

# Nottingham Trent University

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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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

## 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. Initial teacher education (ITE) has been delivered at Nottingham Trent University and its predecessor organisations since 1960. The university offers a range of primary and secondary programmes which are delivered at undergraduate and postgraduate level, including employment-based routes and Teach First. The university is also a provider of initial teacher training for the learning and skills sector, with full-time and part-time courses including specialist qualifications for Skills for Life practitioners. Teach First was not inspected during this inspection.

## A commentary on the provision

4. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees in all four phases inspected is good. This does not mean the overall quality is the same across primary, secondary, employment-based route and further education. Inspectors found training and assessment and the quality of partnerships across all phases to be good. They also found differences. For example, the extent to which the provision promotes equality of opportunity, values diversity and eliminates harassment and unlawful discrimination is outstanding in all phases except for further education; in this phase it is satisfactory.
5. The provider's capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes is good in the primary, secondary and employment-based route and satisfactory in further education. This difference reflects the strengths found particularly in the primary and secondary phases. In primary, there have been significant improvements in provision and trainees' outcomes over the last two years. In secondary, good outcomes for trainees have been maintained. In both these phases the way in which leadership at all levels anticipates change, and prepares for and responds to national and local initiatives have been judged by inspectors to be outstanding.
6. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
  - the excellent deployment of resources and the outstanding way in which the primary, secondary and employment-based route phases promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination
  - the way trainees in the primary, employment-based route and the further education phases reflect on their practice
  - the way trainees in the primary, secondary and employment-based route phases plan for the differing needs of pupils in their classes
  - the commitment to the partnership across all phases of schools and colleges.
7. There are particularly strong features in some programmes that could be applied to other programmes or aspects of the provision:
  - the way in which the primary, secondary and employment-based routes accurately assess the attainment of trainees.
8. The following areas, relating specifically to the further education provision, require further development to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:
  - implementing a coherent system to assess trainees' achievement
  - increasing the rigour and frequency of the monitoring of mentoring and subject specific support, in order to ensure greater consistency in the quality of work-place training across the partnership.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

9. Nottingham Trent University works in partnership with approximately 300 schools to provide primary ITE courses. It offers a four-year BA (Hons) course which prepares trainees to teach pupils in either the primary or early years age ranges; a one-year Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE NQF level 6) and a one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE NQF level 7) which prepares trainees to teach in the primary age range. At the time of the inspection there were 517 trainees.

### Key strengths

10. The key strengths are:

- trainees' ability to assess pupils' learning accurately and plan learning for different abilities as a direct result of the University's excellent capacity to anticipate change and respond to national initiatives
- the cohesion and strength of centre-based and school-based training, which enables trainees to reflect critically and link the theory and practice of teaching effectively
- the tutors' up-to-date knowledge of current primary practice which enhances trainees' ability to meet the Standards at a high level
- the quality and diversity of partnership schools and extra placements in alternative settings, which enable trainees to make good or better progress and to be very well prepared to teach in a culturally diverse society
- the excellent deployment of resources, including the virtual learning environment (VLE), which enhances opportunities for trainees to further their academic and professional development immediately after selection
- the quality of the centre-based training and the very high level of collaboration between tutors which enables them to know trainees very well and respond to their individual needs and improve their well-being.

### Recommendations

11. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment to the outstanding level, the provider/partnership should:
  - simplify the newly introduced progress tracking system to ensure that trainees and mentors are aware of the next development steps for trainees to enable more to move from good to outstanding
  - involve specialist staff from partnership schools more widely in the mentoring of trainees during placements.
12. In order to improve the way it plans and takes action for improvement, the partnership should:

- improve the communication to schools so that headteachers and mentors are fully aware of the current priorities for improvement.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

13. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good.
14. The proportion of trainees who attained the Standards at a good or outstanding level in the last three years has improved rapidly. This is especially so at the outstanding level. There are strengths in trainees' professional attributes; in their understanding of how to plan for learning including their ability to assess pupils' work; and in their subject knowledge of the primary curriculum in English, mathematics and science which enable them to plan and teach lessons of good quality. In addition, trainees are encouraged to reflect on their teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. As a consequence trainees set challenging targets for themselves and are constantly reflecting on their own practice in how to meet the needs of different groups of pupils within their classes. Importantly, since the last inspection, trainees' knowledge and understanding of how to teach pupils from diverse contexts have improved.
15. Recruitment and selection procedures are good and are based on the characteristics of good teaching, academic attainment and applicants' prior experiences in schools. They are rigorous and involve both university tutors and staff from partnership schools in the interview process. A particular strength of the provider is the feedback that all trainees receive after selection. This feedback is personalised to any areas of weakness and candidates are signposted to the university's VLE where they can access on-line modules. This ensures that trainees are able to improve their academic and professional development and make progress immediately after selection. The proportion of trainees gaining employment in partnership schools is high and the proportion of trainees who withdraw from the course is declining over time. This is due to very thorough analysis and exit interviews which result in changes to the recruitment and selection procedures. The proportion of males on the course is well above sector averages and is improving. The university's success in recruiting other under-represented groups, despite its best efforts, has been less successful; for example, the recruitment of trainees from a minority ethnic heritage remains slightly below average.
16. Trainees have a thorough understanding of the attributes needed to become a successful teacher. They are set a good range of pre-course tasks and take the opportunities afforded to engage in mini action research in schools and choose for themselves areas of interest to study. Trainees are required to develop subject knowledge for teaching files in English, mathematics and science which contain up-to-date journal articles; references to professional bodies; and very good examples of web-based resources – all assessed against the Standards and ensuring that trainees are well prepared and up-to-date with current thinking.

