

# King's College London

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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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

### Explanation of terms used in this report

Attainment is defined as the standard reached by a trainee at the end of their training.

Progress is judged in terms of how well a trainee has developed professionally from their starting point to the standard reached at the time of the inspection or at a suitable review point.

Achievement is judged in terms of the progress made and the standard reached by a trainee at the time of the inspection or at a recent assessment review point.

## The provider

3. King's College London provides initial teacher training in the following secondary subjects: classics; English; information and communication technology; mathematics; modern foreign languages; religious education; and science. Trainees in all subjects are prepared to teach across the full 11 to 19 age range. All are expected to work at masters-level to be awarded a post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE). At the time of the inspection there were 191 trainees on the course. The provider works in partnership with schools across the London region and with a small number outside. King's College also undertakes nationally and internationally respected research in education, not least its work on assessment. This research base, within and across all subjects, makes a significant contribution to teacher training and to the professional development of practising teachers. University tutors work with teachers across the region on masters and doctorate programmes further strengthening the partnership.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:

- the quality of the trainees and their ability to critically reflect to improve their practice
- the ability of trainees to combine the elements of the course to secure their progress
- the quality of the monitoring of trainees' achievement and the impact this has on their progress and professional development
- the quality of central training in the way it prepares trainees for teaching and ongoing professional development, and the use of the tutors' research to ensure that this is at the cutting edge
- the constant reinforcement of trainees' deep understanding of the planning, teaching and assessment cycle
- establishing trainees' deep understanding of subject pedagogy and what constitutes good teaching in their subject early in the course to provide a secure framework for their professional development
- the early identification of trainees' strengths and areas for development and the subsequent actions that lead to trainees making good progress from the start of the course
- the high levels of individual support for trainees.

### Recommendations

5. In order to further improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:

- reduce further the variation in the quality of mentoring across the partnership
- ensure that improvement plans are sharply focused on the outcomes for trainees and that all professional tutors and mentors are clear about the priorities for improvement and their role in securing these.

### Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

6. The outcomes of the training at King's College London are outstanding. Well above half of the trainees are judged to be outstanding by the end of the course, with very few judged to be satisfactory; this has been maintained over at least three years. While there are variations in trainees' attainment across the secondary subjects, these are not significant. The attainment of trainees is impressive as the provider works in a number of shortage subjects. There are no significant differences in the achievement of any identifiable groups of trainees; where there are differences in attainment, these are consistent with trainees' starting points. Retention rates are high; they are at least in line with national figures and well

above the average for London providers. The very large majority of trainees secure teaching posts, many in the London region; this is also well above the national and regional average.

7. The trainees exhibit a wide range of notable strengths. They have a deep understanding of a repeating cycle of planning, teaching and assessment. Their understanding of subject pedagogy and the application of their excellent subject knowledge to teaching are exemplary. Very early in the course trainees establish a clear idea of what good teaching in their subject looks like and this provides an extremely secure framework for their professional development throughout the training. They do this through establishing excellent understanding of the links between theory and practice, and combine this with a wide range of strategies for planning, teaching and assessment of learners' progress and achievement. The clarity and depth of trainees' understanding of assessment is far beyond what is expected of trainees at this stage of a one-year course. The high quality of trainees' self-evaluation and critical reflection is a key feature in the outstanding progress many make. All have an admirable clarity of understanding of where they are in their professional development, where they want to be and how to get there. Trainees' commitment and enthusiasm for teaching and for their subjects is inspiring. All trainees are very well prepared to teach in a diverse society; their focus on individual learners equips them well for this. At the time of the inspection, near the start of the second school placement, many trainees' thinking is ahead of their practice. This is particularly the case in aspects such as assessment and differentiation. Nevertheless, they know exactly how they will develop these high-order teaching skills.

8. There is a very clear series of events that explains why the outcomes for trainees are so good: the provider recruits very strong trainees; withdrawals from the course are few; the overwhelming majority make at least good progress to attain at a high level; the trainees are very well prepared for teaching and for furthering their professional development; and more than 90% secure teaching posts, well above the national average. The provider is very successful in achieving its aim of turning out high quality teachers with the potential to become subject, and other, leaders early in their careers.

9. The provider attracts good numbers of strong candidates in all subjects, including those where it is often difficult to recruit. The intake represents well the diversity across the London region. Rigorous and thorough selection procedures ensure that the trainees recruited have the potential to become good and, in many cases, outstanding teachers. Those recruited also have the intellectual capacity to cope well with the demands of the course. They are able to work at masters-level and make good sense of the various elements of the course, including the theoretical aspects, and combine these to help them make progress as teachers. A real strength is their ability to critically reflect on their practice in order to improve. Selection procedures lead to good early identification of trainees' strengths and areas for development. Very effective use of an early tutorial and discussions with mentors, make sure that a very large majority of trainees make good progress from the start of the course.

