportive, and prepare them very effectively to be able to teach.

14. Trainees plan and teach lessons which are inclusive; taking account of the needs of different groups of learners. Lessons are creative, stimulating and make good use of visual resources such as interactive whiteboards and picture cards, to engage pupils' interest and make learning active and fun. Trainees have a very good understanding of equality and diversity issues associated with tackling barriers to learning. This, in part, is as a result of an excellent opportunity to teach in a school in a London Borough which results in increased confidence in inclusive education and working with learners in the early stages of learning English.

15. Recruitment and selection arrangements support high quality outcomes for trainees. University staff and managers of the partnership schools conduct robust selection procedures to enable trainees' individual strengths and needs to be identified. Programmes attract trainees with relevant professional attributes and experience who are well matched to the relevant training programme. This results in high quality trainees starting the programme, few withdrawals and high completion rates. In addition, effective use of information gathered at interview enables trainees to make rapid progress from the start of the programme. Overall recruitment targets are met, although levels of recruitment of under-represented groups varies between the three primary programmes. The University has recognised this emerging trend and participates in a local project aimed at boosting minority ethnic recruitment into teaching in the North East. As a result, the number of applications leading to interviews has increased and recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds is improving on the flexible PGCE.

16. Most trainees make at least good, and often very good, progress. The programmes are highly flexible so that modules and sessions can be adapted quickly to meet the needs of individuals and groups and to incorporate new initiatives, developments and research. Trainees are positive about the quality of university-based sessions incorporating a well-balanced mix between theory, subject knowledge and training in how to teach. The content of sessions is deeply immersed in good primary practice and current research. The introduction of the master's level academic study has not detracted from trainees' skill in the craft of teaching. The University uses well qualified and capable professionals to deliver the programme. Trainees are well versed in educational developments such as those triggered by the Rose Report into early reading, the Williams review in mathematics and the Alexander report. Consequently, trainees are highly reflective of their own practice. The option weeks on the BA programme are a very good feature of the training, contributing firmly to trainees' achievements against the Standards: for example, trainees selecting the faith option, visit places of worship and learn about different faiths. Trainees also have the option of learning about the breadth of education internationally by visiting a range of European countries.

17. Assignments and school based-tasks, designed to develop trainees' creative thinking as well as their understanding of teaching and learning, are well spaced throughout the programmes. Assignment feedback from tutors is very detailed, comprehensive and matched very closely to the assessment criteria and to the

Standards. Marking affirms the efforts of the trainees and clearly signpost how work can be improved.

18. Trainees are placed in a wide range of schools and have the opportunity to teach across the full age range. Schools in the partnership are suitable venues for training. Mentors and class teachers are fully conversant with their roles in training and development; working as teams to support the trainee. Most trainees receive good feedback about their teaching although, for a few, there are some missed opportunities to have a greater focus on pupils' learning and progress in each specific subject area or aspect of learning. There is an excellent system of setting targets related directly to the Standards; these become the focus for subsequent observations. Consequently, trainees are clear about what they need to do to improve. Highly productive weekly tutorials and are used well to make an accurate judgement as to how well trainees are meeting the Standards.

19. The University makes excellent use of its resources. A key principle underpinning its decisions is the impact on trainees' experiences and outcomes. This is evident, for example, in the continuing funding of a week long residential visit to a London Borough and of a cross curricular week involving visits to local sites and museums of interest. Video conference facilities enable tutors to ensure all trainees see 'good' and 'outstanding' teaching. Trainees also benefit from the excellent, award-winning library facilities with associated study areas and staff on hand to help with study support.

20. There is a very high level of commitment and involvement in all aspects of the partnership. School and university-based staff are involved in the aims, direction and evaluation of the programme. There is a clear and well documented partnership management structure. Schools are organised within a fluid and flexible cluster which serves as administrative, training, quality assurance and support units. The partnership committee feel a great sense of ownership and ensure the University keeps pace with changes in schools. An observation, feedback and target record provide a robust mechanism for tracking trainee progress during placements. Trainees' targets are shared with their next school in order that they might be supported from one placement to the next.

