

# Stoke on Trent Graduate Teacher Programme

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Inspection dates

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Lead inspector

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## Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by 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. Stoke on Trent Graduate Teacher Programme is a partnership between Stoke on Trent local authority, the University of Derby and Manchester Metropolitan University. It is situated in an urban area and aims to prepare trainees for teaching in a diverse community. The course offers routes to qualified status through employment-based initial teacher education. The provider attracts a large number of applicants for both primary and secondary programmes. There are currently 22 secondary trainees in both shortage and non-shortage subjects and 19 primary trainees.
4. The partnership aims to provide teachers with the skills and experiences to teach within the city, which has a growing number of immigrants, refugees and people with varying levels of spoken English. It was established in 2001 to address local issues of teacher recruitment and retention.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
  - the rigorous selection processes that result in the recruitment of thoughtful and highly committed trainees who make a significant contribution to meeting local needs

- the consistently strong support for trainees from partnership schools
- the well developed skills of the trainees in managing the behaviour and learning in the classroom
- the trainees' ability to reflect on and to evaluate their practice effectively.

## Required actions

6. In order to improve the progress made by trainees and develop the quality of the provision, the partnership must:

- improve the arrangements for the auditing and development of subject knowledge for teaching
- increase the rigour and consistency of the internal and external moderation of assessments
- improve the scope and rigour of self-evaluation and ensure the outcomes feed directly into improvement planning
- strengthen improvement planning and ensure that priorities are shared across the partnership.

## Recommendations

7. In order to accelerate trainees' progress and raise attainment, the partnership should:

- improve the precision and challenge of targets set during weekly mentor meetings.

8. In order to accelerate the rate of improvement across the provision, the partnership should:

- develop a shared understanding of the expectations of the partnership in terms of trainees' outcomes.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 3

9. Trainees' attainment by the end of the programme is satisfactory. Trainees are thoughtful, hard-working and highly committed to their training. The provider has begun to track the progress trainees are making, but the systems for doing this are in the very early stages of development. Nevertheless, the grades awarded for the current cohort at the end of term one and then again at the end of term two show that they are making at least satisfactory progress. The stable group of schools

in the partnership means that mentors are experienced and generally provide trainees with strong support. As a result, trainees develop good skills for managing the behaviour and learning in their classrooms, especially those in the primary phase. They form positive relationships with their pupils and with other adults. They are generally able to plan interesting lessons and assess the progress being made by their pupils.

10. The provider recruits well-qualified trainees with strong personal qualities. The high number of applicants ensures the provider recruits the target number and there are above average numbers of men training to be primary teachers. The detailed training plans which are drawn up at an early stage in the induction process are central to the training. They are suitably flexible and allow for adjustments to be made as the training progresses. For example, primary trainees demonstrate strengths in their ability to organise the learning in their lessons by building on their previous experience as teaching assistants.

11. Professional studies sessions for secondary trainees are well attended because they are valued by trainees who are willing to travel a considerable distance to attend. Training for developing subject knowledge is satisfactory overall, but there is significant variability in support for trainees across both phases, and particularly for primary trainees in relation to the teaching of reading. There is also variability in the quality of secondary subject sessions in different subjects.

12. Targets are set regularly by subject mentors and following the end-of-term reviews. This process is stronger in the secondary than in the primary phase, but in both phases there are weaknesses. In general targets are too vague and focus on tasks rather than on the trainee's learning. This tends to impede progress especially for the best trainees. An increased focus this year on reflection is having a positive impact on developing trainees' ability to evaluate their teaching, but there are variations in the quality and depth of this reflection.

13. In general, training in the secondary phase is more coherent than in primary. Greater consistency in secondary training this year is leading to trainees making better progress. Variations in the quality of central subject training have been reduced and a greater emphasis on reflective work has helped trainees to extend their subject expertise and become more self-critical. There has also been greater use of the auditing of subject knowledge for teaching. There is a particular lack of consistency in primary training and mentors lack an understanding of what is being provided centrally. New procedures are in place for the external moderation of assessment, but in 2008 the recording and reporting of the outcomes of moderation lacked clarity.

14. Links with the universities provide access for trainees to a wide range of resources. The partnership uses local expertise in outstanding subject departments and through the local authority advisory service to supplement the training. There is a lack of coherence in some of the course handbooks and the provider has rightly identified the need to amend them so that they are clear and concise. The amended guidance for schools has been well received. Schools provide trainees with satisfactory access to information and communication technology and other

specialist equipment. This has a positive impact on their teaching for example in their ability to use interactive whiteboards to good effect. However, trainees in weaker departments are not always made aware of the full range of specialist equipment they might use to make their lessons more engaging.

