

# Sheffield Hallam University

## 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 partnerships 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. Sheffield Hallam University works in partnership with 263 primary and 163 secondary schools to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS). Further education (FE) teacher education is offered through the university's partnership with three colleges of FE and the South Yorkshire Police. The university is also a large provider of continuing professional development (CPD) for practising teachers and is actively involved in leading edge initiatives to research and develop innovative practice in ITE.

4. The university fosters mutually beneficial links with Sheffield and other neighbouring local authorities. The university's commitment to equality and diversity and widening participation permeates all aspects of ITE provision. The recruitment of trainees from underrepresented groups is particularly strong on provision located at the university. The Teacher Education Department has recently restructured so that all ITE programmes are located within the same department. The department is

highly collaborative and is a lead provider for the Masters in Teaching and Learning and Teach First.

## A commentary on the provision

5. The following are particular strengths of the provision across all phases:

- A particularly strong local and regional identity that stems from the university's significant contribution to the workforce needs of local schools, colleges and post-16 training providers.
- The high quality of centre-based training that enables trainees to develop excellent skills in reflective practice which they use effectively to improve their teaching.
- An inclusive ethos and particularly strong commitment to equality and diversity.

6. The particularly effective features of the primary and secondary phase provision that underpin the high quality outcomes for trainees can be attributed to:

- the sharp self-evaluation and action planning at individual programme level
- the strong collaboration between work-based and centre-based trainers
- the keen focus on developing trainees' subject knowledge for teaching
- the extent to which trainees draw on resources contained on the virtual learning environment (VLE) to accelerate their learning and progress.

7. Features in primary and secondary programmes that could be applied to support improvement in FE teacher education include:

- the clear vision and strategic direction that underpins partnership development
- the probing use of data to scrutinise outcomes for trainees
- the outstanding use of resources to support learning and enhance trainees' progress.

8. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees across all phases:

- continue to identify opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of good practice across the different age phases of ITE.
- refine further the use of grade criteria for judging trainees' progress and attainment.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

9. Sheffield Hallam University offers a three-year course leading to a Bachelor of Arts (BA Hons) with QTS, for students wishing to work with three to seven year-olds or five to eleven year-olds. One-year post graduate courses are offered in the same age ranges and, in exceptional circumstances, a few trainees opt for the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education. A two-year part-time progression route to QTS for early years and primary teaching assistants was offered for the first time this year. At the time of the inspection there were 648 trainees across the range of provision.

### Key strengths

10. The key strengths are:

- the excellent centre-based training programme which enables trainees to provide highly effective learning opportunities for themselves and the full range of pupils they teach
- the trainees' very good subject knowledge for teaching which underpins their ability to become reflective practitioners and provide engaging activities which promote pupils' learning
- the cohesion and strength of centre-based and school-based training, which enables trainees to link the theory and practice of teaching very effectively
- the quality designation of schools in the partnership which has led to high levels of commitment and more effective support, enabling most trainees to make good or outstanding progress
- the development of resources and the excellent VLE which greatly enhances opportunities for trainees to further their academic and professional development
- the excellent self-evaluation and action planning which leads to consistently improving outcomes for trainees that meet local and national needs very well.

### Recommendations

11. In order to further enhance partnership development, the provider should:

- embed the many recently introduced partnership developments to ensure consistently high quality practice across all levels of the partnership
- ensure that the newly introduced grade descriptors are used more systematically by mentors and trainees.

12. In order to improve outcomes for trainees, the provider should:

- improve trainees' ability to apply their understanding of the different dimensions of community cohesion more systematically in their teaching.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

13. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good and improving rapidly, with some aspects judged as outstanding. Trainees plan and teach lessons that are of a good quality. Trainees have good knowledge of how to teach early reading, mathematics, pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. Trainees on the early years course have a good knowledge of the early years pedagogy and curriculum; how to plan for continuous provision, and to support learning in outdoor areas. Trainees are also able to plan meaningful cross-curricular links between subjects which improve pupils' learning.

14. Selection processes are thorough and effective in ensuring trainees have the capability to teach and become good teachers. Procedures involve, for example, partnership personnel, link tutors, headteachers and the local authority. A rigorous interview process enables candidates to show their potential through group discussions, written tests and formal interviews. Following selection, candidates are sent a pre-course booklet which records their subject knowledge in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) and this forms the basis of detailed training plans. Trainees are involved fully from the outset in setting their own challenging targets for improvement.

15. In order to increase the proportion of men and minority ethnic trainees on the courses, the university has attended local and national conferences and offers three-day taster sessions for minority ethnic candidates. These sessions are well attended and enable potential candidates to learn about teaching as a career, spend a day in school and meet the criteria for selection. Candidates who attend are offered extra support with their application. It is too soon to see the impact of this initiative on overall recruitment trends. The proportion of men on the courses is in line with other providers in the sector and increasing.

16. Training and assessment are excellent. There is a synergy between centre-based training and school-based training and assignments; this enables trainees to link the theory and practice of teaching very well. Taught sessions link educational theory, pedagogy, and current practice in an innovative way. Tutors model good practice at all times and emphasise that learning must engage all pupils through activities which meet their individual needs. Trainees' expert subject knowledge is complemented by good systems to identify specialists from the wider community and from partnership schools to teach on the course. A particular feature of the training is the strong emphasis on developing trainees as learners from the start of the course. This in turn enables them to reflect critically on their own practice leading to very good levels of understanding of how pupils learn. All trainees have many opportunities to attend specialist placements, for example, in early reading, English as an additional language and in special schools. Trainees' attainment is further enhanced through their involvement in action research in local schools and

abroad. Trainees select 'electives' such as a modern foreign language, creativity, children's fiction and international placements; these further their knowledge and understanding of current practice particularly well.