21. Communication between all members of the partnership is excellent. An effective University placement information website contains support and information materials for schools including examples of completed observation pro forma illustrating what constitutes good feedback. The website *Ensuring Parity in ITT* (EPITT), developed by mentors, is focussed on supporting mentors and responding to their changing needs.

22. The University is highly successful in promoting equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity. All trainees receive their entitlement to high-quality training and there is little difference in the attainment or the progress of different groups of trainees. The University has detailed high quality policies and procedures in relation to equality of opportunity, race equality and harassment which have been appropriately applied to initial teacher education and placement settings. These include policies for *Lone working* and *Whistle blowing*. Trainees are very positive about the support they receive and raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be

effectively tackled. Diversity is valued; for example, adaptations were made to provide alternative provision for a trainee unable, due to faith, to attend the weekend aspect of the flexible PGCE. Trainees are fully prepared for teaching in a culturally diverse society including faith schools and those with high proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 1

23. The University has excellent capacity to sustain high quality outcomes. Programme leaders and the management group provide excellent leadership; all internal and external examiners are very clear about their roles and responsibilities and provide highly evaluative reports which focus on outcomes. Trainees' perceptions, former trainees' evaluations, tutor evaluations and evaluations from school-based tutors contribute significantly to the annual monitoring of provision. The University uses this information to benchmark itself alongside other regional and national providers. This leads to a comprehensive and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of provision and partnership which informs both University-based teaching and the partnership.

24. Self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous and draws on a wide range of evidence. Tutors and senior managers identify how well trainees attain against individual and groups of Standards with appropriate modifications to training. Recently, issues about mentor feedback and evaluating lessons have been identified by the management team and are on the action plan for improvement. Internal and external moderation of assessment ensures accuracy of judgements of trainees' achievements and security of the final assessment. Processes for selection and de-selection of schools are open and transparent. Placements are evaluated through the partnership placement review and any placement found not to be offering the high quality expected is de-selected. The placement administrator makes a weekly check with the Ofsted website for schools which may have moved into a category of concern.

25. Very effective systems monitor University based training including formal performance management process which includes a peer observation. University tutors are committed to continuing personal development and attend national conferences to keep abreast of new initiatives.

26. The University is highly responsive to the views of the current trainees. For example concerns about receiving conflicting advice in completing assignments were resolved through the creation of a 'one voice' system. In this way trainees receive support and guidance from a designated tutor.

27. Leaders are experienced with a good understanding of primary education in general and initial teacher education specifically. Most have recent, relative experience of schools. Leaders have an excellent track record of anticipating and driving change. In response to a relative weakness in trainees' teaching learners from minority ethnic groups, leaders organised placements in a London Borough

together with a multi-cultural day and training from a local authority EAL specialist. The University acted very effectively upon the outcomes of the Williams review into mathematics, the Rose Review and the drive for focussed phonics teaching. For example they developed a phonics training package for school based tutors to use with the trainees on placement. As a result the trainees' ability to teach phonics has improved.

28. University and school based trainers are well qualified and experienced and contribute to regional and national committees. Many tutors are involved in research projects and trainees report they can contact tutors for support as they start their career.

