

University of East Anglia

Partnerships Office
(Validated Provision)
University of East Anglia
Norwich
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A further education teacher training
inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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The inspection

1. The inspection was carried out 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*, both published in 2004. It was conducted in two phases by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a specialist Additional Inspector. During the first phase which took place in January 2008, inspectors focused on the quality of training and the management and quality assurance procedures. In the second phase, completed in July 2008, inspectors evaluated the achievements of trainees through observing their teaching and gathering evidence of their progress during the course.

Background

2. University of East Anglia (UEA) validated initial teacher training courses for Further Education (FE) teachers, and other trainers from the post-compulsory sector, are offered at City College Norwich. The university works with the college to assure the quality of the provision relating to the awards. The partnership between the university and the college was formed in September 2006. For trainees commencing in September 2007, the programme leads to the award of a Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) qualification. Previous recruits will be awarded the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or the Certificate in Education (Cert Ed). All qualifications have been endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK) and satisfy the Secretary of State's requirements for FE teachers. The partnership offers two modes of study: a full-time pre-service course, on which there are 32 trainees, and a part-time in-service course, with 82 trainees in Year 1 and 84 trainees in Year 2.

Effectiveness of provision

3. The overall quality of provision is inadequate (grade 4). The development of trainees' subject specialist knowledge and subject specialist teaching skills is poor. Some trainees have work-based experience which is too narrow: some teach at only one level; others are in narrow training roles and are unable to experience a sufficient range of teaching contexts. The assessment of trainees' language, literacy, numeracy and Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills is ineffective. Individual Learning Plans are insufficiently robust to enable all trainees to track their progress and plan their development coherently. Targets set with trainees are not sufficiently specific. Mentoring arrangements are underdeveloped. Trainees on the PGCE and Cert Ed programmes do not benefit from formal and structured mentoring in the workplace; the quality of mentoring on the DTLLS programme varies considerably. There is insufficient communication between tutors and mentors about the progress trainees make. Trainees develop their generic teaching skills because teacher trainers are skilled

and experienced in the classroom, model good practice and support them well. However, trainees do not make sufficient progress overall. The taught programme is well structured and provides a clear emphasis on the minimum core curriculum of literacy, numeracy and ICT. There are inconsistencies in the application of assignment requirements by assessors. Teacher trainers work well as a team, seek feedback from trainees and use this to plan for improvement. There is insufficient monitoring of key aspects of trainees' experience such as the quality of individual development targets agreed with trainees, the range of their teaching and assessment activities or the quality of mentoring support. Quality assurance processes do not identify key weaknesses. The academic relationship between the university and college is underdeveloped, with too little support for the course team at the early stage of the partnership's development. The overall quality of provision is not adequately assured to bring about timely improvements.

Key strengths

- good training sessions delivered by teacher trainers
- good personal support provided by tutors
- clear emphasis placed on the minimum core curriculum within the training programmes
- experienced and cohesive ITT teaching team responsive to feedback from trainees.

Areas for attention

The partnership should address:

- insufficient progress made by trainees
- underdeveloped support for subject specialist pedagogy in the workplace
- narrow breadth and depth of workplace experience of some trainees
- ineffective initial assessment of the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills of trainees
- lack of systematic monitoring of the progress of trainees and the quality of their experience
- inconsistent application of assignment requirements

- inadequate moderation of the assessment of trainees' teaching
- insufficient academic involvement by the university in the monitoring, evaluation and development of the provision.

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

Achievements of trainees

4. Most trainees demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge but sometimes within a very narrow range. The development of trainees' subject specific pedagogy is very variable. For example, the lack of a specialist mentor or specialist teaching observation has resulted in some trainees not receiving any specific guidance to support the development of their specialist subject expertise. Consequently, they rely heavily on the generic skills they acquire through the centre-based training but are not able to draw on a wider repertoire of teaching and learning methods.

5. Trainees are motivated to improve their practice and take account of lesson observation feedback. Nevertheless, too few trainees reflect on all aspects of their professional development or record their progress effectively. Trainees are committed to the success of their learners. The more successful trainees have good industrial experience and enrich their learners' experience by building this into lessons. Some trainees benefit from participation in the wider activities of their workplace setting such as curriculum development and involvement in extra curricular activities.