17. Course work is challenging and trainees receive high quality feedback on written assignments, which enables them to make good and often outstanding progress. Progress against the QTS Standards is regularly reviewed by academic and university link tutors. Trainee profiles include some insightful evaluations of their own teaching in relation to pupils' progress. The provider reviews trainees' attainment at many points during the year and any perceived weaknesses are identified quickly. Extra drop-in sessions are provided which trainees choose for themselves. This ownership of their own progress is welcomed by trainees, who say that they are very clear about how to become good or better teachers.

18. Trainees on school placements have weekly meetings with their mentors and good dialogue enables the trainees and mentors to set challenging targets for development. Link tutors visit schools regularly 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 the trainee's progress; the resulting grades are accurate.

19. The university is very alert to the needs of individuals with identified areas of weakness and takes timely and effective action to ensure that all trainees meet their potential. There is an excellent range of resources which complement the centre-based training. The VLE is an excellent tool and provides trainees with good access to documents and study materials immediately following their selection. Materials are up-to-date and well used by trainees, particularly to access information and preparation materials relating to forthcoming lectures. Tutors are diligent in ensuring materials are accessible, updated, and uploaded regularly. Trainees are very well prepared for lectures and they make excellent progress in taught sessions. The effective use of human resources to meet trainees' individual needs is also very good and aids their well-being.

20. The quality and diversity of the partnership schools are good and most provide excellent training venues. Trainees experience training in a number of different schools in a range of socio-economic settings. This diversity supports trainees' understanding of how to teach pupils with a range of needs. Training for school-based trainers is well organised and well attended. Many schools in the partnership have accessed whole-school training and the availability of different levels of training to further develop their mentoring skills. A large proportion of mentors also follow the accredited mentor training which is part of their CPD and leads to postgraduate credits.

21. Many new partnership developments have taken place over the last two years. All schools enter into a designation process which designates schools into three levels each year against clear criteria. Headteachers welcome this initiative and feel that it is also helping them move forward in their thinking. Meetings have been set up for 'cluster' groups in the network and held each term, so that mentors can meet together and discuss issues related to the partnership. These are not as well attended as the university would like, and therefore the timing has been moved to

the daytime and supply cover is provided. There is scope to develop these meetings to include cross-moderation of trainees' attainment on block placement. A comprehensive newsletter sets out all partnership developments. This ensures that schools are well informed about the key areas for improvement and are clear about their role in bringing them about. However, many initiatives are at the early stages of development. Newly introduced grade descriptors, which help trainees know how to move from one level to the next, are not used consistently by some mentors.

22. There is a consistent equality and diversity theme which runs through all of the provider's documentation; 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. Inspectors found evidence that placements are adapted well to meet the needs of individual trainees with family or other commitments and that this aids their personal well-being. Trainees who are identified as struggling with the course receive excellent support through learning contracts and extra link tutor visits. Trainees who have disabilities or special needs are very well supported to achieve their potential. During the inspection trainees observed and interviewed were secure in how to provide for pupils who speak English as an additional language or who had special needs and/or disabilities but their knowledge and application of the wider dimensions of community cohesion were sometimes weaker.

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

23. The provider has outstanding capacity to improve outcomes for trainees. The rapid improvements over the last two years are a direct result of managers' ability to collect and use data very effectively to focus on trainees' outcomes. The monitoring of quality and consistency across the partnership is rigorous, involves all stakeholders, and is open and transparent. All aspects are monitored and evaluated formally; for example, individual 'taught sessions', modules, the central overall training, the consistency of grading, and especially, the quality of partnership schools. A particular feature of this partnership is the improvement in their ability to support trainees so that they make good and outstanding progress on block placements. The university has the capacity to seek out and use expert professionals from the wider community and develop partnership working across a range of local authorities to meet local needs and bring about continuous improvement.

24. All aspects of the monitoring of the provision are discussed between all stakeholders and recorded in their meetings' minutes. At the strategic level, headteachers and mentors are members of committees, and schools are invited regularly to become more involved in the strategic direction of developments. This has improved the consistency of mentoring and also the quality of university tutors' knowledge, leading to improved trainees' outcomes. An excellent example is the recent training received by tutors in the early years' curriculum and related pedagogy.



25. All issues from the previous inspection have been tackled and there is evidence of particular success in improving the quality of provision across the partnership; in developing trainees' subject knowledge; in trainees' ability to provide for the full range of learners in their classes; in selecting trainees who have the intellectual capacity to be very reflective practitioners and in giving more specific subject feedback on trainees' teaching. Outcomes at the outstanding level on degree and post graduate courses are increasing rapidly. Trainees gain the confidence quickly to take on subject leadership and gain promotion often at the end of their induction year; this is a particularly strong feature of this partnership.

26. Management and quality assurance systems are well developed. The comprehensive partnership handbooks outline procedures, and schools receive good quality placement handbooks which are valued by school-based trainers. Tutors know their trainees very well; they provide excellent taught sessions with the good progress of trainees at the centre of their work. They make regular visits to schools as link tutors which ensure equality and consistency of grading across the partnership.

27. The provider is able to anticipate change and respond 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. Inspectors found that trainees were particularly knowledgeable about recommendations from the Williams Report and how to plan exciting mathematics lessons across a range of phases. Newly qualified teachers (NQT) and employing headteachers interviewed during the inspection all commented on the strength of trainees' abilities to teach pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. They state that trainees are at the cutting edge of understanding the proposed changes to the primary curriculum and are beginning to link subjects together under cross-curricular themes in their planning; trainees take part in extra study weeks based around cross-curricular themes.