29. Improvement planning is highly effective; actions are prioritised, clearly defined, and appropriately time-scaled and emanate out of the internal and external evaluations. There are clear links between monitoring and evaluation, improvement planning, actions taken and ensuring consistency across the partnership to enable trainees to meet the Standards. The provider rigorously tracks trainees' outcomes on an individual level. This information is used to evaluate success and generate future programme improvements. As a result trainees' attainment has increased over the last three years. However, there is scope for using this information more systematically and analytically to: inform action planning on a cohort and group level; further increase the proportion of trainees attaining the Standards at an outstanding level; and as a measure of the success of actions. The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation are used to direct any actions, interventions and resources to ensure that trainees meet the Standards. The necessary actions are communicated across the partnership and responsibilities for implementation are clearly understood. Staff know their role in improvement, for example in 2008/2009 the emphasis is on the development of phonics and schools have a package to support the process. This is emphasised through the dissemination in cluster meetings by partnership committee members who know the priorities in the action plans.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

30. The Northumbria University offers initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) and the award of a post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE) for the secondary age range in art and design. At the time of the inspection there were 18 trainees on this programme. The partnership includes 48 secondary schools; with 25 schools being used in the programme in 2008-09. Of these, 18 are 11-18 schools, 4 are 11-16, and there are 3 high schools covering the 13-18 age range. The provider has developed very close links with the museums and gallery services in the region and with initiatives and research on art and design education and professional practice. As a result, schools are keen to be involved in the partnership and come from both neighbouring local authorities and further afield.

Key strengths

31. The key strengths are:

- the high quality outcomes for trainees
- the focus on developing trainees as reflective practitioners and subject teachers
- the dynamic partnership arrangements, with reciprocal benefits for all parties
- the commitment of schools and teachers in the partnership to further improving trainee outcomes.
- the quality of leadership and management
- the extent and accuracy of self-evaluation and review
- the quality of insights into future developments and anticipation of change.

Recommendations

32. In order to continue to improve trainees' progress and the already high levels of attainment the partnership should:

- monitor the extent to which trainees are considering assessment outcomes in lesson planning and are fully implementing assessment for learning
- include relevant quantitative benchmarks and timelines in development planning to enable impact and degree of improvement at a group and cohort level to be more precisely monitored.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

33. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. Success rates are very high, particularly in recent years. All trainees consistently gain qualified teacher status, with over half attaining outstanding grades last year. As a consequence, trainees regularly find employment in schools, with 100% of last year's cohort now teaching full time. Two key factors underpin this success. Firstly, the way the programme helps trainees become reflective practitioners, both as teachers and subject specialists; and, secondly, the mature partnership with schools that has been created.

34. Trainees are achieving well, and often very well, across all of the key aspects of teaching. Almost all trainees make at least good progress and are achieving well. This is consistent with the provider's own evaluation.

35. The programme recruits well. Its success and reputation have helped ensure an increasingly healthy level of applications and it is heavily oversubscribed. Very effective selection procedures help to assure the right calibre of trainees are recruited. Only those with the capacity to become reflective teachers and subject practitioners and meet the high expectations placed upon them in taking responsibility for their development are taken on to the programme. Selection takes place in partnership schools so that applicants are evaluated by programme leaders, subject practitioners and, crucially, by pupils. This opportunity for professional development and engagement in the process of selecting the next generation of teachers is much valued. It is another feature of the excellent partnership arrangements and their impact on the quality of provision.

36. The university, including the art and design programme, have made significant efforts to ensure a balance in the range of trainees it selects. The programme has been successful in recruiting trainees for next year that reflect the diverse nature of the student population, including particular ethnic groups within partnership schools. The training ensures that the trainees are prepared well to teach in a culturally diverse society.

37. The programme has excellent balance and effective sequencing of general professional studies, subject specific training, and current research into pedagogy and the subject. All come together well to inform trainees' developing practice. The recommendation from a previous Ofsted inspection that the elements of the programme be better integrated has been addressed very successfully. The addition of masters-level work and the transition to PGCE accreditation has been managed seamlessly, and is already recognised by both trainees and schools as a key component in helping to develop effective and reflective practice. As a result of this strong coherence between all aspects of the programme trainees learn to reflect on and evaluate their teaching and development very well indeed. This includes reflecting on how their own experience and expertise in art and design can underpin and infuse their teaching. One of the central aims of the programme, to develop prospective teachers that are "artist practitioners" is, therefore, achieved successfully. Trainees are clear that they need to apply their own subject knowledge to find interesting and varied ways of developing students' skills and understanding.

