

Bishop Grosseteste University College

Newport
Lincoln
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A further education teacher training
inspection report
2007/08

Managing Inspector
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The inspection

1. This inspection was conducted in accordance with the *Framework for the inspection of initial training of further education teachers* and the guidance in the *Handbook for the inspection of initial training of further education teachers*. It was carried out in two phases by an Additional Inspector. Two further Additional Inspectors contributed to the second phase of the inspection.
2. The first phase of the inspection, which took place in March 2008, concentrated on the quality of training and the quality of management and quality assurance procedures. During the second phase, completed in June 2008, inspectors focused on the achievements of trainees, through observing their teaching and gathering evidence of their progress during the course.

Background

3. Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln, has approved New College, Stamford, to deliver all courses validated by the university college, including teacher training programmes. Teacher training is delivered by New College staff and quality assured internally by New College and externally by Bishop Grosseteste University College.
4. In the current year, provision includes the second year of the Post Graduate Certificate of Education/Certificate of Education (PGCE/Cert Ed) course, which is being phased out, and the first year of the new Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) course. All provision is in-service and part-time. This year 12 trainees enrolled on the second year of the PGCE/Cert Ed course and 18 on the first year of the DTLLS course. While a high proportion is employed by New College, trainees also come from a range of other contexts, such as the National Health Service, the police service, or adult and community education. New College also provides teacher training through Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTTLS) and Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTTLS) courses. Currently, both CTTLS and DTLLS routes integrate PTTLS provision as the starting point of their programme.

Effectiveness of provision

5. The overall effectiveness of provision is very good (grade 1). It has a striking impact on trainees' professional expertise from a very early stage in training. Trainees make substantial and often rapid progress in their competence and demonstrate good or very good levels of professional expertise.
6. These outcomes can be attributed directly to the quality of central training, highly effective mentoring and tutoring, rigorous assessment, and very well considered and appropriate delegation of responsibility for professional development

to trainees themselves. Effective management and quality assurance arrangements, enhanced by the recently established formal partnership with Bishop Grosseteste University College, play a significant role in securing these high standards of provision and outcomes.

Key strengths

Inspectors identified the following strengths:

- the substantial progress made by trainees and the high standards of professional competence they attain as a direct result of provision
- the invariably good, and often outstanding, quality of training sessions which have a striking impact on trainees' professional proficiency
- highly structured approaches to developing critical analysis which plays a significant role in improving trainees' practice
- the strong influence of very effective subject mentoring and subject assessment on trainees' subject pedagogy
- meticulous attention to identifying, addressing and tracking the individual needs of trainees to ensure rapid progress
- rigorous and accurate assessment which challenges trainees to achieve the highest levels of competence of which they are capable
- a scrupulous approach to placing trainees on the training route appropriate to their teaching role
- close integration of initial teacher training (ITT) into human resource management arrangements, thus encouraging the professional development of trainees employed by the college
- highly effective incorporation of college provision into the management and quality procedures of the validating higher education institution to secure quality provision
- excellent improvement planning which drives change.

Areas for attention

The partnership has addressed the small number of areas for attention identified in the first phase of the inspection and has suitable plans in place for tackling the very few minor areas for attention noted in this report.

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

Achievements of trainees

7. Almost all the trainees observed demonstrated good or very good levels of competence, including trainees only half way through the DTLLS route.
8. Invariably, trainees adopt a highly professional approach to their work. They have exceptionally demanding expectations of themselves as well as their learners, they secure equality of opportunity and take account of diversity in teaching their subject, and they are fully aware of the specific needs of learners and committed to supporting their learning. In their planning and teaching, trainees give proper attention to health and safety and ensure that learners know how to do likewise.
9. All trainees develop highly effective relationships with learners and with other staff. They make significant contributions to their departments and, where the context allows, more widely.
10. Trainees respond very well to feedback and advice and take decisive steps to improve their own practice. Thus, one lesson observed showed substantial improvements in key targeted areas such as questioning and student-centred teaching. Over the training, trainees have become increasingly adept in justifying their planning analytically and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of their teaching rigorously, critically and with a view to improving future practice. They recognise clearly the progress they have made and focus their efforts on tackling further pertinent and well defined targets. All are well motivated to develop their academic, teaching and professional skills and many have formulated relevant future professional development and career plans.
11. Assignments are of high quality. They are well written, make increasingly effective use of relevant reading and research, including subject-specific websites, and use theory very well to interrogate practice. Some trainees have benefited substantially from additional support for academic writing.
12. In their teaching, most trainees focus firmly on ensuring learner progress. At the start of each lesson, they set out its outline and intended outcomes, sequence lessons very effectively to extend and consolidate understanding and skills, and refer frequently to previous learning. They are particularly proficient in using coaching techniques and other forms of questioning to probe, check understanding and