28. The university's self-evaluation document is accurate and shows a clear line of sight from monitoring through self-evaluation to action planning and subsequent improvement. For example, useful case studies show that the provider analyses data to determine whether there are any differential outcomes for identifiable groups of trainees based on age, gender, ethnicity or disability. Priorities identified through this process have led to improvements in attainment for the majority of trainees in the current cohorts; 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. Over the last two years, the improvements in outcomes for trainees are impressive with rapidly improving attainment and satisfaction from both trainees and partnership schools.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Context

30. The university offers a variety of undergraduate and post graduate secondary courses in 14 subjects. The undergraduate routes lead to a degree or an honours degree with QTS in mathematics, and honours degrees with QTS in design and technology, and science. The postgraduate routes lead to either a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (Prof GCE) or the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) that both incorporate QTS.

31. There are currently 417 trainees following courses in business education, citizenship, design and technology (including engineering, food technology, and textiles), English, ICT, 14-19 applied ICT, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, religious education, and science.

### Key strengths

32. The key strengths are:

- the careful, close attention paid to meeting the individual needs of a wide range of trainees, supported by the excellent use of resources that enables trainees to make good progress and fulfil their potential
- the strong sense of purpose and high aspirations shared by the partnership, underpinned by regular collaborative working, excellent communication and consistently positive relationships
- the trainees' commitment to and enthusiasm for teaching and learning that often results in high levels of reflection, good planning, and a willingness to take risks
- the trainers' up-to-date expertise and the attention paid in subject training to subject knowledge enhancement and national and local initiatives, resulting in a discernable impact on trainees' classroom practice
- the exceptional quality of senior mentor coordinators who play a key role in enhancing the role of subject mentors and are drivers for sharing of good practice across the partnership
- the highly effective use of accurate and probing self-evaluation and review across the partnership and the monitoring of its implementation that demonstrates the provider's outstanding capacity to improve.

### Recommendations

33. In order to improve the effectiveness of recruitment and selection, the provider should:

- use the thorough analysis of trainees' reasons for both temporary and permanent withdrawals to refine selection and support procedures, so that rates of retention improve and are more consistent between cohorts and across subjects.
34. In order to maximise the progress made by trainees the provider should:
- implement and monitor closely the newly-devised grade descriptors, so that formative and summative assessments are understood more consistently by mentors.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

35. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good. Inspectors found that most trainees make good progress and that trainees' attainment is consistently high. Over three-quarters of trainees have met the QTS Standards at a good or outstanding level over the past three years. The provider's accurate tracking and assessment indicates that the proportion of trainees with good or outstanding attainment will rise from 77% in 2008/09 to 82% in 2009/10.

36. Trainees feel well prepared; their training programmes are coherent, well organised and up-to-date. Consequently, they develop quickly and their early good progress is sustained across subsequent school placements. Trainees are committed and demonstrate consistently positive relationships with pupils and staff. They contribute enthusiastically to the departments where they are placed, as well as at a wider whole-school level. Lesson planning is developed consistently well; plans identify clear and accessible objectives and coherent sequences of learning that enable most pupils to make good progress. Trainees also make good use of the resources available, incorporating information and learning technologies (ILT) skilfully into their teaching. The best trainees are highly reflective and are able to evaluate critically their own performance and progress. These trainees are prepared to take risks in their teaching and, encouraged by mentors, plan lessons that are imaginative, engaging, and well informed by their confident knowledge of subject issues.

37. The centre-based and school-based training combine well and contribute strongly to trainees' good progress and achievement. The general professional studies programme enables trainees to explore in depth the relationship between wider educational theory and current practice. Trainees say that this programme equips them well with the necessary information they need to make successful starts to their school placements. A few trainees expressed concerns about the timing and usefulness of some lectures and the variable quality of some seminars. However, the provider's own regular trainee surveys offer accurate feedback on which aspects of training are most successful and which require further revisions and there is a track record of improving training where required.

38. Trainees benefit significantly from the trainers' expertise in their subjects, the careful attention paid to subject knowledge enhancement and the comprehensive coverage of recent educational initiatives. This is underpinned by well-focused and developmental written assignments and subject based tasks. Rigorous assessment procedures are applied consistently across the partnership. Trainees receive high quality written and oral feedback that is diagnostic and provides focused targets for development. Trainees appreciate greatly the time taken by mentors who respond quickly to their needs and this enables them to make good progress. Some mentors say that they are unsure about the current grade descriptors used to assess trainees' achievement. The provider is aware of this issue and has already revised the grade descriptors in collaboration with its consultancy schools.

39. Headteachers take pride in the partnership, trust its processes, and have confidence in the quality of trainees it produces. Course documentation is of a very high quality and is reviewed regularly in consultation with schools. Support materials and guidance are frequently updated or introduced, such as the well received exemplification of standards document that is used by mentors and trainees to support the gathering of evidence. Communication between the provider and schools is excellent enabling careful selection of placements that match trainees' needs closely and also to build on prior experience. Senior mentor coordinators are dynamic, well informed about partnership matters, and are drivers of ongoing improvements. They are passionate about the role they play in assuring the quality of training in schools and supporting the professional development of mentors.