17. Training and assessment are good. There is a good balance between centre-based and school-based training. This enables trainees to link the theory and practice of teaching well. Subject tutors model good practice. The expert subject knowledge of the tutors is complemented by specialists from the wider community and partnership schools. A particular feature of the provider is the many opportunities that trainees have to attend placements outside main stream education. All Year 1 and Year 3 BA trainees attend a week's residential visit to Anglesey and there are other weekly placements built across the course for trainees to choose placements which extend their knowledge of education. Trainees have, for example, undertaken placements in special schools, children's homes, orphanages and hospitals both in England and abroad. Trainees are very positive about these opportunities and say that they give them a wider understanding of children's learning.
18. The cohesion between the taught sessions, the professional development tasks carried out in schools and marked assignments is good. Course work is challenging and trainees receive detailed feedback. This enables them to make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Trainees' progress against the Standards is regularly reviewed and a new progress tracker is encouraging trainees to be reflective about their practice and think about what they need to do next to make progress. The provider reviews attainment at many points during the year and any perceived weaknesses are identified which results in extra sessions. An example of this is extra lectures on phonics teaching before Key Stage 1 final placements.
19. Trainees on school placements have weekly meetings with their mentors and good dialogue enables the trainees to set weekly targets for development. However, the procedures for recording trainees' weekly targets are cumbersome and trainees' files do not always clearly show how targets are being picked up from one lesson to the next. Link tutors visit trainees on placement every two weeks and carry out joint observations with mentors. A three-way moderation meeting is carried out at the end of each placement involving the mentor, trainee and link tutor to assess trainees' progress. Mentors are also invited to moderation meetings within the university to moderate the standard of trainees' files at the end of placements. Both mentors and trainees see this as a useful tool in keeping mentors up to date and in helping them to assess trainees' progress compared with trainees in other settings accurately.
20. The provider is very alert to the needs of individuals with identified areas of weakness. It takes timely and effective action to ensure that trainees meet their potential. The range of resources which complement the centre-based training is excellent. Trainees report that resources are always available to them and help to keep them up to date. There is, for example, an extensive range of teaching materials available for use on school placements especially for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The VLE is an excellent tool in allowing trainees to access documents and study materials which are up-to-date.

21. The quality and diversity of the partnership schools are good and many provide excellent training venues. Trainees experience training in a number of different schools in a range of socio-economic settings. The provider checks the experiences of every individual trainee closely and if they think that a trainee has had limited experience in one area they seek extra placements to plug gaps, for example in teaching children with English as an additional language (EAL). This diversity supports trainees' understanding of how to teach pupils with a range of needs. Training for school-based trainers is well organised and they are kept up to date with expectations through pre-placement meetings which are well attended because supply cover is provided. However, there is scope to use the wider expertise within individual schools to help with the assessment of trainees' specific subject knowledge.
22. The common equality and diversity theme runs through all of the provider's documentation. Consequently, trainees are well aware of their rights and responsibilities. All trainees receive training on child protection and safeguarding children to prepare them for their placements. The provider responds very quickly to any areas of concern from schools or trainees and timely and effective action ensues. Taught sessions and placements are adapted well to meet the needs of individual trainees with family or other commitments which aids their personal well-being. Pastoral guidance is excellent and trainees report that they feel very well supported by tutors who 'go the extra mile' for them.

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

Grade: 2

23. The provider has good capacity to continue improving the outcomes for trainees. The monitoring of quality and consistency is rigorous across the partnership and involves all stakeholders. A particular feature is the regular review points throughout the year which enables the provider to make quick and effective changes to the provision to improve attainment and progress for trainees. This complements the annual cycle of monitoring and self-evaluation. All aspects are formally monitored and evaluated: for example, the central training; trainees' attainments; the consistency of grades; and the quality of partnership schools. The provider seeks additional ways of gaining a perspective on trainees' outcomes. For example, external examiners provide detailed and helpful reports on strengths and weaknesses. These reports highlight a number of issues which have been subsequently addressed in the primary phase development plans for this year.
24. All aspects of the monitoring of the provision are discussed between stakeholders. At the strategic level, headteachers are members of committees such as the Primary Partnership Management Group (PPMG) which has improved the consistency of mentoring and placements across the partnership. However, during the inspection it was clear that while partnership headteachers and mentors are involved in improvements at this level, individual



schools are not always clear what the current priorities for improvement in the action plan are or what their role is in bringing about improvements.

