

# Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Graduate Teacher Training Partnership

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Provider address

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Inspection dates  
Lead inspector

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Peter Gale HMI

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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. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Graduate Teacher Training Partnership offers employment-based routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for graduate teachers in the primary and secondary age ranges. Trainees in the primary phase train to teach pupils in the 3-7 or 5-11 age range, as appropriate to their employing schools. Secondary trainees mainly train to teach in the 11-16 age range, except for those in subjects such as business studies that are for 14-19 year old students. At the time of the inspection, there were 10 primary and eight secondary trainees.
4. The provider is a partnership between the local authority and schools in the borough. The partnership was established to meet the recruitment needs of the authority's schools by offering an alternative route to QTS for those already living in this high cost housing area where recruitment of newly qualified teachers is difficult. The number of schools participating in the programme varies from year-to-year.
5. This report covers the provision for both primary and secondary phases.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Key strengths

6. The key strengths are:
- The high quality of newly-qualified teachers that the programme produces and their universally strong professional attributes
  - the very high level of commitment to the training across the partnership
  - the close working relationship between the programme manager, his support and the schools, which facilitates excellent communication and rapid response to and anticipation of change
  - the exceptional knowledge and understanding of the borough's schools that enables careful planning of complementary placements and prepares trainees very well to teach in a diverse society
  - the exceptional quality of the central training which is universally praised by mentors and trainees
  - the quality of the selection procedures which identify high quality trainees for the borough schools.

### Recommendations

7. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- quality assure all school-based training to ensure that the setting and monitoring of targets for trainees are consistent across the partnership
  - find ways to communicate effectively to school-based trainers each trainee's initial needs analysis at the time of interview to facilitate the development of personalised training plans
  - improve the auditing of and subsequent structured subject knowledge development for secondary trainees.
8. In order to improve the impact of self-evaluation, the provider should:
- focus evaluation and action planning activities more clearly on trainees' progress and attainment.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

9. Rigorous selection procedures ensure that trainees with the potential to be at least good are consistently recruited to secondary training. Potentially outstanding trainees are recruited in the primary phase, often with a great deal of prior experience. This year, for the first time, there are more primary trainees than secondary and this has resulted in outstanding overall attainment by the time of final assessment. An exceptional knowledge of local schools facilitates careful selection of training environments for trainees. Consequently, a high proportion complete training and are employed in their host schools or others in the borough.

10. All trainees are confident professionals with authority and presence in the classroom. They develop a good rapport with learners and have high expectations for their attainment. They show a real commitment to collaborative team working. Trainees universally exhibit a strong ability to plan for the inclusion of national initiatives in their lessons due to the effectiveness of their own training. Most trainees build interactive learning into their lessons demonstrating an impressive understanding of the use of new technologies.

11. Primary trainees consistently show a good understanding of the pedagogical knowledge required to teach across the primary curriculum due to the relevance of the specialist central training they receive. They are well integrated into their schools and their communication and collaboration with other staff in the school, for example teaching assistants, brings real benefits to their pupils' learning. Secondary trainees generally share the attributes of their primary colleagues but are less secure in carefully matching the work they set to the needs of their learners. Summative assessment is used effectively by all trainees, for example to establish pupils' attainment at the end of a unit of work. Primary trainees demonstrate a good knowledge of the use of formative assessment to develop lesson planning. However, planning to use formative assessment in a lesson context is less strong for both phases.

12. Trainees, with justification, describe a sense of achievement at successfully gaining a place on the provider's training programme. Criteria are consistently applied and those trainees who are accepted are mostly very suitable for the course. This process is aided by a day-long familiarisation visit to the main placement school. Both trainees and schools describe this as a very useful final stage in deciding upon placements. The provider is attempting to recruit a higher proportion of male and minority ethnic trainees through its advertising activities. These efforts are starting to be successful with, for example, the proportion of minority ethnic trainees being set to double next year. An assessment of initial need is carried out as a result of generic and subject expert assessment at the interview stage. However, the transfer of this information to mentors for personalisation of training plans is inconsistent and some are unaware the process has taken place. Opportunities for personalised pre-course learning are therefore missed.

13. The generic training plan provided centrally offers a supportive framework for training and most mentors build on it carefully to individualise a training plan for

their trainees. However, in a small number of cases a regularly reviewed and individualised training plan had not been established. For some secondary trainees, this led to inconsistent approaches to initial subject knowledge auditing. As this aspect of subject training is exclusively in the hands of subject mentors, it means that trainees' development of this important facet sometimes happens too late in the training programme to maximise their progress. The provider has plans to supply subject auditing documents for the next cohort of trainees.

14. Most trainees, in both phases, make at least good progress. The use of resources to support training is good. Primary trainees all make good or better progress because good mentoring is supported by outstanding generic and subject-specific central training. Secondary trainees only receive the generic training. Devolving a proportion of the training grant directly to the mentor's school ensures that training can be tailored to need. The allocation of resource is well understood across the partnership with schools using their own resources well to support training. Trainees are supplied with a laptop computer and this aids them in their teaching and their access to the popular and well-resourced visual learning environment (VLE).

15. The quality of the provision across the partnership is good. Mentors are carefully selected by their schools for their subject or primary phase expertise. All schools demonstrate an exceptional commitment to the programme and reflect that some of their success is due to the high quality of teachers trained through it. Mentor training is differentiated with new mentors receiving a whole day and more experienced mentors half a day before they undertake the role. For most, this is adequate preparation for their role especially as many have experienced mentoring through other programmes or in school. However, some mentors reported a wish for further training especially where they have taken on the role part way through the year or are new to mentoring. The programme manager undertakes joint observations with school-based trainers in all schools and this aids consistency of approach. Excellent communication across the partnership is also facilitated by the mentors' use of the discussion forum on the VLE to share ideas.

