

University of Nottingham

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by one of 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. The University of Nottingham is an established provider of initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development for practising teachers. As a result, the university understands local workforce needs well. The university is considered by many of its partners to be at the forefront of current educational practice and engages in educational research on a range of local, national and international issues.
4. The provider works in partnership with approximately 110 secondary schools and colleges to offer ITE leading to the award of qualified teacher status (QTS). Through successful completion of academic assignments, trainees are able to gain the award of a postgraduate certificate in education, which includes academic credits at Masters level. At the time of the inspection there were 299 trainees, 231 of whom were on the full-time one year programme and 68 were on the flexible programme.

5. In the 11-18 age range the provider offers training in English, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages and science. In the 14-19 age phase it offers training in society, health and development. Three priority subjects: mathematics, modern languages and science are also offered as flexible provision.
6. The university also provides a secondary employment based initial teacher training (EBITT) route which was inspected at the same time. The EBITT is the subject of a separate report.

Provision in the secondary phase

Key strengths

7. The key strengths are:
 - the high levels of commitment, enthusiasm and shared sense of ownership demonstrated across the partnership, which enable trainees to develop high levels of professionalism and a genuine commitment to their own continuous development
 - the innovative and creative personalised training programme delivered by highly skilled tutor teams who: effectively model secondary practice; secure trainees' excellent levels of subject knowledge; and ensure the development of a range of collaborative working skills
 - the consistently high quality of personal, academic and professional support and challenge for individual trainees to ensure most progress to fulfil their potential
 - the provider's commitment to continuous self-improvement, resulting in excellent self-evaluation and very good improvement planning, which supports enhancements to the quality of provision and outcomes for trainees
 - strong leadership and management which ensure available resources are deployed extremely effectively to support high quality outcomes for trainees and to secure further improvements
 - the partnership's excellent capacity to anticipate change and respond to new developments
 - dedicated commitment to equality of opportunity through the promotion of equal and fair access to high quality training for all.

Recommendations

8. In order to further improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:
 - ensure that monitoring, by mentors and tutors, results in more consistent planning for differentiation by trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade 1

9. The overall effectiveness of the University of Nottingham in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. This confirms the accuracy of the provider's own self-evaluation. Over 84% of trainees attained the QTS Standards at a good or outstanding level in the last three years. This is because of the high quality partnership, the excellent model of personalised training and the high levels of individual support trainees receive.
10. The most notable strengths of trainees are their professionalism and their highly developed ability to critically reflect and take effective action to improve their practice. Trainees' experience of working closely with their peers on cross-curricular topics at the university, as well as on school experience and in school-based inquiries, ensures they develop positive working relationships and excellent skills in collaborative practice. They use behaviour for learning strategies with confidence and make very effective use of information and communication technology in their planning and teaching. Trainees develop excellent knowledge and understanding of the current educational context; have very secure subject knowledge and a detailed understanding of effective teaching and learning in their subjects. Although trainees can talk with confidence about how to plan work to meet the needs of different learners, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of their planning for differentiation.
11. The selection process is very rigorous and draws on a wide range of activities to determine the suitability of potential trainees for both courses. Particular attention is paid to the effective assessment and enhancement of applicants' subject knowledge. Information from the recruitment and selection process is used very well to ensure trainees make rapid progress from the start of the course. This includes trainees completing a pre-course assignment and where appropriate, booster or subject knowledge enhancement courses. Completion rates are high and employment rates are above the national average. The provider enjoys an excellent reputation locally and a number of trainees are recruited to schools in challenging circumstances. Employers indicate high levels of satisfaction with newly qualified teachers who they say are retained in schools and enjoy rapid career progression.
12. The provider has recruited to target in all subjects except modern languages in 2009-10. These improvements to recruitment allocations result from the careful analysis of recruitment data and a very effective marketing and recruitment strategy. This includes the use of open days, improved marketing materials and investment in subject internet microsites, together with the re-profiling of Training and Development Agency (TDA) allocations. Recruitment and selection procedures are underpinned by the university's commitment to equality of opportunity through the promotion of equal and fair access to high quality training for all. The provider works hard to widen participation from groups that are currently under-represented in the teaching workforce and from those with a range of entry qualifications. For example, the proportion of trainees recruited from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased over the last four

years and is now above the national average. Outstanding support is provided for trainees who are internationally educated to ensure they make the same progress as other groups of trainees on both courses. Excellent attention to the needs of trainees with a declared disability ensures that appropriate adaptations are made and additional support is provided where necessary.

13. Training and assessment are outstanding. The innovative and creative full-time training model, based on collaborative working practice, is very carefully planned and structured to provide excellent continuity and cohesion between university and school-based training. Trainees, tutors and mentors work together to ensure training is sufficiently personalised to meet the needs of individuals. For example, all trainees utilise video recordings of their own practice as a powerful tool for self-analysis. Expert teams of tutors, with a blend of professional and academic expertise, work together extremely well to support trainees and provide excellent training in subject and professional studies. They also provide effective support for mentors and trainees during the three phases of school-based training: school experience where trainees from a range of subjects are carefully inducted into their first placement school; a thirteen-week solo teaching practice in a second contrasting school; and finally, on return to their first placement school, for the completion of a collaborative school-based inquiry of benefit to the school where there is an opportunity to address individual targets. The flexible programme echoes the strengths of the full-time programme through training delivered in an on-line blended format.
14. The consistently high quality of personal, academic and professional support and challenge for individual trainees ensures most progress to fulfil their potential given their abilities and starting points. Trainees and former trainees confirm very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of their training and assessment and that tutors model good practice and deliver inspiring sessions. They note that all elements of the training complement each other well and are used flexibly to meet their development needs. Support for the enhancement of trainees' subject knowledge is excellent.
15. Inspection evidence confirms assessment systems are accurately and consistently applied across the partnership because of the use of very effective quality assurance visits and internal and external moderation processes. They ensure the accuracy of judgements of trainees' progress and achievements and the security of the final assessment of trainees. Detailed knowledge of individual trainees is used extremely effectively to identify any underachievement and take appropriate action to improve trainees' progress and attainment.
16. The quality, deployment and use of resources across the partnership are excellent and impact positively on individual trainees' progress and attainment. For example, the well used virtual learning environment (VLE) acts as a repository of excellent resources and is specifically designed to promote trainees' reflective practice. Strong leadership and management ensure that available resources are deployed extremely effectively to support high quality outcomes for trainees and to secure further improvements to the provision.