25. All issues from the last inspection have been tackled and there is evidence of particular success in improving the focus on diversity and inclusion; in subject knowledge, assessing pupils' progress and in giving more specific subject feedback on trainees' teaching. This is tracked by link tutors at key points during school placements.
26. The management and quality assurance systems are well-developed. The comprehensive partnership handbook outlines procedures and schools are sent specific placement handbooks and school-based trainers report this is a useful tool. Tutors know trainees very well, they work closely together, often across the different courses including the employment-based route, and the good progress of trainees lies at the centre of their work. They make very regular visits to schools as link tutors, effectively ensuring equality and consistency of grades across the partnership. Trainees welcome the joint observations from tutors, which help them to know how well they are doing. Recently introduced mentor moderation is valued by mentors and trainees and helps mentors to assess trainees' progress and attainment accurately.
27. The provider has shown that it is able to anticipate change, and responds to national and local initiatives in an outstanding way. Excellent practice from within partnership schools is used well to keep training up to date and ensure that trainees are prepared to incorporate new initiatives into their teaching. Inspectors found that new initiatives and recently published learning materials are already embedded across the course and in trainees' files. This has had a good impact on trainees' ability to assess pupils' learning during placements and to be prepared for the rigours of employment. Newly qualified teachers and employing headteachers interviewed during the inspection all commented on the strength of trainees' ability to teach pupils with special educational needs and with EAL. Also commented on favourably was the trainees' ability to understand and implement recommendations from the Williams review of mathematics teaching and the Rose report on the teaching of reading. Trainees are also well prepared to understand the proposed changes to the primary curriculum and are beginning to link subjects together under cross-curricular themes in their planning because they take part in extra study weeks based around cross curricular themes.
28. The provider's self-evaluation is accurate in its judgements and shows a clear line of sight from monitoring through self-evaluation to action planning and subsequent change. For example, useful case studies show that the provider is analysing data in terms of trainees' age, gender, ethnicity and disabilities and comparing the attainment of different groups of trainees. Priorities identified through this process have led to improvements in attainment against specific Standards for the majority of trainees in the current cohorts and there is little difference in attainment between identified groups of trainees.
29. Action planning is detailed and based securely on feedback from trainees and schools. It is clearly expressed in terms of improving outcomes for trainees.

The improvements which have taken place over the last two years are impressive with rapidly improving attainment and satisfaction from trainees' partnership schools and employing headteachers.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Context

30. Nottingham Trent University offers ITE leading to qualified teacher status and the award of a BA (Hons) in Secondary Design and Technology Education and a professional graduate certificate in education (NQF level 6) or a post-graduate certificate in education (NQF level 7) in the following subjects: across the 11 to 16 age range - music and design and technology; across the 11 to 18 age range - ICT; with pathways for 11 to 16 or 11 to 18 - English mathematics and science; and across the 14 to 19 age range - ICT (14-19 Diploma), engineering (14-19 Diploma) and business education. At the time of the inspection there were around 230 trainees on secondary programmes. The partnership includes about 100 secondary schools across eight local authorities.

### Key strengths

31. The key strengths are:

- the high level of consistency and coherence in the quality of training across the programme and the partnership, leading to the good progress made by trainees
- the strong leadership and management of the programme and the effectiveness of actions taken to respond to change and initiatives, both at programme and subject level
- the effectiveness of the selection and recruitment arrangements, which ensure trainees with a wide diversity of backgrounds and experience are able to access the training and make good progress
- the commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, reflected both in the training and the excellent support and guidance provided, to ensure all trainees can fulfil their potential
- the outstanding deployment of resources to support training at all levels
- the focus on developing trainees' subject knowledge and their enthusiasm for learning, within and beyond their specialism.

### Recommendations

32. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:
- extend the opportunities for trainees to develop their abilities to reflect critically on their practice, in order to maximise their potential
  - ensure all those involved in training and assessment have a clear and shared understanding of what it means for trainees to make outstanding progress
  - ensure improvement priorities are more precisely targeted on securing outstanding outcomes and are shared more widely across the partnership.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

33. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good with some significant strengths.
34. The overall attainment of trainees is good. While there are differences in attainment across the subjects, this reflects variations in the profile of recruitment in subject areas. Inspectors agree with the provider's own assessment that trainees make good progress. In the past two years around 80% of trainees were judged to be good or better with nearly 30% judged to be outstanding. The provider's data on the progress of the current trainees indicates that results may improve further in 2010. Trainees make this good progress because of the consistently high quality of the training across the partnership and the careful attention paid to meeting individual needs. This is reflected both in the way training is tailored to match trainees' emerging strengths and needs and in the very high quality of the personal support and guidance provided for trainees.
35. In a number of areas of the Standards, trainees demonstrate very significant strengths. Across all subjects, trainees demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge which they use effectively. Trainees' skills in building effective relationships and managing classrooms are also strong as is their ability to match learning to the needs of pupils. There are some significant strengths in specific subject areas. In music, ICT, business education and design and technology, for example, trainees have opportunities to explore some of the most innovative aspects of teaching their subject and integrate these effectively within their practice. In mathematics and science, the strong programme to enhance trainees' subject knowledge is enabling a wide range of trainees from differing levels of prior specialist expertise to make good progress. In English, trainees have a readiness to tackle some of the more challenging aspects of subject teaching such as work on poetry from diverse cultural traditions. Where the progress of trainees is less consistent is in relation to their ability to reflect critically on their teaching in order to move their subject expertise and classroom practice to the very highest level.
36. The process of recruitment is rigorous and reflects the strong commitment of the provider to promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity. The selection arrangements are carefully monitored to ensure consistency. Good use is made of mentors at interviews, a significant improvement from the situation at the previous inspection. The provider recruits well in most secondary subjects, although, despite strenuous efforts, the targets are not achieved in design and technology, engineering, mathematics and science. As a result the university has negotiated a re-profiling of targets for these subjects in 2010/11.
37. Care has been taken to ensure the portfolio of subjects and the pattern of recruitment matches the needs of schools within the partnership. As a result, the proportion of trainees who find teaching employment is above the national average. Success rates are high and have been sustained over recent years. Withdrawal rates are low although they have increased slightly. The provider investigates any instances of non-completion carefully and has, for example,

analysed reasons why a relatively high proportion of male trainees does not complete the training. Good use is made of individualised pre-course action plans to support trainees. In English, for example, very early and precise identification of individual strengths and weaknesses ensures all trainees make rapid progress from the outset of their training.