40. The provider's use of resources is excellent. Trainees have access to a wide range of high quality subject-specific resources as part of their centre-based experience. Trainees also value and make excellent use of the VLE to support their academic development and to share good practice with their peers. For example, in several subjects trainees are able to strengthen their subject knowledge and reflect on classroom practice through a range of 'blog-based' subject tasks. Centre-based mentor training is well attended. The provider also offers training to new and existing mentors in the placement schools. Evaluations of the mentor training show high levels of satisfaction.

41. Recruitment procedures are of a consistently high quality. Mentors are involved well in the selection process. Procedures ensure that the best candidates are recruited and provide opportunities for applicants from a broad range of backgrounds to be effectively assessed as to their suitability for teaching. Good use is made of tasks to assess the suitability of potential trainees, the breadth of their subject knowledge, and their strengths in reading, writing and verbal communication. The provider usually recruits to meet their target; this is more variable in shortage subjects. Some courses, such as English and physical education, receive high numbers of applications. In the recent round of recruitment, a large majority of courses recruited fully. The number of trainees who complete their respective courses is broadly in line with the sector. This varies between cohorts and subjects but there is evidence that trends are improving as a result of the provider's detailed analysis and timely changes to interview activities and support structures. The provider recognises the need to ensure that it refines recruitment and selection procedures further, so that the number of permanent and temporary withdrawals continues to fall. Employment rates compare favourably with the sector average. The proportion of trainees who remain

in teaching is greater than the sector average, indicating that those trainees who successfully achieve QTS are highly committed and suited to their career. Trainees are very well regarded by headteachers within the partnership and many find employment in local schools. Many former trainees become successful partnership mentors and/or experience quick promotion to subject leader and even senior leadership level.

42. The provider has a strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, underpinned by clear policies and well focused action plans. Trainees are well prepared to teach in a diverse society. The proportion of trainees from unrepresented groups is similar to the sector average; there are no significant differences in the achievement of trainees from different groups. Innovative programmes are in place to provide subject enhancement for potential minority ethnic candidates and to support teachers, who are refugees, in gaining experience that will enable them to apply for QTS. There is regular analysis of data relating to the achievement of different groups of trainees with sensitive action taken to address any areas for development. Close monitoring of trainees' progress identifies problems early and triggers prompt interventions that are well matched to individual needs. Effective systems are in place to support trainees who are struggling academically, are ill, or encounter personal or family problems during the course. Trainees say that they feel very well supported.

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

43. The provider has outstanding capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to take the necessary actions to secure prompt improvements where required. Self-evaluation by leaders at all levels is rigorous and demonstrates a clear understanding of the partnership's strengths and areas for development. There is a tangible drive for continuous improvement. The provider draws routinely on feedback from trainees, a wide range of partners, local authority representatives and external examiners.

44. Headteachers' input is valued; they see that the provider responds quickly to their concerns and suggestions. For example, rapid changes were made to partnership procedures around safeguarding checks as a result of changes to the schools inspection framework. There are regular and well developed surveys of trainee views with recent innovations such as the on-line block placement and mid-year surveys. Response rates to these surveys are high and used to evaluate the success of various aspects of the provision at group and individual trainee level, and to inform improvement planning.

45. The highly skilled partnership managers are respected across the partnership and play a key role in driving the shared culture of self-evaluation. The ten consultancy schools play a central role in evaluation and development. They provide feedback on partnership issues from a school perspective, champion priorities, and trial innovations. This has enabled the rapid implementation of the designation project through which schools evaluate themselves against a collaboratively

developed set of criteria. Headteachers say that the process constitutes a powerful audit tool that has had immediate impact on raising expectations and sharpening school ITE practice. Currently 81 schools have completed the designation process with the remainder due to complete the process before the end of the year. This represents a comprehensive endorsement of the project and underlines the outstanding capacity of the provider and its partners to affect change rapidly.

46. Regular moderation visits from university link tutors provide detailed and diagnostic information based on their meetings with headteachers, senior mentor coordinators, mentors, and trainees. These reports enable the provider to triangulate evidence and to respond very quickly to any issues as they arise. They provide an exceptionally full analysis of strengths and areas for development as well as identifying clear actions and timelines.

47. The provider is highly knowledgeable about current and proposed changes in education. It responds quickly to national priorities and is highly flexible in meeting changing local needs. Centre-based training is regularly reviewed so that it is up to date and equips trainees for their career in schools. It draws very well on expert speakers and headteachers and provides very thorough coverage of current issues. Consequently, trainees' knowledge and understanding of recent educational developments is strong. These factors result in a discernable and marked impact on trainees' confident and informed classroom practice.

48. Trainers have a very broad range of relevant, up-to-date skills; they are involved actively in local and national initiatives and lead on educational research. This broad skills base enables a wide range of innovative projects that include, for example, developing support for working with pupils who speak English as an additional language, developing links between theory and practice, strengthening the university-based programme with expertise from schools and outside agencies and widening participation. The senior mentor coordinator annual conference is well attended ensuring partner schools are kept well informed, have opportunities to share good practice, and have up-to-date presentations from local and national education partners.

