

University of Worcester

Institute of Education
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A primary initial teacher training
inspection report

2007/08

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Introduction

The University of Worcester works in partnership with 550 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers a three year BA (Hons) degree in primary initial teacher education, a primary postgraduate certificate in education and a primary professional graduate certificate in education. At the time of the inspection there were 483 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 revised report combines the judgements from a short inspection of the provision and of the management and quality assurance arrangements in 2007/2008, with the judgements from the scrutiny of further evidence submitted to Ofsted in the autumn of 2008.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

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

Main inspection judgements

Quality of training: Grade 1

Management and quality assurance: Grade 1

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

Key strengths

- the leadership's focused determination to innovate and improve the quality of its training provision
- the strength of the university's partnership with those it works with including schools and Worcestershire Local Authority
- the commitment, to initial teacher training, of staff working in partnership schools
- the high quality of the tutors who work together successfully as a collegiate team and their increasing focus on modelling excellent and inspirational teaching
- the well thought out structure and content of the training programme, which expertly links the theory of teaching with classroom practice
- the regular monitoring of trainees' subject knowledge and the focused provision of additional advice and support
- the excellent opportunities provided for trainees to develop particular skills, such as, teaching primary modern foreign languages and working with pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the tutors' professional relationships with trainees, which supports and promotes their self-esteem and confidence as developing teachers.

Points for consideration

- increasing the number of trainees from ethnic minority backgrounds
- ensuring that the success criteria used to determine the impact of actions for improvement focus increasingly on improving trainees' teaching capability.

The quality of training

1. The quality of training is outstanding. The courses are structured well with a very good balance between centre-based and school-based training. They meet the Requirements fully. The content of the centre-based training ensures that trainees are fully conversant with all the relevant educational initiatives including developments such as the Rose Report. A significant strength that underpins the content in all subjects is the strong emphasis on the *Every Child Matters* agenda.
2. Cohesion between the different components of the training programmes is very good. This enables trainees to apply what they have learnt during the centre-based training sessions to their own practice in school. Links between different subjects are very strong. For example, tutors demonstrate very good use of information and communication technologies in their teaching, which raises trainees' understanding of how it can be used effectively in their lessons.
3. The quality of the centre-based training is very good. This is because the experienced and well qualified tutors act as excellent role models. The recent emphasis on developing tutors' use of inspirational teaching methods has had a significant impact on their teaching. They are increasingly using a wide range of teaching methods to accommodate trainees' different learning styles and engaging trainees in dynamic and exciting learning activities. Additionally, the opportunities offered to trainees to study a modern foreign language abroad and experience a special school environment, have broadened and extended their learning. The school-based training is also of a high quality. Mentors working in the partnership schools provide very good support for trainees during their teaching placements. They build on the centre-based training very well to enhance and develop the trainees' understanding of teaching and learning. As a result, trainees are highly motivated and are enthused to become teachers of high quality.
4. Trainees' individual needs are met very well. Arrangements for auditing and developing their subject knowledge are robust, beginning at selection and continuing throughout the training programme. Where subject weaknesses are identified, trainees are guided very well by tutors and encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Mentors also provide strong support for trainees in addressing their identified weaknesses through setting and monitoring targets for improvement. A strength of the training is the focused attention tutors pay to trainees' individual needs by planning activities that take good account of their personal strengths and talents.
5. The university's procedures for monitoring and assessing trainees' progress towards the Standards are rigorous and work exceptionally well; they ensure that trainees know how far they have progressed and that they understand what they need to do next to improve. Trainees regularly receive very useful feedback following observations of their teaching, which not only identifies areas for improvement in specific subject areas but also identifies helpful and more general improvement points, many of which are linked to specific Standards. Overall, tasks

and assignments are marked to a high standard; provide useful feedback and model good practice.

Management and quality assurance

6. The university has become an excellent provider of very good quality trainees. This improvement is a result of the leadership's clear and unremitting focus on ensuring that every aspect of the training contributes, as intended, to the overall high standard of provision.

7. Applications exceed the number of training places available because of the university's very good reputation for training teachers of a high calibre. The university is very active in promoting its training courses and is continually looking at ways to access all sections of the community. As a result, it has become increasingly successful in recruiting trainees from some under-represented groups, particularly men and trainees with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Despite all efforts, this success is not mirrored in the recruitment of trainees from ethnic minority backgrounds where numbers have yet to consistently meet the Training and Development Agency targets. Careful scrutiny of applications ensures candidates invited for interview possess the necessary academic qualifications, meet all the requirements, and are firmly committed to teaching. Retention is excellent because university tutors and staff from partnership schools work very effectively together at interviews to identify those candidates most likely to succeed.

8. Leadership and management are strong at all levels. There is a shared determination that training provision should enable trainees to achieve, 'more than they thought possible'. As a result, under the leadership's direction, there is a continuous drive to improve and innovate and a collective commitment to identified improvement priorities. The university's partnership with schools is a strength. Communication systems are excellent. They ensure that school staff have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and know how they can contribute to the university's high quality training programme. The university's partnership team have an exemplary knowledge of the schools being used for teaching experiences. They take great care to ensure that school experiences meet trainees' individual needs by providing contrasting opportunities that help them to develop their teaching abilities. The partnership handbook is comprehensive. It sets out in great detail the expectations on all parties, including those of schools wanting to work in partnership with the university.

9. The arrangements for training school staff to support trainees during teaching placements work extremely well. The system of training lead mentors to work with mentors in each school who, in turn, are supported by one of the regional partnership coordinators is very successful. The university's documentation is well written, easily accessible and greatly appreciated by busy staff working in schools. The development of the university's virtual learning environment is improving communications as schools are increasingly using it as an easier means of obtaining information.

10. Arrangements for quality assurance and moderation are very good. The procedures to moderate judgements are proportionate and promote confidence in assessors' decisions. For example, joint lesson observations are conducted during final teaching practices, which ensure consistency of judgements and an appropriate sample of assignments are second marked. Information gathered via the quality assurance arrangements and the external examiners' reports is used very effectively to celebrate the strengths of the training and identify where further improvement is required. This enables the leadership to focus their priorities and resources appropriately to address any issues raised. Trainees' contributions to quality assuring the programmes are encouraged and taken very seriously; this is illustrated clearly by the tutors' well considered responses to remedy any concerns expressed.

11. All parties to the partnership demonstrate a strong commitment to the university's improvement agenda. The points raised in the previous inspection report have been addressed successfully and continue to be used as a focus for further work. Performance is evaluated and benchmarked critically against other similar providers. This analysis forms the bedrock of the annual report, which summarises the progress achieved against current goals and identifies future priorities. Various action plans provide an appropriate mechanism for determining progress achieved towards identified goals. However, the current success criteria do not focus consistently on identifying how the initiatives planned are intended to impact on trainees and so improve their teaching capability.