38. Overall, the quality of training and assessment to ensure trainees fulfil their potential is good. The professional studies course is effective and integrates well with trainees' subject studies. Assignments make a good contribution to trainees' progress. The arrangements for promoting subject knowledge are particularly effective and help foster the enthusiasm modelled by trainees in their teaching.
39. An outstanding feature of the provision is the very effective use made of resources. Trainees are clear that they have excellent access to the materials and equipment they require. There are particular strengths in a number of subject areas. In design and technology, for example, significant investment and co-location of the subject with other related areas of the university provision mean the facilities to support training are now excellent. Very effective use is made of a wide range of expertise from within and beyond the university in, for example, music and business education to enrich the training. There has been a strong and highly effective investment of resources in personnel to support and develop the partnership. This is exemplified most notably by the group of very experienced and effective link tutors who, together with the outreach tutor, play a key role in securing the high quality of school placements. A key resource providing excellent support for all those involved in the partnership is the university's VLE.
40. There is a high level of consistent good practice across schools in the partnership. Schools are very committed to the training provided at the university. Many mentors are ex-trainees from the university. Good use is made of school-based staff in the central training programme. Training by mentors in schools is of a high standard and complements the university programme well. The high quality of the documentation provided by the university, together with clear expectations about the mentoring role, helps to secure consistent practice. The effective use of a common lesson observation proforma, for example, ensures all trainees receive clear feedback on their teaching and are provided with useful targets for improvement. Effective use is made of interim assessments to track progress across the Standards and ensure information about trainees' needs is communicated across different phases of the training. While assessment is generally accurate, mentors are not always sure how to identify and drive towards outstanding performance. As a result some of the target-setting is not as aspirational as it could be and judgements of trainees' performance on the good/outstanding grade boundary are not always entirely reliable.
41. The arrangements for promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in the partnership are outstanding. This is reflected in the recruitment practices, the training programmes and the support provided for trainees. The provider recruits from minority ethnic groups well and has a strong track record of

enabling those with disabilities to make good progress to achieve their potential. The commitment to valuing diversity is reflected, for example, in music where the selection arrangements reflect a commitment to equality of access to music education. This commitment to equality and diversity is embedded within the training through, for example, a series of elective studies enabling trainees to extend their understanding of a wide range of issues related to inclusion. Additional training sessions have been incorporated into the programme to address specific issues related to ethnic and cultural diversity, particularly for those trainees whose school experience has not included these issues. The support for the welfare of trainees is very good. Their evaluations of the training are particularly positive about the quality of the personal tutor support they receive. Considerable attention is given to supporting any trainees with specific difficulties or needs. The progress made by trainees is tracked very carefully using a comprehensive data analysis programme and action is taken promptly to address any issues which arise.

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

Grade: 2

42. The provider has good capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to take the actions required to secure improvements where necessary. There is a track record of continuous improvement over the last three years. Improvements to the provision and outcomes for trainees since the previous inspection have been good. In particular, the arrangements for ensuring trainees' needs are identified at an early stage have become a strength of the provision.
43. The university has strong procedures for securing consistency and evaluating the quality of the provision. Good use is made of external examiners' reports to highlight priorities for improvement. Feedback from trainees and school-based trainers is carefully analysed. Trainees' evaluations of their placements are shared with the school. The link tutors and outreach tutor play a central and highly effective role, working alongside the school ITE co-ordinators, in monitoring training in schools and intervening where issues arise. Subject tutors also monitor and evaluate the quality of school provision and the provider has identified the opportunity to develop a more systematic process of reporting on training quality within schools.
44. The provider uses its well-defined de-selection procedures where a school finds it cannot provide an appropriate level of training. Good use is being made of joint observation and cross moderation to help secure reliable and consistent judgements; for example, English and mathematics staff are working closely together to compare judgements about trainees' performance. These arrangements are not yet fully effective in always ensuring consistency in the quality of target-setting and judgements at the good/outstanding boundary. Some mentors expressed concern about how to help trainees provide evidence of outstanding performance in certain areas of the Standards.

45. Increasing use is being made of the systems for collecting data on trainees' performance. For example, the programme leaders identified that last year's trainees under-achieved in the standard related to the effective use of data. As a result changes were made to the training and the current trainees are demonstrating more confidence in this area. While these systems are giving useful information to support the evaluation and improvement of the provision, the programme leaders are aware that there is scope to extend this further to establish more precise targets for measuring success and, for example, in comparing performance across different subjects. Subject leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the training well, although again there is scope to use the data on trainee progress more sharply in this process.
46. The provision benefits from strong strategic leadership and management at all levels. This is particularly reflected in the excellent way the provider anticipates change and prepares for and responds to national and local initiatives. The provider is actively exploring ways of developing more innovative patterns of placements across the partnership. For example, the partnership development group has been involved in extended and well-focused discussions of ways of developing the partnership using the Training and Development Agency's self-review tool. The main professional studies programme and its related assignments have been re-structured to focus on the Every Child Matters agenda. All subject areas demonstrate excellent practice in responding to wider developments including the new Diplomas and changes in the National Curriculum. These initiatives underpin the way trainees are demonstrating strengths in integrating some of the most innovative practice within their teaching. The programme of professional development for subject tutors to ensure they keep abreast of current initiatives is strong. In music, for example, there has been active involvement with Musical Futures and in business education with the business administration and finance Diplomas. In design and technology a systems and control curriculum development project has been developed in partnership across the region.
47. Improvement planning across the partnership is good. The provider has a definite grasp of the priorities for improvement and embeds these within clear action plans at both programme and subject level well. These are reviewed at regular points across the year to identify progress and re-focus the priorities where necessary. While success criteria are identified, these are not always sharply focused on measurable impact on trainees' performance. The priorities for improvement are shared across the partnership through, for example, the annual partnership conference. Attendance at mentor meetings, an issue raised at the time of the previous inspection, remains modest. In practice, few of the personnel in the schools visited could identify the priorities for improvement or identify ways in which they are able to play an active role in self-assessment of the provision.
48. The partnership's commitment to improvement was reflected throughout the inspection. A key feature of the school visits were the high expectations modelled by all those involved in training. During the inspection, leaders and managers at all levels were keen to enter into professional dialogue and share their ideas about ways of developing the provision further.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Context