38. This high quality training draws on the most relevant and best informed practice in the subject. University tutors are well-qualified, undertake relevant research, and are recognised experts in the subject. They maintain strong links with local and national bodies, and with major subject initiatives and research on art and design education. They use the outcomes of this to constantly up-date and refine the training the programme provides to trainees, to mentors and, through the partnership network, to other art & design teachers in schools regionally.

39. Trainees are provided with a model of the reflective practice that they are expected to emulate. They rise to this challenge well and use their evaluations rigorously to set their own targets and take responsibility for working in a mature professional relationship with their tutors and trainers. Trainees' targets for development, including their teaching placements in schools, are progressively addressed over the programme.

40. Partnership schools and subject mentors help trainees to identify and set relevant targets and training needs, and to support them in achieving those targets. The high quality of training and the effective matching of provision and placements is a reflection of the mature professional relationship that has been carefully established within the partnership.

41. Subject mentors, link tutors together with University based staff value high quality reflective practice. All feel a strong sense of ownership and responsibilities in ensuring trainees meet the Standards. They work unstintingly, customising teaching programmes and providing additional opportunities for trainee's to work with specific groups of pupils or in particular media ensure trainees' development targets, interests and needs are met.

42. The quality and consistency of assessment and feedback to trainees provided by school based mentors has been an area for development by the partnership; this is now good. Trainees' assessment files and records demonstrate rigorous and regular review of progress towards their targets and the development of their subject specific and general professional and pedagogic skills. This combines effectively with holistic assessment against the Standards. Trainees' lesson plans show clarity in the intended learning outcomes, steps in learning and, for the most part, a sound understanding of a range of strategies to monitor students' progress. However, the degree to which trainees are planning what the assessable outcomes will look like for groups and individuals if the learning outcomes are achieved is relatively less well developed.

43. The support for the welfare of trainees is excellent; trainees speak very highly of the attention to their personal well-being as well as their professional development, and about the way that incidents are dealt with, although these arise very infrequently. The quality of this support is a strong feature of the relationship between the University and the schools and is a fundamental part of the ethos that permeates the partnership.

44. The resources available to the provider are used efficiently and very effectively to achieve the very good outcomes for trainees. Funding from national

agencies and local initiatives, for example, the North East Regional Hub for Cultural Renaissance, is used intelligently and productively. External resources such as the Baltic and Shipley Galleries are used very well. The involvement of these and other relevant education service providers within the overall partnership ensures that trainees can engage directly with current local and national initiatives in the subject. An increased the focus on craft and on ICT & Media education, in response to national inspection findings and the new secondary subject curriculum, has been successfully achieved through judicious use of additional resources. The arrangements to monitor, support and assure the quality of provision across the partnership are extremely comprehensive and resource intensive. Here again, the quality of the partnership is a crucial factor; this commitment requires an investment of time, human resources and materials from schools which goes beyond simple financial remuneration.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 1

45. The provider has outstanding capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees, and to take the actions required to secure any improvements where they become necessary.

46. There is a strong track record of continuous improvement over the last three years. All Ofsted's previous recommendations have been addressed. A strong and dynamic partnership has been established. This has been underpinned by high quality leadership and management, effective evaluation of performance, good use of professional and subject specific networks to anticipate and respond to national and local initiatives. In addition well considered actions are conscientiously monitored for their impact on outcomes and sustaining high performance in training prospective art & design teachers of the highest calibre. All involved in the programme model very well the ethos of "reflective practitioner" that it seeks to develop in trainees.