10. The very large majority of trainees make good, and often better, progress throughout the course. This is the case wherever they are in the partnership. In

addition to extremely high quality central training, informed well by tutors' extensive classroom-centred research activity and the strengths of the trainees themselves, there are some particular features of the course that contribute to the high quality outcomes for trainees. Throughout the first long school placement, trainees are in the college every Monday. This enables tutors to monitor trainees' progress as well as ensure that there are very strong links between central training and school-based work. Throughout this stage of the course, tutors constantly challenge trainees to think more deeply and broadly. These college-based days are also used extremely well for collaborative working and the sharing of best practice. There is also a sequence of frequent individual tutorials throughout the course. These, together with tutor visits during school placements, also contribute to close monitoring of trainees' progress, the refining of targets and the setting of higher levels of challenge, and to very high quality personal support. The two assignments, both assessed at masters-level, are extremely effective in supporting trainees in making links between theory, policy and practice.

11. School-based mentors undertake frequent observations of trainees' teaching and generally provide at least good feedback and guidance on the practicalities of teaching. They use a range of training strategies including collaborative teaching, coaching, and focused observations of other teachers throughout the two school placements. The strength of trainees' understanding of good subject teaching enables them to absorb the advice they receive in schools and use it to make at least good progress. There is variation in the quality of mentoring across the partnership; some is outstanding and none is less than satisfactory. While they carry out their coordinating role well, a small number of school-based professional co-ordinating mentors do not recognise their key role as lead mentors. This variation does not impact negatively on trainees because of the strength of trainees and their ability to manage their own professional development, and the close monitoring and quality of support from college tutors.

## The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 1

12. The provider has outstanding capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees, with more than half consistently judged to be outstanding and most of the rest good. Retention and employment rates are always well above national averages; the provider is successful in achieving its aim of supplying high quality teachers, many of whom secure employment in the London region. Since the previous inspection, the provider has further developed the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning to sustain these high quality outcomes. This is indicative of a culture of always striving to improve; in this the provider uses well its strengths in research to drive improvement in a systematic and evidence-based way. This culture permeates the extremely strong team of university trainers, all experts in their own fields as well as in teacher training, who have a unified sense of purpose.

13. Self-evaluation is comprehensive and rigorous, covers all aspects of the provision, and is focused well on the monitoring and analysis of the outcomes for

trainees. Evidence is gathered from a wide range of sources, including trainees and school-based trainers. External examiners' reports provide sharp evaluative comments. Self-evaluation leads to absolute clarity about what is working well and what needs to be improved or developed further. In recent years, in some subjects, there has been fluctuation in the proportion of trainees judged to be satisfactory. This has been rigorously investigated to determine any implications for selection, training, assessment procedures or the support for individual trainees. The provider is fully aware of the variations in the quality of school-based training across the partnership. Again, this has been systematically analysed. In both cases, the provider has put in place well-considered responses that are very carefully monitored and evaluated to determine their impact on trainees. A range of innovative approaches are either being tried or planned to deal with, for example, difficulties in achieving high attendance at mentor meetings. The quality of the approach to improvement planning reinforces the provider's outstanding capacity to improve.

14. The outcomes of self-evaluation and improvement plans are fully discussed with the partnership, both to encourage ideas and to keep schools fully informed of developments. However, the quality of written action plans does not fully reflect the high quality of the improvement planning process; they lack focus on the outcomes for trainees. This does mean that not all schools are clear of the priorities for improvement or about their role in securing these. A small number of schools would also appreciate more feedback on how well they undertake their role to inform their own self-evaluation.

15. The provider is outstanding in anticipating and responding to change; in many ways, the high quality of the research in King's College London means that the provider is often setting the pace. The college is at the cutting edge in subject developments, as well as other key areas such as assessment. Where the provider responds to external initiatives, such as in dealing with changes in the secondary curriculum and developments in the 14 to 19 provision, this is undertaken extremely thoroughly to ensure that trainees are very well prepared for the impact of these on schools and on their own practice. Mentor meetings often include aspects of professional development for the mentors themselves; in some subjects these meetings are a valuable source of subject development that benefit trainees, mentors' own professional development and their schools. University tutors are extremely well informed about current developments in schools nationally, and in London schools in particular. They use this to constantly review the subject and professional programmes to ensure that trainees are fully prepared. They also recognise that the quality of their trainees means that they need to prepare them for subject, and other, leadership roles in schools; they do this extremely well and add significant value to trainees. Developments in the assessment of trainees now provide a very good balance ensuring that trainees receive clear feedback on their overall professional development while ensuring that they are clear about their progress against all of the standards required for qualified teacher status.

## 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

How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	1
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1
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

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?	1
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	1
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?	1

<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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