49. The provider uses robust data to inform improvement planning. Action plans are ambitious, challenging, and focus on raising outcomes for trainees. External scrutiny is welcomed; the findings of external examiners are used consistently well to inform subject level plans. Action plans are submitted to the quality group that includes headteachers and local authority officers; this group ensures consistency and accountability. There is a track record of success in maintaining high quality outcomes and affecting quick and lasting change where areas for development have been identified. Levels of recruitment have improved, particularly in shortage subjects such as mathematics, and science, with a marked increase in the recruitment of minority ethnic trainees in physical education to around 25%. The mid-year trainee survey demonstrates clearly that the provider's drive to improve trainees' satisfaction with the quality of training in special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who speak English as an additional language and support for minority ethnic pupils has been successful to above the sector average as a direct result of an increased focus on these areas.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Context

50. The Yorkshire and Derbyshire Training Partnership provides employment-based initial teacher training, based in schools in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire. Sheffield Hallam University is the lead partner in managing the provision; the other partners are Derbyshire, Rotherham, and Sheffield local authorities. Places are available for suitable candidates on the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), the Registered Teacher Programme (RTP) and the Overseas-trained Teacher Programme (OTTP). Training in secondary subjects leads to QTS in the 11 to 16 age-range, except for business studies, and psychology, where training is in the 14 to 19 age-range. Training in primary teaching leads to QTS in either the 5 to 9 or 7 to 11 age-ranges. At the time of the inspection, a total of 79 trainees were following the GTP, made up of 15 primary trainees and 64 secondary trainees spread among a wide range of subjects, often with three or fewer trainees in an individual subject. The small number of trainees on the RTP and the OTTP did not form part of this inspection.

### Key strengths

51. The key strengths are:

- the personal support offered to trainees by university staff and school mentors, including the response to individual needs, which contributes strongly to trainees' progress
- the wide range of experiences that prepare trainees well for teaching in a diverse society
- the rigorous selection procedures that make a strong contribution to maintaining high quality outcomes
- the role played by coordinating mentors in ensuring that trainees make good progress
- trainees' high levels of attainment, particularly evident in their lesson planning and professional attributes.

### Recommendations

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

- strengthen subject-specific training to ensure that all secondary trainees have a broad and thorough understanding of relevant pedagogy and recent developments in subject teaching

- ensure that all training plans are completed quickly, updated regularly, personalised to the trainee, and include explicit reference to developing subject teaching.

53. In order to promote further consistency across the partnership, the provider should:

- monitor trainees' experience more closely to ensure that secondary trainees benefit from stronger experience of planning and teaching in the second placement school
- promote further opportunities for mentors to learn from other mentors and share good practice.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

54. Inspectors agree with the provider's judgement that trainees' attainment is outstanding. Trainees show excellent skills of lesson planning; they develop strong working relationships with pupils and staff, reflect well on their progress, and take considerable responsibility for their own professional development. Many use resources effectively as an aid to learning, including ILT. As a result of the extensive support and guidance that they receive, many trainees show good skills in behaviour management. A small number of weaker trainees fail to cater for all abilities in the class and/or miss opportunities to assess pupils' progress to inform future planning.

55. Consistently good training helps trainees to progress well in relation to their starting points. The breadth of training helps them to contribute strongly to the all-round development of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Trainees appreciate the value of the central training, which includes contributions from a wide range of professionals. Although the central training makes an effective contribution to trainees' development, secondary trainees would benefit from additional central training in how to teach their specialist subject.

56. School-based trainers demonstrate a very high level of commitment to the partnership and the trainees in their care. Training in schools caters well for individual needs: for example, some primary trainees drew clear benefit from being able to select assignments that have enhanced their ability to accelerate pupils' progress in communication, language and literacy and number. The effectiveness of target-setting in driving trainees' progress is good. In examples of excellent practice, mentors set well-focused developmental targets and the response to these progressively more demanding targets demonstrates trainees' progress towards higher order skills, such as how to provide greater challenge for high-ability pupils. However, long term training plans for trainees vary in quality: in the best cases, they cover a broad range of professional issues and enhance trainees' breadth of experience; others have insufficient focus on subject training or are insufficiently personalised.



57. Placement schools are high quality providers offering good training and guidance for the trainees. Useful feedback from lesson observations, particularly when focused on the standards, helps trainees to focus on how they can improve. Good quality documentation ensures that school-based mentors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Good communication with the university helps mentors to feel involved and fully supported. Mentor training is generally well regarded, although some mentors would appreciate more opportunities to learn more about what mentors in other schools are doing. All trainees have experience in second placement schools that complement the main placement; they benefit mainly from broadening their experience and gaining evidence towards particular standards that they have identified. However, the amount of teaching that secondary trainees undertake in the second placement varies; some trainees do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their teaching skills in a different context.

58. Assessment systems are rigorous and secure. Trainees' progress is reviewed regularly by mentors, in conjunction with moderators. Internal moderation within schools, supported by moderator visits, checks the accuracy of assessments. All trainees receive helpful and developmental feedback on their progress; however, trainees are sometimes left with the impression that they have made better progress than is actually the case.

59. Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures contribute strongly to maintaining the high quality of trainees. Thorough selection processes ensure that those who are successful in gaining a place have the personal qualities and the potential to acquire the professional skills expected of a good teacher. The selection process promotes equal opportunities through involving representatives from all parts of the partnership to decide which applicants to interview. School-based mentors contribute to the interview itself, which includes a useful assessment of the candidates' numeracy and literacy skills. All appropriate safeguarding checks take place. The self-audit of the QTS standards that candidates complete forms a useful basis for trainees' initial needs assessment early in the course. As a result of the interview and induction arrangements, trainees feel well prepared at the start of the course. Recruitment exceeds the university's targets for funded places; a considerable proportion of those on the programme find a placement school that is willing to fund their training. Completion rates are broadly average but the employment rates for those who complete successfully are high. The provider recognises that its recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds is below target and has appropriate plans to address this.