47. The provider knows its strengths and areas for improvement well. This, and associated development planning is based securely on a wide range of internal and external sources of evaluation including: University-wide priorities; annual reviews by the partnership and programme Development Committee; and external evaluation, for example by Ofsted and external examiners. Close links with regional and national initiatives, and associated research in the subject, has also ensured that the programme has been responsive to necessary change and has anticipated a number of key subject developments. All these sources are used very effectively to inform programme development.

48. The provider has very good procedures for involving all those in its partnership in self-evaluation and programme review. The views of trainees are sought regularly and systematically analysed, not just through questionnaires and discussions in professional studies groups, but through the involvement of representatives on the programme Development Committee. The provider has

recently begun to collect wider sources of evaluation from former trainees and schools that employ them. The feedback is very positive, but partial. The programme is looking to build on the very strong links within the partnership, and with the trainees, to formalise and strengthen this source of evidence and feedback to better inform evaluation.

49. Improvement planning, at all levels, is very clearly focused on improving outcomes for trainees. The key targets arise from rigorous analysis of these outcomes and are now linked to more sharply-focused monitoring and review strategies. For example, as part of the strategy to strengthen the consistency of assessment and feedback to trainees across the partnership, experienced subject mentors, operating as link tutors, have recently been given a much clearer and stronger quality assurance role. They are a key component in the process of continuous monitoring, review and evaluation, and improvement planning for trainees. They have also been much more involved in partnership-wide strategic planning.

50. Link tutors, along with the programme leaders, are part of the ongoing strategy to provide support to subject mentors. The programme leaders have successfully managed the development of mentors and now have a core group of dedicated and influential teachers, including advanced skills teachers, working well together with a clear focus on improving the training and outcomes for trainees. These arrangements have led to discernable improvements in the outcomes for trainees and provide a very secure basis for further improvement.

51. Development planning sets out the priorities clearly and includes the rationale for their identification and inclusion. It is transparent and helps assure that the partnership is well informed on the reasons for development and the actions identified. It is a very effective working tool to inform and lead the implementation of change. Alongside the very good management provided by the programme leaders and the sophisticated delivery, management and monitoring mechanisms that they have established across the partnership, it supports very coherent and high quality provision. Nonetheless, development planning and monitoring and evaluation could be improved further by even better use of the available data. For example, whilst the development plan itself has sufficiently robust success criteria, more quantitative benchmarking information and timelines would enable impact and degree of improvement brought about by actions to be more precisely monitored. Equally, the current monitoring of progress of individual trainees would benefit from being benchmarked against starting points and milestones for defined groups and the cohort as a whole, to provide useful monitoring information for programme leaders and link tutors.

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Context

52. The School of Health, Community and Education Studies provides a two year part-time in-service programme to prepare trainees to teach in the learning and skills sector. This leads either to the professional graduate certificate in education (PGCE), or the diploma in higher education (Certificate of Education) in post compulsory education and training (PCET). Both programmes meet the Secretary of State's requirements for further education (FE) teacher education. The university works with regional partners to recruit trainees working across a range of private and public sector organisations, including the health service, police force and private training organisations, some in a voluntary capacity. Few trainees work in further education colleges. The programme is delivered by the university on the university premises. There is in addition some outreach provision. Approximately 97 trainees are currently enrolled on the programme. The university is a designated Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT).

Key strengths

53. The key strengths are:

- trainees' good development of practical teaching skills and knowledge
- trainees' good use of reflective practice to improve their own performance
- the university's clear commitment to local and regional workforce development
- the thorough recruitment and selection procedures
- the high quality of support given by the programme team which is making a significant contribution to trainees' progress.

Required actions

54. In order to improve the quality of provision, the provider/partnership must:

- strengthen the consistency and quality of mentor support
- sharpen the use of target setting and action planning to support trainees' progress.

