

Wessex Schools Training Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Poole High School Harbin Campus Wimborne Road Poole Dorset BH15 2BW
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Inspection dates	27-30 April 2009
Lead inspector	Mary Massey HMI

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of 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. Wessex Schools Training Partnership is a partnership of a group of schools within Poole and Bournemouth local authorities. The provider offers a route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for 14 secondary trainees through employment-based initial teacher education, with Poole High School employing almost two-thirds of them. Trainees are recruited for both priority and non-priority subjects and are trained for two key stages within the 11-18 age range. The course lasts for one academic year, starting in April.
4. The three employing schools, each of which has entry at Year 8, serve wide ranging socio-economic contexts. Three further schools support the partnership by offering additional training and placement opportunities, particularly by providing trainees with experience of teaching pupils in Year 7.

Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
- the outstanding quality of personal support for all trainees, particularly provided by advisory support tutors, which contributes to their good progress
 - the effective systems for assessing the quality of trainees' teaching and their progress towards the QTS Standards
 - the very good communication systems between partnership schools that ensure coherence between the elements of the course
 - the thorough preparation of trainees for teaching, which leads to a very high number of previous trainees staying in the teaching profession.

Required actions

6. In order to further improve trainees' progress and attainment the provider must:
- ensure that trainees on the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 programme have a secure understanding of continuity between the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 curriculum in their specialist subject
 - ensure that all trainees are effectively prepared for teaching in culturally diverse settings.

Recommendations

7. In order to further improve trainees' progress and attainment the provider should:
- ensure that recruitment procedures thoroughly assess trainees' ability to be both reflective and evaluative and then ensure that these skills are further developed throughout the course
 - set clear targets for trainees' teaching that focus on the impact of their teaching upon pupil's learning
 - extend the breadth and depth of trainees' own subject knowledge.

8. In order to improve the quality of planning for further improvement the provider should:

- develop the partnership's self-evaluation and planning to incorporate a sharper focus on outcomes for trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

9. The total involvement of trainees in the life of their employing schools enables them to develop a good understanding of both the academic and pastoral aspects of secondary education. They enjoy being in school, show positive attitudes and have high expectations of learners.

10. Recruitment and selection procedures are good. An open evening run by the provider uses presentations by previous trainees and the course leader to make clear the heavy workload involved in the training. Consequently trainees recruited to the course are well aware of the providers' high expectations and, to date, all those who have completed the course since the provider was accredited remain employed as teachers, with many still employed within the partnership. A higher proportion of trainees from minority ethnic groups are recruited than are in the local population and each year, with considerable success, trainees are enrolled who have non-standard qualifications. The long and short listing process is consistent and fair, with a wide range of stakeholders from the partnership involved, including subject mentors, heads of department, advisory support tutors and other representatives from the employing schools. This helps to ensure that high quality trainees are recruited. In 2009, a team task was introduced in addition to the interviews and presentation in order to assess more accurately potential trainees' ability to work effectively in teams. The current process does not always give the opportunity for interviewers to ascertain how reflective and analytical of their own practice applicants are likely to be during their training.

11. The trainees who completed the course in 2009 were the first to have their potential assessed at interview using a numerical scoring system; the accuracy of this process is under review. The assessment of trainees' potential six weeks into the course is more robust, with all but one trainee either meeting or exceeding their expected outcome. A thorough initial needs analysis is completed very early in the course and mentors use the analysis and data from subject knowledge audits to create individual training plans and subject tutorial programmes, which are modified and developed at each assessment point. This approach, together with the close relationships within such a small provider, ensures a personalised approach to training. Trainees feel that their individual needs are very well catered for through the individual training plan and that they receive a very fast response when they experience difficulties. This outstanding personal support is a key strength of the provision.

12. Mentors receive annual training and regular email contact is maintained with the course leader to ensure a consistent approach to school-based training. The

course leader acknowledges that on occasions there is some inconsistency in the quality of subject mentoring across the partnership. To address this in some subjects this year, the subject tutorial programme is being delivered across partnership schools, although this has not yet had enough time to show a positive impact. In order to improve the efficiency and coherence of subject knowledge, the partnership also plans to appoint subject knowledge co-ordinators in preparation for the next intake of trainees. Because a number of different people observe each trainee, targets are not easily transferable from one lesson to the next. This limits the impact target setting has on encouraging trainees to reflect systematically upon their practice.

13. The quality of feedback by subject mentors to trainees on their teaching is good overall, with some outstanding practice. A numerical scoring system which links to the Standards enables trainees accurately to track their own progress over time. Lesson observations are managed well by the course leader who ensures that the areas being assessed link closely to the centre-based training being undertaken at the time. Assessment of trainees' teaching tends to focus more on the trainees' classroom practice than the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress and learning. The provider has recognised this and has recently modified the lesson observation form accordingly to allow for a greater weighting to be placed upon learning, for example through the collection of pupils' views on their learning.