60. The deployment of resources across the partnership is excellent and has a positive impact on trainees' outcomes. A particular strength is the match of resources to meet the personal and professional needs of trainees. For example, all trainees benefit from regular visits from moderators but additional visits are arranged according to need. In addition, managers have responded to the needs of trainees in school subjects, where the university does not have a subject specialist, by drawing on appropriate expertise from within the partnership to make moderation visits. Trainees benefit from working in well-equipped schools. They have excellent access to a range of resources, including books, websites, and publications from subject associations. Trainees know that key texts are available on the VLE and benefit from the facility. They appreciate the regular contact from tutors and the

course administrator giving them electronic access to course information, news and offering articles to read. However, a few trainees do not make full use of the available resources, and miss opportunities to accelerate their progress through, for example, reading widely or using the VLE for sharing resources.

61. Managers promote equality and diversity well. Interview processes are carefully monitored to ensure that no group is disadvantaged, and there is no difference in the progress during the course made by different groups. Trainees find university staff approachable and comment on the excellent personal and professional support they receive from both university staff and school-based mentors. Trainees speak warmly of the strong, supportive ethos of the university. They also value highly the opportunities to meet with other trainees on the central training days, which they feel provide an additional support mechanism. Trainees take advantage of the programme's flexibility to broaden their experience through additional school visits or placements. As a result, a high proportion of trainees have experience of teaching or supporting the learning of pupils from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language. In addition, because of good training in schools and the university, trainees develop a good understanding of how to provide for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This breadth of experience means that, by the end of the course, trainees are well prepared for teaching in a diverse society.

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

62. The provider has a good record of taking action for improvement. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and based on information about all aspects of the provision, and managers show a good awareness of the overall strengths and weaknesses of performance across the partnership. Evaluations take account of inputs from a wide range of different people, including mentors and trainees. The management committee, supported by informal feedback from mentors, ensures that course developments take account of views from across the partnership. School-based mentors feel involved in developing the course and feel that the provider takes full account of their views.

63. Managers identify trends through a rigorous analysis of outcomes including the performance of groups to identify any differences in performance that might develop. The provider has been successful in maintaining high attainment and employment rates. Managers have introduced several measures, particularly through the moderator role, designed to promote the consistency of provision in partner schools. While these have had a clear impact, the monitoring process does not always pick up unevenness in trainees' experiences, for example, in the number of lesson observations, the quality of training plans or the amount of teaching in the second placement.

64. Managers have had an effective role in improving provision and maintaining high quality outcomes. For example, an initiative to strengthen subject training for secondary physical education (PE) trainees is very successful: in order to improve trainees' understanding of outdoor and adventurous activities, the PE trainees all join

together for a two-day course delivered in one of the partner schools. Trainees report that this is a particularly valued part of their training. In another example, the provider responded to the Byron Review of 2008 by raising the profile of e-safety as part of the course. As a result, trainees have a confident understanding of how they can help protect vulnerable young people from possible danger on the internet. The NQT survey, combined with the provider's evaluation data, demonstrates trainees' increased satisfaction with some aspects of their training, such as their understanding of how to assess and report pupils' progress.

65. Course tutors have high levels of expertise and contribute to national developments in teacher education. All trainees have attended training covering a wide range of national educational initiatives. As a result, they show a good awareness of national initiatives, such as the Assessing Pupils' Progress project and the Williams Report into primary school mathematics. Primary trainees show a good understanding of how to teach early reading. Trainees have a satisfactory understanding of the wider issues relating to the broader Key Stage 4 curriculum; some who have had additional opportunities to observe teaching on the 14–19 diplomas have benefited from the experience. However, because of limited coordination of the subject-specific aspects of their training, secondary trainees are not always fully aware of recent developments in their specialist subject.

66. Managers are successful in sustaining high quality provision and the course meets the high expectations of both trainees and school mentors. Different members of the partnership are fully involved in improvement planning through the management board. Many school-based mentors are aware of priorities and fully involved in implementing course developments. There is clear evidence that managers' evaluation of performance leads to action, including changing the resource allocation; for example, because of the growing size of the programme, managers have appointed two additional external moderators to strengthen their monitoring processes. Improvement planning is well organised; plans are regularly reviewed and the planning and evaluation process is carried through from one year to the next. Plans focus on key issues and are beginning to have more focus on trainees' outcomes. For example, managers have recently added a focus on identifying which QTS standards are stronger or weaker for trainees in order to inform future plans but current plans make only limited use of comparisons with national performance profiles to identify areas for improvement.

## Initial teacher education for the further education system

### Context

67. There are around 252 trainees enrolled on a range of full- and part-time courses leading to either a generic or specialist ESOL, literacy, numeracy initial teacher training qualification. There are 37 trainees enrolled on the full-time PGCE pathway at the university and 215 trainees enrolled on the part-time in-service pathway which is offered by the university and its partners. The university's PGCE and Certificate of Education meet statutory requirements and are endorsed by Standards Verification UK.

68. A unique feature of the provision is the different composition of the trainee cohorts across the partnership. Most of the in-service trainees at the university are employed in the wider FE or voluntary sectors. Many work in a highly specialised environment or have unusual specialist subject backgrounds. In the partner FE colleges, most of the trainees are either college staff or employed in an FE college.

### Key strengths

69. The key strengths are:

- the ability of trainees to improve their classroom practice through very good reflective practice
- the enthusiastic trainees who are skilful in promoting best practice in equality and diversity in their teaching
- the good quality of centre-based training which enables trainees to translate pedagogic theory into effective practical teaching strategies that support their learners' progress
- the highly detailed and developmental feedback provided by tutors and mentors following observations of trainees' teaching, that has a significant impact on accelerating trainees' progress
- the university's success in widening participation which enables trainees from underrepresented groups to access initial teacher training, and to succeed
- the very good personal support for trainees that enables the vast majority to achieve their potential.

