

Edge Hill University

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A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The Edge Hill University works in partnership with approximately 2000 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers undergraduate courses for trainees preparing for the 11-16 age-range, a three year undergraduate key stage 2/3 course and post-graduate courses for trainees preparing for the 11-16 and 14-19 age-ranges. Flexible post-graduate training is offered in most secondary subjects. The subjects offered are creative art, design and technology, applied art and design, business education, design and technology, English, geography, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education, religious education and science. At the time of the inspection there were approximately 1000 trainees.

Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a short inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

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

Main inspection judgements

Management and quality assurance: Grade 2

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The next inspection of this provider will take place in accordance with the ITE Inspection Framework.

Key strengths

- the thorough and consistently applied selection procedures which result in the recruitment of high quality trainees
- the strong widening participation policy and the success of initiatives to recruit trainees from underrepresented groups
- the outstanding provision for meeting the individual needs of trainees
- the consistently strong support trainees receive from tutors in all subjects
- the up-to-date content of subject programmes and the extent to which central subject training sessions engage and motivate trainees
- the quality of the triangulation record as a tool for evaluating and recording trainees' progress against the Standards.

Point for action

- ensuring greater consistency in managing and monitoring school-based provision.

Points for consideration

- ensuring consistency in the internal moderation of trainees' achievements against the Standards
- refining procedures for monitoring the implementation of equal opportunities policies
- making more robust use of data to inform improvement planning and self-evaluation and to set targets for improvement.

The quality of training

1. Courses have been reviewed in the light of all recent developments and have been modified in order to link securely to the new Standards. Course content is up to date and clearly reflects current developments; for example, the business studies courses takes account of recent initiatives concerning enterprise work. The strong emphasis on critical reflection is particularly effective in supporting trainees' development. Assignments are relevant, suitably demanding; they support the training well.
2. Coherence is generally good, both between elements of the university taught subject programmes, and between central and school-based training. A phased introduction to teaching through the initial placement ensures that trainees are able to make secure links between theoretical and classroom based work.
3. Trainees use web-based materials effectively, particularly for sharing resources. The online community also facilitates good communication between trainees and tutors. This is particularly effective for trainees on the flexible route, who benefit from being able to keep in regular touch with their tutors and other trainees.
4. Tutors convey much enthusiasm for their subjects, and this is reflected in the trainees' commitment and keenness for their work. Sessions are well planned and include a variety of highly relevant activities. In science, for example, sessions on misconceptions, concept maps and models and analogies have had a positive impact on trainees' teaching. Links to Standards are made clear to trainees, and this enhances the trainees' understanding of their progress. Mentors value the suggested agenda for training supplied by university subject departments, and this supports the generally good coherence between the various elements of the training.
5. The provision for meeting trainees' individual needs is a notable strength. By offering a wide variety of routes, including a flexible Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), the university ensures that candidates can follow the course that suits them best. Careful consideration of each trainee's needs starts at the selection stage. Pre-course tasks are personalised according to need. Booster courses ensure that trainees have the opportunity to make significant strides in improving their subject knowledge before the programme formally commences. The tracking of subject knowledge development throughout the course is thorough and supported well through the tutorial system.
6. In the majority of cases, schools play close attention to meeting trainees' individual needs. Although most trainees are matched to school placements that meet their needs well, a small proportion of trainees on the 14-19 applied art and design and business education courses do not have the full range of opportunities to teach the subject across the age range. Business education trainees sometimes teach for a significant proportion of their time in Key Stage 3 and a small number of

applied art and design trainees gain very limited experience of teaching applied art and design, as apposed to art and design.

7. Lesson observation feedback given by mentors is detailed and constructive. Feedback on assignments is of good quality, and gives trainees a clear picture of the stronger elements of their work whilst at the same time providing realistic suggestions on how to improve further. Although most trainees meet regularly with mentors to discuss progress against targets, this is not always the case. In the best instances, targets for development, set by trainers in collaboration with trainees, are focused, challenging and achievable.