extend learner expertise. Transitions are smooth and well signposted. The great majority of trainees employ a wide variety of imaginative and carefully selected methods and resources, including a very suitable range of Information and Learning Technology (ILT). They know how to set and apply ground rules for behaviour and are very adept in tackling any momentary disaffection. Praise and humour are employed judiciously and to good effect. Where lessons involve support workers and technicians, roles are not always defined with sufficient precision.

13. All trainees are expert and up-to-date in their subject specialism and very well informed about relevant course specifications. Their expertise enriches their teaching and gives credibility. They draw on effective theoretical perspectives as well as practical exemplification to extend or clarify learners' understanding and they have the depth of subject knowledge and skills necessary to respond flexibly to learner needs. For instance, in teaching criminology, a very well qualified police inspector, selected highly pertinent and up-to-date illustrations and information to enhance learning, for instance about the reasons for the involvement of particular agencies in multi-agency partnerships.

14. Almost all planning is of very high quality. Lesson plans are derived from thorough and well staged schemes of work, thus ensuring attention to progression as well as course specifications. Plans are characterised by clearly defined learning outcomes which incorporate high level skills, and careful attention to assessment, resourcing, health and safety, equality and diversity and key skills. They also detail closely timed teaching and learning activities. The great majority of planning gives thorough attention to specific learning needs, including those of the most able. This enables trainees to focus and adjust provision appropriately and to deal with unexpected behaviours expertly.

15. Trainees have a very good understanding of all aspects of assessment and their relevance for teaching and learning in their subject area. They employ a good range of suitable assessment methods. The great majority monitor learning closely throughout lessons and assess intended learning outcomes specifically at the end of each lesson or/and sequence of lessons. They provide very constructive oral and written feedback and employ a very suitable range of records to track and facilitate learner progress.

16. Because trainees are well informed about literacy, numeracy and IT requirements and have been assiduous in developing high level personal skills, they are skilful in embedding relevant expectations into their subject teaching.

17. Almost always, learners are highly motivated, participate fully, engage well in very demanding activities and are willing to discuss and respond purposefully, often at length. They make evident progress in understanding and skills. Trainees provide appropriate encouragement, guidance and support, and alert learners to relevant support services.

18. Any occasional shortfall in planning, teaching or assessment is identified and addressed effectively by tutors and mentors. Thus one lesson observed

demonstrated clearly that the trainee now involves learners more fully in all aspects of teaching and learning – a key strategic target. Where scope for further improvement remains, for instance in making best use of other adults in the classroom, this has been recognised clearly and suitable planned development is already in hand.

Quality of training

19. The content and structure of the PGCE/Cert Ed and DTLLS courses are highly effective in promoting trainees' progress and competence.

20. Courses take full account of relevant national expectations and are very well matched to expected levels. A strong emphasis is placed on subject pedagogy and this impacts markedly on provision, for instance in central training sessions, in the significant part played by subject mentors and in the substantial use of specialist subject assessment. The minimum core is given particular prominence and additional sessions are included to meet particular needs, for instance in numeracy. Course content is updated systematically to take full account of policy developments and changes to practice, thus ensuring that trainees are very proficient in implementing current national expectations.

21. Course structures are very successful in promoting coherence between central training and workplace experiences and in extending trainees' knowledge and skills progressively. Thus, the DTLLS programme builds exceptionally carefully on each topic addressed in PTLLS, so that trainees gain an increasingly sophisticated understanding, for instance of the learning process, which is underpinned by a growing knowledge of relevant research grounded firmly in professional practice. The course team has kept the impact of the new DTLLS structure under close review throughout the first year of implementation and has already planned very appropriate adjustments to benefit trainee progress. Course design also ensures systematic attention to library skills and personal study and builds tutorials formally into programmes.