### Required actions

70. In order to improve its capacity to make further improvements, the partnership must:

- identify the key performance indicators by which the quality of provision at programme and partnership level can be probed and evaluated
- improve the accuracy and reliability of data on trainees' outcomes so that managers can make informed decisions about where improvements need to be made at both individual programme level and across the partnership as a whole
- systematically evaluate the extent to which provision and actions for improvement impact on outcomes for different groups of trainees
- engage all partners more fully in the process of self-evaluation and action planning so that judgements made about the quality of provision are more accurate and incisive
- ensure that success criteria within improvement plans are sharply focused on outcomes for trainees and that all partners are clear about the priorities and their role in securing them
- ensure that contributions made by mentors are formally part of quality assurance processes.

## Recommendations

71. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:

- ensure greater consistency in the quality of mentoring, in particular for those trainees who are employed in the wider FE sector
- embed the system for tracking progress and grading trainees' attainment so that all trainers are clear about how they can guide trainees to become good or outstanding teachers
- ensure that all trainees can access and benefit from the university's learning resources, in particular the VLE.

72. In order to develop a clear vision and strategy for the provision, the partnership should:

- draw more systematically on individual partner's strengths and increase opportunities for sharing best practice
- identify ways of drawing on the exemplary practice that already exists in other phases of initial teacher training at the university.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

73. All trainees attain the professional standards at a satisfactory level at least. Systems to measure the extent of trainees' attainment against the professional standards are not yet understood fully or embedded across the partnership. Individual partners and the university are not able to determine accurately the proportion of trainees awarded each attainment grade. Nevertheless, inspection evidence identified a high degree of accuracy in the judgements made by trainers in relation to trainees' current level of achievement.

74. Regardless of their individual starting points, which often vary quite significantly, most trainees consistently make good progress. The overall success rate for the partnership, as a whole, is high. The overall success rate for trainees who are not employed in FE colleges has been lower than that of other trainees. Nevertheless, inspectors identified a marked improvement for this particular cohort of trainees in the current year. There are no significant differences in the achievement of any identifiable groups of trainees, although the partnership does not evaluate this systematically. The proportion of full-time pre-service trainees who successfully complete the training is high and improving. Progression rates into employment for this cohort are also high. Many former trainees have mapped out successful careers for themselves in colleges and training providers across the region. Former trainees can demonstrate how they have developed personally and professionally as a result of their experience on the course. Many become mentors to new trainees and complete the accredited mentor training provided by the university.

75. Trainees are enthusiastic and committed to their learners. They are highly motivated by the training; they grow in confidence and make good progress in their teaching and study skills. Trainees bring a wide range of vocational experience and good subject expertise to the programme. They draw well on their professional expertise or industry backgrounds to enliven teaching and make learning relevant. One particularly strong feature of trainees is their skill in using their own evaluations and those of others to evaluate the impact of their teaching on learning and to identify ways of improving their own practice. For many trainees this aspect of their development becomes almost second nature and is a skill they develop within their own learners. For example, an in-service trainee had produced a chart to allow members of a large choir she was teaching to self-assess the development of their skills. She used this very expertly to help members of the choir identify what they could do independently, what they could do with support, what they had yet to master and what they aspired to achieve. Not only did this approach empower her learners, it also provided the trainee with valuable information on which to plan lessons that met her learners' individual needs and ambitions particularly well.

76. The most effective trainees acquire a wide repertoire of teaching skills which is informed by enquiry, research, and a sound theoretical knowledge. As a consequence, they are able to take risks and deliver lessons that make learning enjoyable and memorable with their learners asking for more. Inspectors also saw some innovative learning resources that had been tailored particularly well to meet

learners' needs. For example, one pre-service trainee had produced an examination revision pack to a high professional standard which was used to good effect by her trainees.

77. A minority of trainees struggle to develop their literacy skills to meet the demands of an academic programme. Their written work is often descriptive rather than analytical and they struggle to find links between theory and practice. Weaknesses in their personal literacy skills are sometimes carried through to the teaching and learning resources they prepare for their lessons. The workshops available at the university to support literacy and essay writing skills benefit enormously those trainees who choose to attend. The entry requirement in relation to literacy skills is not applied consistently across the partnership. One of the colleges has introduced a short bridging course between year 1 and year 2 of the in-service programme to equip trainees with the higher order essay-writing skills that they will need for the final modules.

78. The programmes meet local needs very well. The proportion of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds recruited onto both pre-service and in-service pathways at the university is significantly higher than that of the FE regional workforce. Similarly the proportion of trainees who declare a disability is well above national average. Thorough selection processes carried out by human resource departments at partner colleges underpin the high success rate for trainees employed in FE colleges. However, the partnership does not evaluate systematically the effectiveness of recruitment and selection procedures in terms of their impact on outcomes for individuals or identifiable groups of trainees. During the selection process and in the early stages of the courses, detailed information is gathered about each trainee's strengths and areas for development. The ensuing individual learning plan is fragmented and is not updated systematically throughout the programme by all providers.

79. As a result of the good quality of training, which is consistent across the partnership, most trainees achieve well and make good progress. Trainees thrive and develop because of the very good personal support and guidance they receive from their tutors. Centre-based trainers are good role models of best practice in FE teaching. Trainees draw systematically on the techniques demonstrated by their trainers and fellow trainees in micro-teaching sessions to extend the range of teaching strategies they employ. Trainees are overwhelmingly positive about the meticulous, encouraging yet constructively critical feedback from both tutors and mentors which they receive following their teaching practice observations. Inspectors agree that this is a significant factor in enabling trainees to develop as practitioners. Targets to improve are followed up systematically from one observation to the next. This motivates trainees to work on identified weaknesses before the next observation and improve their performance. Observations are carried out alternately by tutors and mentors. This ensures that trainees generic and subject specialist teaching skills develop complementally.