Recommendations

55. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:

- strengthen trainees' access to an appropriate range of teaching experiences
- extend trainees use of information and learning technologies (ILT) to enrich students' learning.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

56. Overall attainment is good, for trainees who go on to complete the second year of the Diploma in Higher Education or Professional Graduate Certificate in Education. In 2007-08, just over 90% of trainees who started the second year of the two year programmes completed successfully, with the majority attaining at a good or better level. Nevertheless, although showing signs of improvement this year, retention rates on the first year of the training are low. For example, in 2007-08, around one third of trainees either suspended studies or withdrew at the end of year one, often because of the loss of a teaching contract or a reduction in teaching hours, which is outside the control of the university.

57. Trainees demonstrate good practical teaching skills and knowledge. They use a variety of effective strategies, draw on valuable subject and industrial expertise, and develop students' professional attitudes and specialist skills well. They take good account of their students' individual needs, and effectively build the development of communication and number skills into their teaching.

58. The programme reflects a strong commitment to local and regional workforce development. Effective use is made of employer links and labour market intelligence to recruit across a wide geographical area. Trainees come from a rich and diverse variety of backgrounds, some with few formal qualifications and often seeking a career change. They work in a range of private and public sector backgrounds, including the police, health service, local council and private training companies, some in a voluntary capacity. Good community links have enabled the university to widen access through off-site provision, including a very successful outreach programme based in Alnwick.

59. Given the nature of their workplace setting many of the trainees lack the support infrastructure within their organisations. This makes work place support for these trainees a particular challenge for the programme team.

60. The thorough recruitment and selection procedures ensure that applicants are well informed about the demands of the programme. A well-structured interview process accurately assesses trainees' individual starting points, including their literacy and numeracy skill levels, and their potential to succeed. Trainees speak highly of the inclusive and confidence-building group activities that form part of selection process.

61. The good quality of support provided by the programme team makes a significant contribution to trainees' good progress. Trainees can choose daytime or evening attendance, and vary this to suit their personal circumstances. They can request additional tutorials at any time, and have access to telephone and email support. Trainees value highly the flexibility, enthusiasm and encouragement of tutors.

62. The development of reflective practice is a strong feature of the programme. It is built into programme structure and activities, and is the key element of the final assessed module. It forms a very effective bridge between theory and practice, and trainees speak highly of the impact that this has on their teaching and the overall progress they make.

63. Targets in individual learning plans are occasionally too general and, similarly, not all lesson observations lead to specific plans for improvement. In these instances, teacher trainers do not make best use of opportunities to model good practice.

64. In order to address the need to improve trainees' access to a broader range of teaching experiences, an area for attention at the previous inspection, the programme team has taken action to ensure that trainees who teach in a very limited context have the opportunity to observe a wider range of teaching. In addition, trainees are encouraged to extend their presentation skills through group presentations to their peers. However, for many trainees, the opportunity to gain direct experience of teaching different groups at a range of levels remains restricted. Some, for example, teach one small group, or only teach their subject at one level.

65. Innovative use of information and communication technology to enrich students' learning is already promoted through training sessions. There is some good practice, such as the use of the interactive whiteboard; however, a few trainees lack the technical skills and confidence to use ICT effectively in the classroom.

66. Resources are effectively used to support the programme and enable trainees to make progress. Well qualified tutors offer good quality support and training. Trainees have access to extensive library facilities. Improvements have been made in the accessibility of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), an area for attention identified at the previous inspection. Technical problems have now been overcome, and trainees report they can access the VLE at home. However, as trainees have now found other means of electronic communication to share resources, such as group email, further work is needed to encourage trainees to use the university's learning platform.

67. Strong engagement with employers, and improvements in access to subject specialist mentoring help to support the good outcome for those trainees who complete the training. For example trainees are well supported to develop expertise across a range of contexts and are timetabled to teach different subject areas and several levels of programme.

68. The robust assessment and moderation procedures, including the recently introduced inclusion of practical observations by the external examiner, are designed to further support consistency.