22. The impact of training sessions on trainees' understanding and practice from a very early stage of the courses is striking. All the training observed was at least good, with some very good or outstanding. The effectiveness of college training is supported by excellent course and session planning which takes full account of all external requirements and shows clearly how professional standards are addressed. It is shared with trainees to illustrate high quality professional practice and support their progress.

23. Training sessions model very good teaching and make exceptionally clear to trainees what is being done and why. Trainees are expected, not merely to draw on their own subject practice, but also to examine how to apply training on general teaching pedagogy, for instance related to behaviour management, to teaching their own particular specialism. Trainee presentations during session are followed by self,

peer and tutor assessment and contribute very effectively to improved confidence and skills, not least in using ILT. Training ensures that trainees make increasingly effective use of pertinent reading and research which enhances their professional expertise and underpins their critical analysis of practice.

24. Relationships in training sessions are excellent, cemented by good humour. Trainees engage with tasks effectively, take full part in professional discussions with each other and the tutor, and are enabled to raise questions and concerns frankly. They articulate very clearly the substantial improvements to their own professional practice resulting from their training and highlight in particular the impact of this on the progress made by their own learners. One trainee pointed to the effects of improved feedback, more effectual recording and the use of precise targets, all of which were the direct result of training sessions.

25. Trainees are also very well supported by documentation which shows them very clearly how the appropriate specifications are addressed and where subject pedagogy is tackled. Course materials include substantial up to date classified reading lists, including relevant web references, and additional useful references are provided during training sessions. Trainees benefit from additional excellent written guidance and some outstanding and highly distinctive requirements which help them to develop their professional expertise to the highest possible level. For instance, they compile thorough research-backed justifications for every formally observed lesson, together with detailed lesson plans, at least one day ahead of the observation, and then evaluate these lessons to a similarly high professional standard. Their learning journals are very carefully structured and thus highly focused. Justifications, evaluations and learning journals demonstrate very clearly trainees' recognition of the impact of training on practice as well as their marked progress in understanding and proficiency.

26. Throughout the training very close attention is paid to identifying and addressing the individual needs of trainees, who are given increasing responsibility for this process as a key element of their professional development. They are constantly challenged to attain the professional standards even more highly. Tutors maintain systematic records of trainee progress. Professional needs are identified assiduously and progress in tackling such areas for development is reviewed critically and perceptively by tutors, mentors and trainees themselves. As a result, new specific development targets are set. Similarly, literacy, numeracy, and information communication technology skills are assessed formally and very effectively at a very early stage, clear improvement targets are set and progress is assessed rigorously.

27. The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for each trainee is increasingly effective in translating identified needs from all sources into more strategic professional action points which are reviewed formally during tutorials. The best ILPs include precise targets, which are scrutinised and updated during regular tutorials alongside focused discussion of assignments and lesson observations. Tutors are alert to shortfalls in the completion of some ILPs and include timely updating sessions to support trainees in setting more effective strategic targets to focus future development.

Strategic targets set in this way by one PGCE trainee were very significant in securing progress throughout the second year of training.

28. Feedback to trainees is highly specific and very detailed, identifying progress on previous targets and making target areas for further development very clear. Marking results in significant improvements, for instance to future planning or subsequent assignments. Written observations of teaching take unusually close account of planning as well as subject pedagogy and sets clear targets which focus the agenda for further observations.

29. Mentors make a very significant contribution to the professional development of trainees, in particular, to their progress in subject pedagogy and confidence. All trainees are supported by experienced specialist subject mentors, even in the case of external trainees with unusual specialisms or where there is no suitable mentor in the college workplace. Tutors then draw very astutely on expertise from other sources to secure specialist mentoring.

30. Mentors are well informed about their role and implement their responsibilities well. The great majority meet trainees frequently, offer clear guidance, model aspects of practice, support assignments, and undertake focused observations. They provide regular debriefing discussions and reviews of progress. Their effectiveness in enabling trainees to improve their practice is attributable to a very helpful mentor handbook and two formal briefing sessions, attendance at which is checked meticulously and any absentees followed up by letter and relevant documentation. Additional arrangements to enhance the impact of mentors even further are in hand. To address slight inconsistencies in mentor practice, such as variability in the logging of mentor meetings, a formal mentor tutorial record is now included in the ILP and the planned completion of ILPs electronically will allow even closer monitoring of effectiveness.