6. Trainees develop good schemes of work and lesson plans that incorporate a wide range of activities and teaching strategies. They are able to produce appropriate teaching and learning resources and use them effectively. Trainees' skills in the use of questioning to extend and develop learning is more variable; Lessons typically start with a good introduction relating to previous work, or the use of warm up activities. The most skilful trainees place good emphasis on learning points both during and at the end of the session. In less effective lessons, opportunities to assess learning are missed. Aims and objectives are not clearly stated which results in learners not being clear about what is expected of them. Weaker trainees do not plan sufficiently well to meet the individual needs of their learners.

7. Trainees' use of assessment is satisfactory. The best trainees encourage independent learning through well-structured activities and the effective use of formative assessment. Most trainees devise appropriate assessment methods for use during lessons or at the end of modules. Some trainees incorporate opportunities for peer evaluation into their assessments, however not all trainees equip their learners with the skills and terminology to undertake this effectively.

8. Trainees based in the college have good experience of supporting individual learners using college systems, either directly, as personal tutors, or through referrals. They are confident in giving general advice and guidance. Trainees know their learners well and most give them formal feedback on their progress; however very few are involved in setting learning targets for their own students. Some trainees do not track their learners' progress sufficiently and as a consequence, they are ill prepared for lessons and assessments.

9. The majority of trainees demonstrate a good understanding and application of initial assessment, inclusive learning and progression opportunities, either in practice or in their portfolios. A minority rely too heavily on a narrow range of teaching and assessment experiences and fail to extend their learning across the wider aspects of the FE teacher role.

Quality of training

10. Programmes are planned to ensure coherence between taught elements of the training and written assignments. Part-time DTLLS trainees undertake additional work-based tasks linking theory and practice. The majority of trainees are placed at City College Norwich, with others working at local schools, colleges, community learning centres, prisons and the police.

11. Course content develops trainees' generalist teaching skills well. There is insufficient development of subject specialist subject knowledge and teaching skills within the taught programme or through mentor support. Mentors do not routinely observe trainees teaching, and they have no role in the assessment of trainees.

12. A significant number of trainees are in teaching roles which are too narrow to enable them to experience a breadth of teaching, or opportunities to assess and support their learners. Not all trainees who teach in FE teach at more than one level, but the college is unable to quantify the extent of this. As a result some trainees are unable to meet the Lifelong Learning UK professional standards. The college has not yet identified ways of extending trainees' experience across all aspects of the full FE teacher role.

13. The minimum core curriculum is embedded well within the programme; trainees can clearly evidence ways in which they develop their learners' literacy, numeracy and information technology skills within their lessons and assessments.

14. The programme is offered in a variety of modes with different starting points throughout the year. Course information and handbooks are thorough and are available within the college and off-site through the virtual learning environment. In 2007/08 trainees had the opportunity to attend a Saturday session and work with mixed groups of trainees on topics of their choice. This was well received by trainees.

15. The quality of college-based training sessions is good. The best sessions effectively model good practice and highlight this to trainees, for example, by identifying learning points clearly and concisely and relating them to lesson objectives. Teacher trainers have good subject knowledge, and use a variety of teaching techniques. They make good use of trainees' expertise and group trainees effectively. They are supportive and good relations are evident in sessions. Activities are appropriate, enabling a degree of stretch and differentiation. In a minority of sessions, there is insufficient use of information learning technology (ILT), with missed opportunities to develop trainees' skills and competence in using ILT.

16. Resources at the college are satisfactory and improving. During the inspection period ILT facilities within teacher training rooms were improved. Course documentation and learning materials are accessible through the college's virtual learning environment. Trainees appreciate the ease of access to this information. Trainees have full access to learning resources at UEA which is within easy reach of the college. Due to staff absences, some trainees have had a number of different teachers over the year and some have found this disruptive to their learning and progress.

17. The college's response to meeting the individual needs of trainees is inadequate. The assessment of the language, literacy, numeracy and IT skills of trainees recruited at the start of the year was weak resulting in late development of these skills in trainees. The college has recognised this and new processes are in place for recently recruited trainees. Tutors provide good personal support and guidance and those on the pre-service programme benefit from very frequent tutorials. Although most trainees receive feedback and suggestions for improvement through tutor meetings, on marked work and following lesson observations this is not brought together coherently. Targets set in tutorials do not routinely incorporate feedback from observations. Target setting is often weak and targets are not sufficiently specific or measurable. The tracking of trainees' progress is weak; the individual learning plan is not a consistent means by which trainees record and track their progress or plan their development. Trainees do not have sufficient ownership of these plans which are maintained by tutors.