69. Although all mentors have now received training, some are over generous in their assessment of trainees teaching. Consequently, this, adversely affects the helpfulness of feedback to trainees who are not always sufficiently clear about weaker areas of their practice. The university has a programme of planned joint observations between tutors and mentors to address this issue. However, it is at a very early stage of implementation.

70. Equality and Diversity are promoted well. The programme team adopts a highly inclusive approach to the recruitment and support for learners from non-traditional backgrounds and a wide range of workplace settings. Trainees with additional needs are given good support, through, for example, the provision of specialist equipment, and large print handouts for trainees with dyslexia. Training sessions raise trainees' awareness of equality and diversity issues. This includes legislative requirements with regard to harassment and bullying in the workplace, and trainees' responsibilities for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults. The university ensures that the appropriate statutory checks have been carried out on all trainees. Most trainees understand the importance of addressing learners' individual needs through, for example, the use of differentiated teaching strategies and resources.

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

71. The provider's capacity to assess performance and sustain high quality is good. Trainees' outcomes are good, and the university has made effective use of its quality assurance procedures to bring about improvement.

72. There is a clear synergy between internal quality procedures such as annual review, self-evaluation, and development planning. Review and evaluation processes are comprehensive and the programme team knows its strengths and areas for development. The annual programme monitoring reports are sufficiently detailed and draw on the feedback from external examiners, trainees and module reviews. Action points to address the identified issues are well articulated.

73. Very effective use is made of trainee, employer and mentor feedback to inform annual programme monitoring reports and the self evaluation document (SED). Arrangements for the moderation of written assessments are robust, and tutors accurately assess the quality of trainees' practical teaching. Further attention is needed however to ensure consistency of standards in practical observations carried out by mentors.

74. The self evaluation document is largely critical and reflective, drawing on a wide range of evidence including stakeholder views and findings from the previous inspection. The programme team has analysed attainment by type of employer. Although the programme team analyses applications and recruitment by gender, ethnicity and disability, it has not analysed attainment of these groups at programme level. The SED is accurate in many of the judgements made, but overoptimistic in the grades awarded.

75. The university plans and takes action for improvement well. The programme team has brought about improvements in trainee outcomes. The grade profile of trainees, based on the assessment of teaching and written assignments, has improved year on year since 2005-06. The proportion of trainees assessed as outstanding has risen from 46% to 62%, while those assessed as satisfactory have dropped from 21% to 6%. Nevertheless, these outcomes are based on trainees completing the programme, and withdrawal rates, although showing signs of improvement remain high.

76. In 2008 progression to Year 2 was low, with one third of trainees withdrawing or suspending their studies by the end of Year 1. A significant factor was the loss of teaching contracts or reduction in teaching hours. The programme team has a good understanding of the barriers to progression that trainees face and works hard to reduce the impact of these on trainees' outcomes. Staff make clear at interview stage what the demands of the programme are, and provide flexible arrangements to meet the needs of trainees experiencing personal or family problems. For example, trainees can switch from evening to daytime attendance, and access additional tutorials on request.

77. The programme team has made effective use of the self evaluation document to plan and bring about improvement. Steady progress has been made against all priorities for development, for example strengthening the role of mentors in supporting subject specialist teaching, and extending trainees' experience of a wider range of teaching contexts. In response to the previous inspection report, the university now requires external examiners to report on the practical teaching of trainees in the learning and skills sector.

78. The university and programme team are very responsive to national and local initiatives, making very effective use of regional networking and employer links to plan for workforce development across a diverse range of settings. Priorities for development have placed a strong focus on the successful introduction of the new professional standards. This includes for example, the greater emphasis on subject specialist pedagogy, and on the development of learners' literacy and numeracy. The school has worked effectively within the Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) partnership to provide subject specific mentor training.

Annex: Partnership colleges

None - direct delivery by Northumbria University.

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

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Primary	Secondary	Employment-based routes	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?		1	1	N/A	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1	1	N/A	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	1	N/A	2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		1	1	N/A	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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