49. The employment-based route to qualified teacher status at Nottingham Trent University comprises the graduate teacher programme. It offers a one year initial teacher training programme in the primary and secondary phases. Sixty days of training are provided through the partnership with the remainder of the trainees' time spent in school experience. As part of the training, there is the option for trainees to gain the award of Professional Graduate Certificate in Education. At the time of the inspection there were 72 trainees on the course of whom 31 were in primary and 41 in secondary.

### Key strengths

50. The key strengths are:
- the commitment of trainees, and the way in which they reflect on their own practice in order to strengthen their own teaching and improve outcomes for the pupils they teach
  - the very good pedagogical feedback given by school-based mentors, which gives clear guidance to trainees about how to develop their teaching practice
  - the strong commitment of the provider and partner schools which promotes outstanding equality of opportunity, ensures the consistency of training across schools and contributes well to the good progress trainees make
  - the good quality training and systems for assessment, such as the provider's 'characteristics of performance', which enable trainees to follow individual programmes where appropriate and demonstrate the potential to become good quality teachers
  - the outstanding deployment of resources to support training
  - the very good outcomes consistently attained by secondary trainees.

### Recommendations

51. To enhance the improvements in primary trainees' attainment, the provider should:
- continue their good focus on developing trainees' subject knowledge and build on existing good practice, to enable all school-based mentors to give good quality subject-specific feedback.
52. To sustain the good progress trainees make the provider should:
- include in their appropriate plans for improvement what benefits they expect trainees to attain.



## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

53. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good.
54. Trainees' attainment is good. They make good progress and meet the Standards well. The result is they are well equipped to teach in their chosen age ranges and specialisms. The key characteristics of trainees include their ability to reflect not only on their own teaching but also the learning of the pupils in their classes. For example, one trainee, typical of many, considered how effectively his choice of reading material challenged all ability groups in his class. In addition, trainees are increasingly confident of finding ways of assessing their pupils' progress and using this information to plan future learning activities. These characteristics are demonstrated in trainees' planning which shows good attempts to meet the differing needs of pupils, including the more able.
55. Over time the attainment of secondary trainees has been higher than that of primary trainees. The gap narrowed last year and current assessments of this year's cohort of primary trainees suggest it may be eradicated. The sustaining of secondary attainment and the improvement of primary attainment is the result of the provider recruiting the right trainees for the course, good quality training and assessment personalised to trainees' needs, consistency across the partnership and the outstanding deployment of resources. Another key factor is the accuracy of the assessment of trainees by link tutors and school-based mentors.
56. The recruitment and selection of trainees are good. From the very beginning, prospective trainees have to prove their commitment and demonstrate their potential. Part of the interview process, for example, requires secondary PE and music candidates to perform to demonstrate their skill competency. Information from these interviews is used to inform trainees' individual training plans well. The success of the recruitment and selection procedures is demonstrated by the increase in trainees completing the course. In addition the provider has made concerted efforts to improve the proportion of men and those from ethnic minorities on the course. While the increase in minority ethnic trainees has been small, the increase in men, particularly in primary, has been more successful. For example, current recruitment figures show approximately one third of primary trainees next year will be male.
57. All aspects of training and assessment are good and enable the trainees to meet the Standards well. Both primary and secondary trainees benefit from teaching experience in two schools over two key stages. Training is enhanced by the provision of up-to-date and relevant reading materials, including materials to develop subject knowledge and opportunities for trainees to consider wider educational issues such as citizenship and Every Child Matters. The assignments trainees are set are challenging and enable them to reflect on their own practice well. One trainee for example, putting pupil outcomes at the heart of her thinking, critiqued her professional impact in helping pupils

understand algebraic ideas of pattern and relationships in number. The marking of these assignments is of good quality. Assessments of trainees' progress are cohesive and links from initial audits of need to weekly reviews and individual training plans are strong. Clear connections to the Standards are made.

