

# Anglia Ruskin University

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Faculty of Education  
Bishops Hall Lane  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 1SQ

A further education teacher training  
inspection report  
2007/08

Managing Inspector  
Alan Winchcombe HMI

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## Background

1. Initial teacher training (ITT) at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) is located within the Department of Continuing Professional Studies in the Faculty of Education. The Faculty offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in primary, secondary and further education. It also provides a range of post-compulsory pathways, such as a Masters level in Learning and Teaching and a number of continuing professional development programmes.
2. ARU works in partnership with five colleges of further education (FE) in the Essex and West Anglia area to provide initial teacher training for FE teachers and other trainers in the post compulsory sector. Provision leads to the university's Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and/or certificate in education. One hundred and ninety three in-service trainees are enrolled the second year of legacy awards. Four FE colleges are involved this year in delivering new university qualifications endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK) as meeting national requirements. The new in-service training route has 104 trainees enrolled. Around 35% of in-service trainees work outside FE college contexts, particularly in adult and community learning delivered by local authorities.
3. The in-service course is designed as a two year programme, with possible entry into the second year of courses through the assessment of prior experience and learning. In-service trainees attend centre-based weekly sessions, either during the day or in the evening. All training is delivered by university or university-approved tutors.

## The inspection

4. The inspection was carried out in two phases by a core inspection team which comprised four members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate. Four Additional Inspectors joined the team for part of phase two. In-service provision at three colleges was evaluated as part of the inspection. Account was also taken of provision elsewhere.
5. During the first phase, which took place in November 2007, inspectors focused on the quality of training and management and quality assurance procedures. During the second phase, inspectors concentrated on the achievements of trainees, through observing their teaching and gathering evidence of their progress during the course. Phase 2 of the inspection was completed in June 2008.

## Effectiveness of provision

6. The overall quality of provision is adequate (grade 3). Trainees demonstrate a strong commitment to helping their learners overcome barriers to learning, and in helping them to progress successfully into employment or further study. Programmes are well structured and teacher trainers provide good models of teaching and learning for trainees to follow. Individual support for trainees is strong. Workplace support for the development of trainees' subject specialist skills is often good, but is inconsistent in focus and delivery. Formal links between mentors and tutors are insufficiently developed.

7. Managers have a clear strategy and direction for the future development of the partnership. A strong collegiate approach encourages the shared development and ownership of programmes and builds productive relationships between partner institutions. There are well developed university and college quality assurance processes to evaluate and address any areas identified for attention. Quality monitoring arrangements for the mentoring and workplace support of trainees are not sufficiently consistent. The management of the partnership is open and responsive, and has been prompt in addressing the areas for attention identified in its detailed action plan.

## Key strengths

Inspectors identified the following strengths:

- trainees' commitment to their specialist subject areas and the very effective use of their professional knowledge and skills which support learners' progression into employment and further study
- good teaching by teacher trainers, which focuses on and models good practice in learner-centred and participative approaches
- good support for individual trainees by tutors
- strong ethos of peer support and shared working created within programmes which builds trainees' skills, knowledge and confidence
- positive approach by managers to the shared development and ownership of provision across the partnership.

## Areas for attention

The partnership should address:

- inconsistent arrangements for mentoring and subject specialist support for trainees
- insufficient development of trainees' skills in applying strategies for differentiating learning and in developing their learners' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT
- the limited reference in taught sessions to the full range of contexts in the FE sector
- underdeveloped quality monitoring of teaching observation and workplace support for trainees
- insufficient opportunities for sharing of good practice across the partnership.

Further information on strengths and areas for attention is contained in the substantial sections of the report that follow.

## Achievements of trainees

8. Trainees demonstrate positive attitudes to their teaching roles, with clear evidence of a strong commitment to helping their learners and to improving their academic and vocational skills. Trainees are enthusiastic about continuing to develop their own professional knowledge and understanding. Nearly all trainees gain good reflective and self critical skills, which they use well to evaluate and improve their practice. They are very open to constructive criticism from peers and teacher trainers, and seek to incorporate ideas and suggestions into their teaching. Trainees are effective in promoting the values of the vocational areas in which they teach and train. They demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of their learners and aim to treat them fairly. Nevertheless, they are not always clear about how they can promote equality and diversity in the context of their specialist subject.