14. Assessment procedures are thorough and consistent. Rigorous monitoring, for example by the chair of the management committee, ensures the effective moderation of judgements on the quality of trainees' teaching. The subject assignments are assessed and moderated by subject specialists. In some instances assignments are graded too generously because insufficient account is taken of the depth or breadth of trainees' subject knowledge development. Nevertheless, effective moderation systems are in place to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the final assessment of all trainees. All trainees, therefore, reliably meet the QTS Standards by the end of their course.

15. Resources are allocated effectively to ensure that trainees make good progress. An ambitious example is the provision of M-level training for some mentors as a means of developing further a core of school staff who are committed to the partnership.

16. The partnership includes a range of different types of school; it comprises a comprehensive school, a selective school, two schools with a religious character, an independent school and two middle schools. Care is taken to ensure that all trainees have placements in two complementary schools and experience of the key stages either side of those for which they are being trained. This works well for post-16 provision, but experience in Year 7 is limited, although the extent of trainees' experience is expanding this year.

17. Centre-based training is rated highly by trainees who increasingly appreciate its importance as the course progresses. Experts from both inside and outside the partnership contribute, and the skills of advisory teachers from the employing schools are used well. Although much is covered in the first few weeks of training,

the programme is extended by regular additional days throughout the course. A promising new innovation for the current cohort is the inclusion of a regular half day a week to allow trainees to share good practice. Assignments are effectively designed to link subject and pedagogic knowledge. Trainees' have only a limited theoretical understanding of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum and their awareness of subject specific links with Key Stage 2 is underdeveloped.

18. The provision makes a good contribution to equality of opportunity for trainees. Each year, some minority ethnic trainees are recruited and the current cohort has equal numbers of men and women. Trainees feel confident that they could report incidents of unlawful discrimination or harassment, although none have been reported. However, none of the partnership schools are able to provide trainees with direct experience of teaching within a culturally diverse context. Trainees are well prepared theoretically, and do have a good understanding of issues relating to diversity, but they do not have any experience teaching in a multicultural school, which limits how well prepared they are to teach in culturally diverse settings.

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

19. The provider demonstrates good capacity to improve. Data to show improvement in the proportion of trainees making expected or better progress are only available for this year. However, records show that attainment over time has improved, although the size of each cohort is small.

20. A management committee oversees the development of the partnership very effectively. It meets regularly to discuss ways to improve the provision, and now has a formal process for monitoring, planning and implementing improvements. The chair of the management committee, who was a senior leader in one of the partnership schools, has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and ensures that all recommendations are implemented. The committee ensures that efficient internal and external moderation procedures are in place to confirm the accuracy and security of judgements. Members are involved in final assessment interviews with trainees. Each year a trainee representative is elected onto the management committee. In addition, in order to ensure that the opinions of all stakeholders are heard and acted upon, a strategic development committee includes interested teachers and former trainees. Mentors describe the role of this group as very effective in achieving coherence in the way the partnership is managed and ensuring that the suggested developments are implemented quickly so that outcomes for trainees improve. Much informal evaluation is passed to and acted on by this group.

21. Annual self-evaluation involves all partners, including trainees, mentors and other stakeholders. Good evaluation, including the careful analysis of trainees' progress and achievements, is carried out to ensure that the actions that are taken will bring about improvement. The introduction of formal evaluation procedures is

relatively recent and the process is not yet always rigorous enough to provide an outstanding and incisive analysis of the quality of provision. However, the course leader and management committee know this small partnership very well. Trainees feel they are well known as individuals. The very good relationships and efficient and regular communication systems ensure that areas for development are identified very effectively and acted on quickly. As a result, many changes have been implemented, or individual needs responded to, without the need for formal evaluation, for example changes to the centre-based programme and the development of the selection process. However, written evaluations from trainees about the quality of training are not always thorough enough to be useful because responses are not always sufficiently reflective or evaluative. In addition, the areas of questioning focus on the usefulness rather than quality of the training and provision.

22. The leadership anticipates and responds to local and national initiatives well. Trainees are very well prepared within their subjects to respond to current development issues, for example in relation to changes to GCSE and AS/A2 curricula. They receive training in teaching pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and have experience of teaching the latter. They are aware of the issues surrounding vocational diplomas and developments in the 14-19 curriculum, but they know less about the new Key Stage 3 curriculum and the teaching of reading. This is particularly pertinent as trainees are mostly employed in schools that start at Year 8 and their direct experience of Year 7 is limited to a few days. The capacity is present in the leadership to tackle this and plans are in place to improve provision in this area for the current cohort.

23. Action planning is well focused on priorities which are intended to improve outcomes for trainees. These include the increased emphasis placed on learning outcomes in the lesson observation form; the development of learning networks; and the delivery of subject tutorials jointly across the partnership. Actions such as these are often taken in response to informal evaluation and are frequently implemented more quickly than the time scale of the action plan. However, success criteria are not always sufficiently precise, quantitative and focused on trainees' outcomes.

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

		Employment-based routes
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	N/A
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	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
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	2

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

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