58. Trainees benefit further from consistently good quality, helpful mentoring in schools. School-based mentors provide trainees with good support and give them very good pedagogical feedback. While secondary trainees also benefit from very good subject specific feedback, primary trainees do not consistently have this. Nonetheless, the overall good quality of mentoring is consistent across the partnership and, importantly for trainees, across their main and second schools. A key factor in ensuring this consistency is the mentors' and tutors' clear understanding and regular use of the provider's 'characteristics of performance'. This is an assessment tool which breaks down the developing trainees' competences against the Standards very well.
59. The provider's use of resources is outstanding. Trainees have access to a very good range including information and communication technology, the VLE and subject specialists in school and at the centre. Secondary PE trainees, for example, benefit not only from indoor and outdoor facilities, but also video and computing facilities to enhance their own evaluations of pupils' learning.
60. Trainees typically use resources for their own and pupils' learning very well. On induction, trainees are given access to student support services and the library; they also receive training in using ICT for teaching. Trainees with specific needs, dyslexia for example, receive very good support which includes if appropriate, modifications to materials. Very good use is also made of local authority staff, visiting lecturers and partnership personnel to provide training. They give trainees practical insights into teaching pupils with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language. Good use is also made of partnership special schools to allow placements and widen the experience of trainees. The sharing of tutors' expertise, for example by their teaching across this and other training routes, further typifies how the provider uses resources to achieve best value.
61. The quality of the partnership is good with, at the time of the inspection, two thirds of schools judged by Ofsted to be good or better. The partnership makes use of such reports and those that judge the quality of teaching in subjects to help inform their view of the most appropriate schools for trainees. Another key factor in ensuring consistency of good quality training across the partnership is the common understanding and application of the provider's 'characteristics of performance' and the use of inspection criteria to assist in the assessment of trainees.
62. The way the provider and the partnership promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination is outstanding. Trainees are very well prepared to teach diverse pupils' needs. Their planning and evaluations show good attention to differing needs of learners. In addition, trainees have and take opportunities to experience

schools with pupils from a range of backgrounds and with a variety of needs. Secondary trainees also benefit from sessions which, for example, consider why young people from a black background underachieve in comparison with other groups. One trainee, typical of the views inspectors received, commented, 'The second school placement has given me a much broader understanding of teaching English as an additional language which will be essential in my eventual teaching post'.

63. Equality of opportunity is very strong for trainees too. For example, they are able to develop weaker aspects of subject knowledge through the deliberate selection of appropriate second schools. Trainees with specific needs and those at risk of withdrawal are supported very well. The provider is proactive in enabling trainees to identify their own needs via weekly mentor meetings, link tutor support, and improved arrangements for declaration at application or induction. The provider is aware of its groups of trainees, for example those aged over 25, and monitors their progress. Using all this information the provider and the partnership are well placed to personalise support for trainees.

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

Grade: 2

64. The provider's capacity to secure further improvements and to sustain high quality outcomes is good. This is demonstrated by its sustaining of good quality attainment for secondary trainees and the improvements made in the attainment of primary trainees. It is also demonstrated by the strong commitment of all members of the partnership in ensuring good quality and consistent training for all trainees. The programme is led and managed well.
65. The effectiveness of management at all levels and across the partnership in evaluating performance in order to improve or sustain high quality is good. The provider has an accurate picture of its strengths and what it needs to do to secure further improvement. A key aspect of its successful evaluation of its performance is the accuracy of its assessment of trainees' attainments. This accuracy is secure at this provider and is ensured by the numerous checks and balances in place, including joint observations of trainees by link tutors and school-based mentors. These observations make use of the commonly understood 'characteristics of performance'. In addition, the provider is aware of the quality of the overall good quality of schools within its partnership through the checking of published inspection reports and through its own local knowledge. Robust systems are place for the provider to be quickly alerted to any changes in the circumstances of schools and trainees. The result is that the schools used are the most appropriate for the trainees on the programme. Not only do these features provide consistency of assessment, they also enable regular quality assurance of the training to take place.
66. The views of tutors, mentors and trainees feed into course programmes well and the provider uses these to amend provision accordingly. However, it is not

clear how these feed into overall programme evaluations and resulting action plans. This means that not all members of the partnership are fully clear about their role in securing further improvements and how their efforts will contribute.

67. The way the provider anticipates and responds to change is good. It is not yet outstanding. This is because, while there are potential improvements in the attainment of primary trainees with, for example, the current attainment of primary trainees similar to that of their secondary peers, a trend has not yet been established. Nonetheless, the provider has responded well to important national developments, for example the Rose review into early reading, the Williams report into teaching and learning in mathematics, the revised secondary curriculum including Diplomas, and the development of subject knowledge for teaching by incorporating training and opportunities at the centre and in schools. The provider also responds positively to external scrutiny, for example to external examiner reports and using inspection criteria across the partnership to ensure trainees are accurately assessed so that training is individually appropriate. Further positive responses to change include improvements to the interview programme, the extension of teaching time at the centre to meet changing priorities, and tutors' awareness and dissemination of current information by their involvement in local, regional and national programmes. The impact of these actions has included the sustaining of already very good secondary trainees' attainments and the improvement in those for primary trainees from a satisfactory level last year to, what current assessments point to, a potentially good level this year.
68. Also good is the effectiveness of the provider's planning and taking of action for improvement. Plans focus on improving provision, subject knowledge and recruitment of under represented groups. Their impact is already seen in the improving outcomes for trainees and good, consistent quality of training across the partnership. However, although work has just begun, specific outcomes for trainees are rarely specified. Nonetheless, the plans for improvement are appropriate and highlight the right priorities for this provider.

# Initial teacher education for the further education system

## Context

69. Nottingham Trent University works in partnership with four colleges of further education in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Staffordshire, to provide ITE for teachers and trainers in the further education system. The university offers full-time pre-service courses and part-time in-service courses, leading to the university's post-graduate certificate of education (HE level 7/M), professional-graduate certificate of education (HE level 6) and the certificate in education (HE level 5). The university also provides specialist Skills for Life integrated courses. The qualifications meet the statutory requirements and are endorsed by Standards Verification UK. Currently, 70 trainees are on the pre-service route and 253 on the in-service route.