16. Assessment procedures are comprehensive, regular and usually accurate. They are clearly referenced to the Standards and provide trainees with a regular snap shot of their development. They are secure at the pass/fail border. A few mentors find it hard to differentiate between good and outstanding attainment using the providers' criteria and this in turn leads to occasional over-estimation of the quality of higher attaining trainees. The diversity of school types and populations means that careful selection of second placements results in a very complementary experience for all trainees. Transfer documentation including an assessment profile makes clear to all parties the Standards focus for the second placement. The level of mentor communication at handover is inconsistent ranging from joint observation of the trainee to documentation transfer only. Occasionally, this together with differing interpretations of assessment can mean that trainees appear to make limited progress in some Standards areas during the second placement.

17. Mentor meetings reflect on lessons learned in the previous week and identify future actions to be undertaken by mentor and trainee. The large majority of these meetings are effective in facilitating trainees' good progress. In the best practice

mentors set clear targets which are related to the Standards. These are then built into lesson planning by the trainee and assessed by means of lesson observation and subsequent mentor meetings. Where this happens, trainees make outstanding progress because school-based training is of the same high quality as central training. Occasionally, trainees are set too many non-specific actions which make it difficult for them to focus on and track their own progress. Trainees receive frequent feedback on their teaching by experienced practitioners. This is consistently strong in the primary phase due to the smaller number of experienced observers working with trainees. In the secondary phase training departments are often very strong due to the strength of participating schools. Here lesson feedback is as strong as in primary. However, in a small number of placements the quality of set targets is less consistent across the department. This can result in either guidance that is limited or targets that are too generic.

18. Trainees' universally strong professional attributes, the commitment to training in the partnership, and the high regard in which they are held in placement schools mean that trainees feel exceptionally well supported. They are aware of their rights and responsibilities and how to resolve problems or raise complaints. The partnership has ensured that trainees would feel very secure in reporting discriminatory, harassment or bullying incidents had there been any. The choice and duration of the second school placement means that all trainees have significant complementary and contrasting opportunities to teach in schools with students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. This, coupled with excellent generic training in diversity, has prepared trainees very well to teach in multi-cultural Britain.

## The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 2

19. The provider has good capacity to sustain the high quality that exists, and to secure and maintain improvement where required as evidenced by the improving attainment of trainees. The provider's leadership and management are strong. The programme manager and his administrative support have complementary skills and form a dedicated and resourceful unit that has high level of credibility with schools in the local authority. Communications across the partnership are rapid and effective. Schools praise the administration of the programme and say that everything they expect to happen does.

20. Good evaluation systems are in place covering most aspects of provision. The provider gathers evaluative data about all central training sessions from both trainees and trainers. It supplements this by benchmarking its provision against other providers and through its development group of school representatives. An innovation this year involves an on-line end of course evaluation for mentors to match trainees' feedback. The hard data collected are supplemented by a great deal of qualitative evaluation by the programme manager through his close working relationship with the schools and his regular visits. Information gathered has been used well to inform the management team about the quality and impact of most aspects of the provision.

21. Professional development mentors and the programme manager carry out regular joint observations with mentors to moderate the quality of lesson observation feedback to trainees. There is not yet a quality assurance programme for all school-based training and in particular mentor-mentee meetings. This explains some of the inconsistencies in target setting and review. However, where mentors and trainees closely follow the comprehensive documentation or mentors are experienced in their role, very good training is provided. The external examiner is clear about their role and makes a useful contribution to course evaluation; they provide reports that are helpful in assessing the accuracy of assessment judgements and the security of the pass/fail border. The reports are not yet as helpful in identifying shortfalls in trainees' outcomes related to the QTS Standards to inform future improvement planning.

22. The programme manager has a great depth of understanding of employment-based routes to QTS, in part through his national role with the Training and Development Agency. This and his close working relationship with schools have helped the outstanding anticipation of and flexible response to change. Consultant support is also used judiciously to decide on changes to the course. Consideration of national priorities has been built into the central training very well with local authority and school-based experts used for delivery. Secondary trainees can articulate 14-19 developments and build them into their lesson planning where appropriate. The use of the lead literacy schools for training means that primary trainees have a very good understanding of the implications of the review into the teaching of phonics and early reading. At school level, secondary mentors have an excellent understanding of subject-specific national priorities and their primary colleagues are equally well informed in their phase. This is due to the strength of the mentor team. The provider is, therefore, extremely well equipped to deal with changes to this type of provision. A particular example of this is the maintenance of and/or improvement to all aspects of provision while the local authority has undergone significant reorganisation.

23. Development planning is a centralised activity undertaken by the local authority. This has resulted in plans that dovetail with central systems and procedures. The focus of the strategic plans, both long and short term, is on the maintenance of viability of provision rather than outcomes for individual trainees. This means that actions taken are not always sharply focused on the small number of improvements required to accelerate trainees' progress and make the provision outstanding. Evaluative data are used to inform the improvement plans and have impacted positively on the quality and quantity of provision. The plans in their raw form are not widely shared with schools. However, mentors and headteachers report that they are happy with this arrangement and expect to be informed of their role in implementing the plans through comprehensive handbooks. This means that not all school-based trainers are always aware of the origin of changes to the partnership. Those on the development group are better informed. The impact of actions taken is assessed against the intended outcome in terms of trainees' progress and achievements. This has contributed effectively to the progress made by trainees as shown by their steadily improving attainment and the sustained high levels of completion and employment over recent years. Improvements over time indicate a good track record of making decisions and driving continuous improvement. This



includes improvements to the VLE, more comprehensive evaluation of training, enhanced central training and leading literacy work.

## 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?		2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	1
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?	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1

### 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?	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?	1
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?	2

<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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