15. Trainees are generally positive about the training they receive in the partnership schools, which are suitable training venues. A strength of the provision is the rigorous checking of departments which the provider undertakes when new schools apply to join. There is some variability across the partnership, for instance not all primary schools understand how the dispersed elements of the training combine. The provider has recognised the need to improve the consistency in the quality of the support and advice given to trainees in the primary phase. The centrality of the training plan ensures better coherence in the secondary training.

16. The management team is representative of the various partners. Team meetings are central to communications and trainees' progress is now a regular feature on the agenda. This enables the provider to have detailed knowledge of the trainees and intervene when issues arise. In addition, the development plan now includes a clear focus on outcomes for trainees. Training for mentors is highly rated, but is relatively infrequent. There are too few opportunities for both subject and professional mentors to meet and share good practice in order to reduce the variability in mentoring, especially in the setting of targets. Subject tutors visit the schools regularly every half term. These meetings are valued by the secondary schools, but are less consistent for primary trainees. In the best examples the subject tutors rigorously monitor the training and ensure all routines are being followed. Joint observations and discussions with all partners help to moderate judgements and schools feel suitably challenged by the process. Where these visits are less successful there is a lack of rigour and occasionally primary visits fail to take place.

17. The provider is responsive to meeting individual needs and there are many examples of flexibility to change placements or provide additional resources if required. Trainees feel well supported but recent staffing difficulties have led to a reduction in the centrally organised peer support meetings. The equal opportunities policy has been revised recently so that it is more robust. This is supported by helpful links with expertise in the local authority to ensure best practice. Trainees receive training from local authority specialist advisers in the teaching of English as an additional language and have the opportunity to observe such teaching even if there is none available in their placement school.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 3

18. The management of the partnership is shared across the management team which has continued to function satisfactorily during a period of considerable turbulence. The post of course manager was vacant during the autumn term 2008 and the recently appointed secondary co-ordinator has yet to take up her position.

Despite this, the partnership has continued to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis and some modest improvements in provision and outcomes are evident. For example there have been improvements made to the secondary training and to the selection process, both of which are having an impact; secondary trainees are making slightly better progress this year and the number of minority ethnic trainees that are recruited is slowly rising. The provider has satisfactory capacity to improve.

19. Self-evaluation is adequate. The managers of the partnership conduct regular reviews and evaluate the provision annually and as a result have accurately identified some of the strengths and areas for development. Lack of data on trainees' progress has restricted the provider's ability to identify trends or the performance of different groups. However the detailed individual knowledge that course managers have of the trainees has ensured that no groups or individuals are disadvantaged and the vast majority make satisfactory progress. Although evidence on trainees' satisfaction is gathered and, to some extent on their progress, this is not analysed against the Standards to ensure focussed priorities for improvement are set and areas of relative weakness tackled. The relatively high number of trainees who remain in partnership schools once they have gained qualified teacher status enables the provider to follow their career paths and use this information to confirm the effectiveness of the training. The final assessment process is rigorous and refinements to the process made last year have been well-received by trainees. Moderation procedures are satisfactory and ensure that judgements are accurate. The provider is investigating ways of establishing a secure baseline for measuring trainees' starting points in order to provide more helpful data on progress than is currently available.

20. The place of the partnership within the local authority ensures that the course managers are thoroughly briefed on local initiatives and can prepare for them well. The links with the universities and schools enables the provider to be aware of national priorities and build these in to the course. However, some national initiatives are not thoroughly covered, for example some primary trainees had limited knowledge of recent reviews such as the Rose review. This is in part due to the absence of a course manager to drive initiatives forward in a co-ordinated and consistent manner. Much of the recent work has been driven by reactions to immediate needs.

21. Development planning lacks rigour and the links between self-evaluation and improvement planning are not well-established. The current development plan has been enhanced to include evaluations against trainees' outcomes, but there are no measurable success criteria and roles and responsibilities for leading, monitoring and evaluating actions are not specified. Moreover, the priorities in the improvement plan are not shared with schools. These weaknesses have resulted in a variable pattern of success in dealing with areas for improvement.

22. The solid base of schools has provided a firm foundation in turbulent times. Many schools have experienced and skilled trainers and mentors who have helped to ensure that all trainees have successfully completed the course during the last three years and very few have withdrawn. New mentors are paired with more experienced colleagues in order to pass on their expertise and ensure that the partnership

continues to have the necessary expertise to support the trainees. The leadership of the course has been strengthened and communications across the partnership have improved.



## Summary of inspection grades<sup>1</sup>

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?		3
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	3
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?	3
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	3
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	3
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	3

### 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?		3
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		3
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		3
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		3

<sup>1</sup> 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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