18. The role of the mentor is underdeveloped. The college has been very slow to introduce mentoring on the teacher training programme. PGCE and Cert Ed trainees do not have a mentor; the requirement for work-based mentors has been introduced for DTLLS trainees. There are variable practices between mentors. They have differing views on their role, including their role in developing trainees' subject specific pedagogy. Not all mentors are subject specialists. Very few mentors are involved in monitoring or evaluating their trainee's progress or observing their classroom practice. Links between the mentor and the tutor are weak and tutors do not have access to information from mentors when conducting tutorials. Mentors do not play any role in the assessment of trainees. Subject specific elements of the programme are not assessed by specialists.

19. The assignment programme supports training adequately. It encourages trainees to investigate relevant reading and research and relate this to current

practice. Assignments are well designed and there is an appropriate balance between theory and practice. On the DTLLS programme trainees are required to link reflections on their observations to a written assignment. Trainees are encouraged to be reflective and to maintain a reflective journal; however too few trainees do so.

20. Assessment procedures are clear to trainees, although implementation by assessors is inconsistent, for example they apply the rules on referrals differently. Assessment criteria within one assignment were ambiguous causing some difficulty early on in the course; this issue was identified and corrected but as a consequence trainees had to submit an assignment twice. Some assignments were returned to trainees excessively late. The quality of written feedback to trainees following observations is variable. Feedback does not always give trainees sufficient guidance for improvement.

Management and quality assurance of provision

21. Management and quality assurance are inadequate. Although university quality assurance procedures are well established; for example the requirement for the submission of annual monitoring reports and attendance at joint boards of study, many aspects of the programme are not monitored or evaluated sufficiently to bring about timely improvements. The university is not assuring the quality of provision with appropriate rigour.

22. Longstanding issues of poor IT resources were addressed very recently. The management response to the long term absence of a key member of the team this year has been slow and has impacted adversely on the quality of training for a significant number of trainees. Nevertheless, the teacher training team is experienced and cohesive and has implemented the new programme rapidly, delivering taught elements coherently; however they have not addressed the quality and coherence of the work-based elements of the training well enough.

23. The university and the college have a strong strategic partnership aimed at widening participation. The operational relationship between the university and college is underdeveloped and there has been too little support for the course team at the development stage, though the partnership is still young. A member of staff from the education department of the university was allocated a small amount of time to work on the developments but ill health caused disruption. Academic operational links have been strengthened very recently, both by an increased allocation of advisor time and by the inclusion of PCET team members in a range of development meetings. Actions to bring about improvement are at an early stage of implementation and are yet to impact on the current cohort of trainees.

24. Mentoring arrangements are not robust. Mentor training was slow to be arranged although several sessions have now taken place. Not all mentors have been trained and this is not monitored sufficiently. The role of mentors is not clearly understood; their role in relation to the development of subject specific knowledge

and teaching skills is ill defined. Some mentors do not see this as part of their role, especially those supporting trainees who do not work in colleges.

25. Quality assurance procedures are insufficiently developed and there is insufficient monitoring of key aspects of the training. Weaknesses, such as poor target setting, the quality of mentoring and the narrow experiences of some trainees, are not routinely identified. Course leaders are responsible for programme review, evaluation and action planning throughout the year. Feedback from learners is obtained regularly and is incorporated effectively into reviews. Action planning from this limited range of evidence is effective and monitored appropriately. Annual reports to the university are closely monitored and the internal quality assurance of the programme complies with the university's policies and procedures. However, these reports are insufficiently detailed to support effective action planning for continuous improvement and the quality of many aspects of the programme is not evaluated.

26. The final moderation of written assignments is thorough. There is insufficient moderation of the assessment of practical teaching observation, so inconsistencies in feedback between assessors are not identified. Very few joint observations take place and there is very little moderation of observation paperwork.

27. Procedures for the recruitment and selection of trainees are adequate, although not all trainees have sufficiently broad experience to progress to qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) status. Recently the college has taken steps to widen participation by targeted advertising. Teacher trainers are playing an increasing role in workforce reform, for example through delivering continuing professional development and mentoring staff who need additional support in classroom practice.