17. The rigorous quality assurance visits and subsequent detailed feedback provided for schools, create a context where consistency across the partnership is assured. There is a high level of commitment, enthusiasm and shared sense of ownership across this well-established and continually developing partnership. High quality documentation, often produced in collaboration with school-based colleagues, good communications and positive relationships support trainees' progress and ensure school-based trainers have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Focused training and development for mentors and coordinators, together with the effective work of the partnership committee, ensure there is a shared understanding of the partnership's priorities for development. An increasing proportion of trainees are achieving higher attainment grades because of the partnership's consistent emphasis on the promotion and monitoring of individual trainees' progress, improved feedback on lesson observations and clear target setting for trainees' professional development.
18. The university values and respects diversity and shows an exemplary commitment to promoting inclusion and equal opportunities, and ensuring equality of access. This ethos underpins the provider's personalised approach to individual needs and trainees' well-being. There are no discernible differences between the outcomes for different groups of trainees. Inclusion and diversity are embedded in the training. Trainees complete five research tasks on school culture, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, social class and youth culture which prepare them very well to teach in a diverse society. There is an excellent focus on inclusion and special education needs in the inclusive schools seminars and a strong emphasis on community cohesion in both subject and professional studies.

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

19. The provider has outstanding capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees, where these already exist, and to take the actions required to secure improvements where necessary. This can be seen in the way in which further improvements have been made to provision and outcomes since the previous 'outstanding' inspection report. In addition, there have been improvements to trainees' attainment; the amount of progress trainees make from their starting points; and in relation to long-standing issues including recruitment to priority subjects and from groups that are currently under-represented in the teaching workforce.
20. The strength of the partnership is considerable and enhances the provider's capacity for further improvement extremely well. Mentors and coordinators are committed to, and involved in, developing the courses further through membership of subject working groups, attendance at open partnership meetings and annual conferences. As a result, they have responded positively to a number of recent developments. This includes the use of multiple

placements, the focus on whole department mentoring, the videoing of trainees' lessons and the shadowing opportunities provided for those thinking about mentoring or becoming an ITE coordinator for the first time. The provider's proactivity has resulted in increased numbers of offers of placements and ensured that all placement schools have the capacity to provide excellent venues for training. The university has a strong track record of supporting partnership development in relation to trainees' early years in teaching, providing support for newly qualified teachers and offering a range of continuing professional development activities at Masters level for school-based colleagues. Partners hold the university in high-esteem and appreciate the many opportunities provided to enhance their own practice and professional development. Former trainees describe how they continue to be involved in the university's 'community of learners' through their involvement as mentors and their continuing studies with the university. This further strengthens the partnership's capacity to improve.

21. Extensive evaluation procedures, well informed by internal and external moderation activities and benchmarking against newly qualified teacher survey data, are used to inform a very rigorous and thorough annual review process at subject, programme and initial teacher education level. A wide range of data is used including 'recruitment to destination' data to monitor trainees' progress and outcomes. A systematic review of provision in response to local, regional and national priorities takes place. Stakeholders feel their views are listened to and changes happen as a result. This means that the provider has a very accurate understanding of its strengths and the aspects it needs to continue to improve. For example, the provider has recognised the need to involve employers in evaluating the impact trainees make on schools.
22. Leadership and management at all levels very skilfully anticipate change to ensure the courses remain up-to-date. University systems and the courses themselves are highly flexible. Staff are involved in cutting edge research activities and keep themselves up-to-date through active membership of subject associations, external examining and attendance at relevant conferences. As a result, provision is constantly adapted to take a range of initiatives and priorities into account. This includes the Rose Review on early reading, the Lamb report on special educational needs and the MacDonald Report on personal, social and health education. In addition, changes have been made to provision to reflect new arrangements for safeguarding and the revisions to the secondary curriculum. This approach benefits provision, improves trainees' practice and supports the wider partnership well. The partnership has benefitted particularly from the introduction of the new society, health and development course, specifically designed to meet the needs of one of the 14-19 Diploma lines. The university also benefits greatly from its direct involvement with a range of schools, including a number of new academies and training schools, in the partnership.
23. The provider's effectiveness in planning and taking action for improvement is outstanding. There is a very strong link between the robust evaluation and review process, and priorities and targets in improvement plans. Improvement planning is strong at a partnership and programme level although the provider

acknowledges this currently lacks a sufficiently sharp focus on the use of data at a subject level. All partners are informed about the key priorities for improvement and their role in securing these. Timely and effective actions are taken because of the thorough systems in place to identify issues and the careful piloting of appropriate solutions before wholesale changes are made to the provision. Action plans are systematically monitored and evaluated throughout the academic year and there is strong evidence to indicate that actions taken have had a positive impact on improving outcomes for trainees. Action planning reflects the provider's strong leadership and a tireless drive towards continuous self-improvement and enhancement of provision and outcomes.

Summary of inspection grades¹

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

Overall effectiveness

		Secondary
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

	Secondary
To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?	1
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	1
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?	1
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?	1

¹ 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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