## Key strengths

70. The key strengths are:
- the very good outcomes on the pre-service programmes
  - the good progress and development of teaching skills and professional practice made by most trainees
  - the good development of trainees' skills in reflection, which they use very effectively to secure improvements in their teaching
  - the quality of the academic and personal support for trainees, which supports their progress very well
  - the high standards of trainees' assessed written work.

## Required actions

71. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment the provider must:
- implement fully a coherent system to assess trainees' achievement.
72. In order to improve its capacity to improve, the partnership must:
- increase the rigour and frequency of the monitoring of mentoring and subject specific support, in order to ensure greater consistency in the quality of work-place training across the partnership.

## Recommendations

73. In order to improve the quality of training, the partnership should:
- further develop trainees' understanding and skills in relation to the promotion of cultural diversity, so that all trainees are well equipped to teach in the diverse lifelong learning sector

74. In order to improve its capacity for further improvement, the partnership should:
- further develop mentors' skills to increase the effectiveness of their role in work-place training and to ensure that all mentors are equipped with effective lesson observation skills
  - increase the effectiveness of action planning, particularly through increased and ongoing monitoring of the impact of actions to secure improvements

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

75. The overall effectiveness of the partnership in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good.
76. The attainment of trainees by the end of their courses is at least satisfactory. Systems for assessing trainees' progress and grading their achievements are relatively new and the partnership is not yet able to assess accurately just how well trainees' attain in relation to the professional standards. Nevertheless, trainees on the pre-service programmes achieve very good outcomes. They make very good progress, demonstrate high standards and a good range of teaching skills, and develop a very good understanding of post compulsory education and training. Their progression into full-time and substantial part-time employment is good. Most trainees on in-service programmes make good progress in the development of their professional practice and teaching skills. Trainees are enthusiastic and highly motivated, have a good understanding of the needs of their learners and demonstrate high levels of commitment and good standards in their work with learners.
77. Recruitment and selection procedures are thorough, well understood and applied consistently across the partnership. Trainees understand the demands and requirements of the courses, although a small minority of trainees finds the academic demands of the assignment writing particularly challenging on the in-service courses. On the specialist Skills for Life courses, a bridging course is particularly helpful in supporting prospective trainees to reach the required standards for entry onto the main programme. Although the university promotes its pre-service course to groups under-represented in lifelong learning well, this is not done as effectively on the college pre-service course.
78. Training and assessment are good. Trainees across all programmes demonstrate up-to-date subject knowledge and have excellent relationships with learners. Most trainees make good use of effective lesson planning and engage learners productively in well designed learning activities. However, not all trainees plan sufficiently to meet the varying levels of learners' abilities in their classes. Trainees develop good skills in classroom management and use question and answer sessions successfully to promote learning and learners' engagement. Trainees make good use of a wide range of resources in lessons, including the creative use of ICT. They develop good skills in reflection and evaluation which they use to good effect in securing improvements in their

teaching and in their work with learners. Trainees are also able to relate learning theories to their developing practice very well. For example, a trainee in the construction area was clearly able to describe the different learning theories that he thought best fitted approaches he uses with each learning group.

79. Trainees receive good academic and personal support and greatly benefit from active help and encouragement from teams of dedicated and committed teacher trainers, which significantly contributes to the good progress they make. Trainees describe an open door policy and good communication, both face-to-face and through the use of technology. Trainers know their trainees well and are very responsive to requests for extra help. Consequently, trainees increase in self-confidence and motivation significantly and describe clearly how they have become more confident teachers in the classroom and in their overall teaching roles.
80. Trainees demonstrate high standards in written assessed work. Marking is very thorough, particularly on the university courses. Tutors provide detailed feedback on assignments, with clearly annotated points on how trainees can secure improvements and with appropriate attention to trainees' spelling and punctuation. Across the partnership, attention to the moderation of assignments is good and highly effective. Trainees make good use of feedback from observations of teaching and learning as well as from assignments, in order to secure improvements in their professional practice. In a minority of cases, written feedback on observations by mentors does not sufficiently focus on trainees' development of subject specific skills and does not contain sufficiently clear action points for further development.
81. Pre-service trainees gain a good breadth of experience from their placements. A large majority also takes good advantage of opportunities to extend their range of experience towards the end of their course, through extended placement opportunities. For example, a trainee who had worked predominantly in the daytime with learners on vocational courses at levels two and three was taking the extended opportunity to work with older learners on an evening advanced level course.
82. Trainees across the partnership generally have good access to a wide range of resources. Trainers are well qualified and experienced in their field and make good use of learning resources with trainees; for example, modelling good practice in the use of ICT. The impact of this is evident in trainees' good use of resources with their learners. Trainees make good use of the VLEs at the individual colleges. The VLE at the university contains a wealth of useful resources for trainees. However, not all trainees manage to make sufficient use of this resource because of difficulties they experience in securing technical access to the system.
83. The quality of provision across the partnership is of a good standard. Processes to moderate assignments are particularly effective. The partnership actively encourages trainees to make their voices heard, with examples of how their feedback results in improvements to the courses. The majority of trainees

benefit from effective workplace support from mentors and other teaching staff, who willingly share information, ideas and resources, which helps them to secure improvements in their teaching. In particular, on the Skills for Life courses, trainees benefit greatly from mentors who are very experienced and who provide regular, constructive and specialist feedback to trainees. They have a strong emphasis on trainees' securing specific improvements in teaching these subject areas. However, mentoring and subject specific support remain areas which are not yet of a consistently good quality. There are, for example, occasions where mentoring is too informal and ad hoc and where mentors are not specialists in trainees' subject areas. The result is that trainees consequently do not receive sufficient feedback on how to teach their specialist subject areas. The ongoing monitoring of mentor support and feedback is insufficient.