31. Tutors provide excellent formal and informal challenge as well as support for individual trainees. They make themselves readily available to the benefit of trainees who are often part-time or external tutors. A very wide range of other formal and informal support mechanisms is in place to help trainees address particular needs.

32. Assessment is rigorously accurate, sets high expectations and has a formative as well as a summative function. It is recognised by trainees as very influential in helping them to develop professionally. Assessment procedures take careful account of award specifications, are very well documented, understood fully, and implemented meticulously. In undertaking assignments, trainees are supported by focused additional guidance in training sessions and through purposeful tutorials, such as the briskly paced and highly professional PGCE tutorial observed which resulted in precise action points to sharpen the trainee's extension study. The assessment of teaching is tightly focused through carefully structured templates. Unusually strong emphasis is paid to assessing subject as well as general pedagogy through the close involvement of subject mentors.

Management and quality assurance of provision

33. Publicity is well presented and informative. Marketing is suitably focused and includes the targeting of under-represented groups.

34. Selection procedures are effective in confirming the suitability of prospective trainees. All candidates are interviewed carefully, with a view to ensuring that they meet requirements. The ITT team is meticulous in placing trainees on the course that matches best their teaching role. Trainees maintain a careful record of their teaching and professional experiences as evidence of appropriateness. Recently, selection records have been amended to list any professional subject needs, together with related remedial actions, for entry onto the ILP at the start of the course.

35. Within New College, ITT is integrated systematically into wider human resource management arrangements. Effective communication systems make certain that the college ITT team is kept well informed about the ITT needs of new staff, including agency staff, and that individualised continuing professional development (CPD) builds on initial qualification.

36. Provision is very well managed to secure trainee progress and competence. The recently forged collaborative partnership with Bishop Grosseteste University College is very effective. It was the result of a stringent and productive approval process, and is cemented by a detailed memorandum and the implementation of a series of codes of practice.

37. Strategic management of ITT provision is highly productive and integrated appropriately into the relevant systems of the University College. Communication between the two partners is very effective. Day to day management, which is the responsibility of the ITT team, is carried out meticulously. The roles of all involved in training are laid out clearly, understood fully and almost always implemented as intended. Any shortfalls are identified and tackled rapidly. The trainee voice is heard formally through focused evaluations and representation on relevant committees.

38. Provision is well resourced. Key ITT staff are highly expert and suitably experienced. They engage in very appropriate professional development and networking to secure up to date and highly relevant provision, and they make the most of additional opportunities now offered by the University College and local Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTS). Trainees also profit from a suitably equipped teaching base and a very well organised and supplied resource centre, with easy availability of computers and a virtual learning environment. Partnership with the University College provides increasing access to additional resources, including electronically.

39. Quality processes set demanding expectations, and are very efficient in identifying and tackling any shortfalls as well as any trainee concerns. They focus on quality enhancement. A wide range of internal quality procedures is implemented

rigorously, including self assessment review, formal observation of training, monitoring checks on mentors and careful evaluation by trainees and relevant committees. These internal procedures benefit from close integration into the university college's accountability structures and requirements. The university college is rigorous in implementing its quality role, as in the validation of the DETTLS provision, the expectations of annual monitoring reports, or monitoring the quality of training sessions through the link tutor.

40. Internal and external moderation arrangements are rigorous in ensuring accuracy, in the case of both assignments and teaching. Assignments are moderated very thoroughly, internally by documented second marking and externally by an external examiner. Teaching is moderated internally by very detailed joint observation and debriefing and externally by the same external examiner. Judgements on teaching in written assessments and pen pictures align with those of inspectors.

41. Procedures are being put in place to monitor more systematically the implementation of equality and diversity policies and thus provide more robust evidence for internal and university college review expectations. Training programmes, and thus trainees' teaching, gives very close attention to equality and diversity, as in the case of a performing arts trainee when tackling a particular piece of drama or considering work with disabled learners.

42. Quality information from all sources is scrutinised scrupulously so that issues are identified precisely and suitable actions are planned and taken. The team leader provides very thorough formal reviews and forward planning in line with college and university college requirements, and implements a very well considered improvement plan to drive effective development.