8. Good quality systems are in place for monitoring trainees' progress towards the Standards and are mostly implemented effectively. Regular tutorials ensure that tutors gain a clear and up-to-date picture of each trainee's progress. All trainers are involved in the monitoring process, and this enables further tailoring of trainees' programmes to ensure that opportunities are provided to meet all of the Standards. Trainees have a secure sense of their own progress. Those on the flexible route are well provided for and staff keep detailed records of their contact with these trainees.

9. Feedback from trainers is used well by trainees in evaluating their own progress towards the Standards. Self-evaluation is an important part of the triangulation meetings at the end of blocks of teaching experience where trainers and trainees discuss progress in detail and agree on gradings. There are good arrangements for gathering together all evidence on trainees' progress when making judgements at the end of the programme.

Management and quality assurance

10. Selection procedures are thorough and are applied consistently across programmes and subjects. All relevant checks are made and procedures followed in line with the Requirements for ITT. Trainees recruited have appropriate qualifications and experience. Those that express an interest in applying but who do not have the minimum qualifications are encouraged to gain them, sometimes through training offered by tutors in the evenings or weekends. An excellent initiative to provide in-house tuition to prospective mathematics' trainees has resulted in a doubling of numbers to the three year 11-16 course.

11. A strong widening participation policy underpins the recruitment and selection process. Various initiatives are in place to recruit from minority ethnic and other underrepresented groups and, as a result, the proportion of minority ethnic trainees recruited to the courses has increased year on year. Equal opportunities policies clearly influence and direct recruitment and selection. These are applied carefully and thoroughly to ensure trainees are provided with every opportunity to succeed in gaining a place. However, the provider does not yet collate data from applications to identify trends in rejections and to ensure groups of trainees are not disadvantaged in any way.

12. The partnership is large and widely dispersed. Partnership agreements are clear and detailed. They are individualised according to the type of partnership school and direct the schools' involvement. Communications with schools are mostly effective. As a result of difficulties in finding suitable placements, a small number of trainees, particularly those on the undergraduate programmes, begin placements late, usually by two or three weeks, but occasionally by several months. School-based trainers usually undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively and are largely supportive of the Edge Hill partnership. Mentor training takes place at regular, programmed times throughout the year, but attendance is variable. Where necessary, tutors train mentors during their visits to schools and trainees report mostly good support in the schools.

13. Roles and responsibilities for centre based staff are clearly defined. Many subject leaders and most managers are new to their roles having been appointed within the past two years. Nevertheless, individuals are clear about what is expected of them and are knowledgeable about how they implement their responsibilities. Tutors at all levels meet regularly, in subject or programme groups, or as part of the many programme boards and committees. These meetings are largely effective in managing the training, particularly that at the centre. The provider actively promotes equality of opportunity and good race relations through its various initiatives and its support for trainees, staff and schools. Although when asked, tutors can explain how they would act upon incidents or concerns relating to equality of opportunity, there is no transparent procedure in place for monitoring and recording incidents.

14. Systems are in place for monitoring school-based provision but visits by link tutors do not always take place or are slightly variable in the quality of support and guidance they provide to schools and trainees. Internal monitoring and assessment of trainees' progress and achievements are usually good, although there is variability in the number and scope of visits made by subject tutors to monitor the progress of trainees and to moderate the judgements made by school-based staff. A significant number of external examiners report on each subject and programme; all reports confirm the consistency and accuracy of the assessment of trainees at the pass/fail border.

15. The improvement planning process is extensive. Training programmes are systematically monitored and evaluated. Trainees are regularly invited to offer their views through trainee consultative meetings and to pass on concerns to trainee course representatives. Annual monitoring reports draw on subject and programme evaluations and lead to action plans to deal with issues arising. However, action plans are not always sufficiently sharp or focussed and do not usually set measurable targets for improvement. This, together with the unevenness in some aspects of school-based provision and in the monitoring and support for trainees has led to the judgement that management and quality assurance are no longer outstanding.