84. Nonetheless, the partnership demonstrates some good practice in the effectiveness of target setting and action planning to secure improvements in trainees' progress and professional development. On the Skills for Life courses, for example, trainees have clearly identified, specific targets and actions for further development which greatly enhance their learning experience. Trainees regularly review these with tutors and mentors. However for a minority of trainees, target setting and action points are too broad and general, do not sufficiently stretch and challenge trainees and make an insufficient contribution to trainees' overall progress and development.
85. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Trainees report they are confident in raising any issues of concern with their tutors and are positive about the support they receive as part of their training, for example support to meet any specific learning needs such as dyslexia. The provider closely monitors the performance of different groups and identifies that no differences in outcomes exist by ethnicity or disability, but that a disproportionate number of males have not gained the qualification over the past three years. Although the self-evaluation document identifies this as a focus for action in 2009/10, the ongoing monitoring of the progress and achievement of males across the partnership is currently insufficient.
86. Trainees develop a good understanding of the significance and importance of meeting individual learners' needs. The majority meet them effectively in their classes. Their understanding in relation to cultural diversity and race equality issues, however, is not as well developed and, as a result, trainees are not sufficiently clear about the promotion of diversity with their learners. Trainees' files and reflections and tutor and mentor observation feedback contain little in relation to the promotion of cultural diversity.

The capacity for further improvement  
and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 3

87. The university has satisfactory capacity to improve further and sustain high quality outcomes. The self-evaluation document is detailed, comprehensive and



clearly demonstrates that the provider and its partner colleges are sufficiently aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. It covers all key aspects of the provision and takes into account analysis of a wide range of evidence, including data in relation to trainees' outcomes and feedback from trainees, from the partner colleges and from external examiners. The partnership has maintained the strengths since the last inspection, particularly in relation to the good progress that trainees make in developing their teaching and reflective skills and the good support that they receive from the teacher training teams. The unevenness in the support available for trainees to develop their subject specific skills and the underdeveloped quality assurance of mentoring arrangements still remain areas for further development. Managers include an analysis of data in relation to success rates for trainees. The analysis does not, however, cover data over the full two-year initial teacher education courses, but treats each year as if it were a separate course. Consequently, the success rates do not take full account of trainees who do not return to year two of the programmes and are therefore not sufficiently accurate.

88. The partnership's ability to anticipate change and prepare for, and respond to, national and local initiatives is satisfactory. Managers are fully aware of key issues in teacher education. Teacher training teams belong to a broad range of national and local networks which help inform programme development. However, the partnership does not yet have in place a coherent system to assess trainees' achievement accurately or to grade their achievement in relation to the professional standards. The current self-audit process is not sufficiently rigorous and not all colleges are successfully implementing this process with trainees.
89. The provider introduced graded observations from September 2009, with varying degrees of success. Observation feedback and grading by tutors is generally detailed and accurate. The quality of mentors' observations is not always of a sufficiently good quality. For example, some mentors have not graded at all, some do not identify key action points to help trainees secure improvements, some do not provide sufficient written feedback, and written feedback does not always match the grades awarded or provide sufficient reference to the development of trainees' subject specific skills. On the pre-service programmes, six of the graded observations are mentor observations, which make the impact of mentor observations particularly significant. Observers at one college do not identify one specific grade, but, for example, identify grade two or three, or grade three or two, which some trainees find confusing. The university has invested significant time and resources in carrying out paired observations, which are supporting the graded observation process well. But with over 300 trainees, a large majority of observers has not yet received any detailed feedback, including many new and inexperienced mentors. Most trainees spoken to are positive about being graded.
90. The provider and colleges have well-established overarching systems for quality assurance. These include annual reviews of all programmes and good use of feedback from external examiners and from trainees. The provider is fully aware of the need to secure further improvements in mentoring, which it identified as a key action point for development in 2009/10. However the

systematic and ongoing monitoring of mentoring and of graded mentor observations is currently insufficient. Mentors told inspectors that if they hear nothing to the contrary, they assume that their observations, feedback and grades are of the required standard. The planned monitoring of mentoring at the end of the academic year is too late to secure improvements in 2009/10 for current trainees. The training of mentors is also insufficient, particularly in relation to carrying out graded observations. The examples of good practice in mentoring that are in place for trainees across the partnership are not shared sufficiently.

91. Action plans are detailed and comprehensive. However, the effectiveness and impact of actions to secure improvements are not always monitored or reviewed sufficiently early on in the academic year in order to secure in-year improvements for trainees.

## Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes:

Burton College  
Derby College  
Lincoln College  
New College Nottingham

## 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

		Primary	Secondary	ITE for FE	Employment-based routes
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		2	2	2	2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	2	3	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	2	2	2	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	2	2	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	2	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2	2	2	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1	1	3	1

### Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

	Primary	Secondary	ITE for FE	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	2	3	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	2	2	3	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?	1	1	3	2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?	2	2	3	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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