80. Processes for monitoring and tracking trainees' progress are satisfactory and improving. A 'traffic light system' is used to good effect by ensuring that appropriate interventions are put in place for those who are at risk of not achieving. Where problems or cause for concern have been identified resources are targeted

effectively to provide additional support. The potential of the university's VLE to support trainee's academic and vocational development has not been fully realised; not all trainees can access the resources or contribute to virtual debates.

81. Most trainees benefit from the excellent support of skilled mentors. The consistency in the quality of mentoring for pre-service trainees and for in-service trainees based in FE colleges has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The provider recognises that mentor support is an area for further development, particularly for those trainees who are employed in the wider FE sector. The university provision attracts a very high number of applicants from the voluntary sector or from small-scale settings that are unable to offer support in the workplace. In these cases mentoring sometimes lacks formality; mentors are not easily accessible or find it hard to find the time or enthusiasm to support their trainee. Where this occurs, it de-motivates the trainees concerned and slows down their progress. Various strategies by the university to build capacity in terms of mentor support have had varying degrees of success.

82. The partnership's highly inclusive ethos and strong commitment to equality and diversity permeates all aspects of provision. Trainees feel valued and well supported; they are confident that any concerns will be handled sensitively and effectively. They have a good understanding of the Every Child Matters agenda and are secure in their awareness of processes and procedures to safeguard learners. A key strength of the provision is the extent to which trainees take practical account of diversity and promote equality within their teaching. Many trainees seek out opportunities to promote community cohesion in their classrooms. For example, a health and social care trainee used a sequence from a television documentary filmed in a maternity ward to consider the challenges faced by a same sex couple. While this addressed the need to develop her learners' vocational understanding of the topic, it also broadened their awareness and appreciation of parenting from the perspective of a community of which they had little or no knowledge.

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

83. The partnership has satisfactory capacity to take the actions required to secure improvement. This differs from the partnership's judgement that capacity to improve is good. Appropriate steps have been taken to address some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. For example, strategies to support the development of trainees' subject knowledge for teaching have been established; these have been particularly successful on the ESOL/literacy programme. The quality of mentor support has improved in the colleges and strategies to widen participation have had a significant impact on the composition of cohorts of trainees at the university. Weaknesses relating to data remain and have a limiting effect on the partnership's capacity to improve.

84. Self-evaluation relies too heavily on anecdotal evidence and does not draw systematically from an objective assessment of the impact of provision on outcomes for trainees. As a consequence some of the partnership's self-assessed grades are



higher than those awarded by inspectors. There are no agreed performance indicators by which the partnership can evaluate its effectiveness. Consequently, the partnership does not have a secure overview of the extent of trainees' successful completion, their attainment, progress or whether there is any variation in the performance of different groups of trainees. Data relating to trainees' retention and success are inaccurate and unreliable. This is because data are currently evaluated at qualification level rather than by cohort or by different groups of trainees. The university's annual quality review process evaluates in-service trainees' successful completion on a year-by-year basis rather than across the whole two years of the programme. This impairs the partnership's ability to pinpoint key weaknesses, diagnose the cause and determine a solution.

85. The process of self-evaluation draws on a wide range of information. The 'learner voice' has been given a higher priority and the consultative mechanisms that are now in place ensure that trainees' views are taken into account and result in timely changes to aspects of course modules. Trainees' feedback on completed modules is evaluated meticulously. The university has started to monitor the quality of the work-based element of training, including the range of trainees' teaching experience. This is not the case for all providers. There is scope to involve partners more systematically in the self-evaluation and grading process and to draw on the good practice seen in their individual course reviews in the FE colleges.

86. The internal moderation of trainees' assignments is particularly thorough. External examiner reports are largely evaluative and provide clear feedback on the standard of trainees' written work; the external moderation of judgements made about trainees' teaching is underdeveloped. There is no systematic internal standardisation of the observations undertaken by mentors, which represents a significant gap, given that mentors undertake half of the assessed observations of trainees' teaching practice.

87. Partners have worked together effectively in response to the national reforms. Changes to the programmes have been introduced smoothly and successfully. However, more needs to be done to provide a clear vision and strategic direction and to realise the full potential of the individual strengths that each partner brings to the partnership. The restructuring of teacher education provision at the university in 2009 has had a highly beneficial effect on the FE provision, which is now part of a larger department that includes other age phases. Management of the provision has been enhanced; there is potential for FE trainers to share more systematically the best practice from other age phases and for FE to share its strengths around the promotion of community cohesion. It is too early to see the full impact of some of the structural changes.

88. The quality of action planning has improved recently and is satisfactory. Links between the success criteria by which the impact of actions taken are to be evaluated and outcomes for trainees, are not sufficiently explicit. Similarly, there are no direct links between the partnership's action plan and the action plans produced by individual partners. As a consequence partners are not clear about their role in addressing partnership priorities.

## Annex: Partnership colleges

The FE partnership includes the following providers.

Chesterfield College  
The Sheffield College  
North Nottinghamshire College  
South Yorkshire Police

## Summary of inspection grades

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

### Overall effectiveness

		Primary	Secondary	Employment-based routes	ITE for FE
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	1	3
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	2	2	2	3
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1	2	2	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	1	3
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?	2	2	2	2

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

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

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