9. Most trainees use a good range of teaching approaches and strategies to engage and motivate learners. They demonstrate an increased awareness of learner-centred approaches, and are able to make effective links between theory and practice. Trainees generally pace their lessons well, and challenge learners appropriately, although a minority of trainees do not always set sufficiently high expectations.

10. Trainees build good working relationships, and successfully create a good environment for effective learning. They use praise effectively to encourage and motivate learners. Trainees in vocational areas manage work environments well.

Most trainees make effective use of a wide range of materials and resources, including the effective use of information learning technologies (ILT). Better trainees also use humour effectively to engage their learners and to make learning more enjoyable and more memorable. A minority of trainees' lessons are too teacher-led. They are not sufficiently flexible and do not vary their approach to teaching and learning sufficiently. Not enough emphasis is placed on key learning points and new learning is not always reinforced or consolidated.

11. Trainees are able to explain how they have grown in confidence in their teaching roles, and generally show satisfactory awareness of *Every Child Matters* themes in their teaching. They are appropriately aware of health and safety issues and promote good practice in their practical teaching and training. A few trainees do not always challenge poor and disruptive behaviour sufficiently.

12. Trainees understand the need to differentiate learning to meet the needs of individual learners, and better trainees are able to differentiate learning well in both their planning and teaching. However, most trainees do not plan or apply sufficiently developed strategies for differentiated activities in their lessons.

13. Most trainees are well qualified and have good subject knowledge, relevant to the range of courses they teach. Trainees in vocational areas have wider professional experience. They generally make good use of this knowledge to make their teaching directly relevant to the needs and interests of their learners.

14. Typically, lessons are planned thoroughly by trainees, setting out detailed objectives and clear goals which integrate theory with practice. Plans link effectively to detailed schemes of work and identify a range of appropriate resources. Most trainees do not plan sufficiently to support the development of their own learners' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. A minority of trainees do not estimate approximate timings effectively, and indicate either insufficient or over-generous timings in some lesson plans.

15. Most trainees have a good understanding of the nature and purposes of assessment, and show a clear grasp of awarding body standards and assessment criteria in their specialist subject areas. They monitor learners' progress carefully and provide constructive feedback. Trainees generally make effective use of questioning techniques and other formative assessment such as quizzes or short written revision tasks to assess student's progress through lessons. However, a minority of trainees do not check students' understanding of key points in lessons, and do not use questioning techniques in a targeted way to consolidate learning for individual students at different levels of ability. A minority of trainees have only limited opportunities to participate in the formal assessment of their students.

16. Trainees support their learners well, and demonstrate a good knowledge of the academic and vocational progression routes open to their learners. Trainees in colleges show a good understanding of the wider support services open to their students and make effective use of additional support to develop learners' skills for life, and to ensure equality of access to learning.

## Quality of training

17. The courses meet national qualification requirements and follow closely the national frameworks for the new Diploma to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) qualifications. The structure of the programmes integrates theory with practice effectively and emphasises the development of trainees' subject specialist skills. Clear guidance is provided through a new student handbook.

18. Teacher trainers are very enthusiastic and well-qualified, and have a clear understanding of their professional roles. They are strongly committed to the trainees and the sector. Teaching and learning is very effective on the taught programme. Training sessions are well prepared and teacher trainers take good account of current learning theories and research in planning to meet trainees' needs. Teacher trainers demonstrate learner-centred teaching and action research very effectively and routinely model good practice which is recognised and adopted by trainees in their own teaching. An extensive range of imaginative activities and resources, including information and communication technology (ICT) skills enhance the development of trainees practice. However, opportunities are missed within teaching sessions to include reference to and share trainees' experience on the wider range of FE contexts. Teacher trainers are very effective in developing trainees' reflective skills. Trainees are encouraged to work collaboratively. Training groups build a strong culture of mutual peer support, shared working and professional self evaluation, which helps to build trainees' skills, knowledge and confidence.

19. Initial assessment identifies trainees' levels of literacy and numeracy clearly, both through on-line testing and a free writing activity. Initial assessment does not include a detailed assessment of trainees' ICT skills. Assessment arrangements are generally appropriate and well documented, with comprehensive module handbooks for trainees. Where support needs are identified, good levels of individual support are provided by partner colleges. Trainees' progress is generally tracked effectively and recorded clearly, using a range of records, including teaching observation forms and individual learning plans. The development of individual trainees' literacy and/or numeracy skills is not always clearly recorded. Teacher trainers and mentors do not focus sufficiently on the application of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills by trainees in their teaching. The use of individual learning plans (ILPs) with trainees varies across the partnership, and, in a minority of cases, targets set for trainees within ILPs are insufficiently detailed and do not link clearly to initial assessment or to previously agreed targets.

20. Teacher trainers provide strong individual support for trainees, in particular for those trainees with specific development needs, which encourage and motivate them. Constructive feedback from teacher trainers, on assignments and observations, provides helpful guidance for trainees on what they need to do to improve. Trainees appreciate the broad range of support provided by their mentors, and by other workplace colleagues, although workplace support for the development of trainees' subject specialist skills is generally underdeveloped.

21. Mentoring arrangements are not yet fully integrated with all other aspects of programme so that observation, assessment and feedback provided by mentors to trainees is not closely linked with that of teachers/trainers. Mentors do not consistently provide detailed subject specialist feedback on observations of teaching to help trainees improve their subject pedagogy. Too many mentors' teaching observation comments are descriptive or generic rather than evaluative and focused on the specialist subject area. While most trainees benefit from observing their subject specialist mentor, and occasionally other experienced practitioners in their area, too few opportunities are generated to encourage trainees to observe more experienced teachers or to learn from particular examples of good practice.

## Management and quality assurance of provision

22. Marketing and recruitment to the university's ITT (FE) programmes is effective. Candidates receive detailed and accurate information about the programmes, in advance and at interview. Prospective trainees have an individual interview and undertake an assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Selection procedures are thorough, and result in trainees assigned to appropriate courses. The partnership has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity, which is reflected in the careful monitoring of recruitment data and in delivery of programmes.

23. The university's management approach to its partnership is very positive. It has sought increasingly to involve and support its partner colleges and has placed particular emphasis on strengthening the existing relationships across the partner centres. The university has encouraged the shared development and ownership of new DTLLS programmes. Frequent, constructive communications take place with colleges, particularly through the partnership network management group which acts as the main catalyst for improvement. Partnership representatives are fully involved in the strategic and operational aspects of programme development. The growing strength of relationships is valued by colleges.

24. The university's overarching systems for quality assurance are well established. These include annual programme reviews, partnership liaison meetings, trainee feedback, and external examiner reports. Clear arrangements are in place to moderate written work. Action is taken promptly to address any areas for attention identified. However, some aspects of quality monitoring, at programme level, are underdeveloped. Monitoring arrangements are not yet applied routinely across the partnership to ensure the consistency and quality of experience for all trainees. For example, the moderation of trainees' teaching observations and the monitoring of mentoring arrangements have not yet been fully implemented. Mentors are not always clear about the content of teaching programmes, or their role in the development and assessment of trainees' progress in subject specialist and minimum core skills.



25. The partnership is fully aware that these aspects require further development, and as such has established a very clear strategy to address this. The university has appointed a programme coordinator who is implementing a detailed action plan, with support, where appropriate, through the East of England Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training. The actions taken are already beginning to have a positive impact of the experience of individual trainees.

26. The partnership also recognises the additional opportunities to promote improvement through the increased sharing of good practice that exists and has already taken prompt action to take this forward.

## Appendix list of colleges

The following colleges were members of the partnership at the time of the inspection:

Cambridge Regional College  
Chelmsford College  
Epping Forest College  
Thurrock & Basildon College  
The College of West Anglia