

# University of Wolverhampton

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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## Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist inspectors in accordance with the Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008-11).
2. The inspection draws upon evidence from all aspects of the provision to make judgements against all parts of the inspection evaluation schedule in the framework. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the training in supporting high quality outcomes for trainees and the capacity of the partnership to bring about further improvements. A summary of the grades awarded is included at the end of this report.

### Key to inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

### Explanation of terms used in this report

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

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

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

## The provider

3. The University of Wolverhampton offers a range of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes, in conjunction with over 600 partnership schools, colleges and other organisations. In total, in 2009/10 there were around 1,700 trainees enrolled on initial teacher education courses. These programmes include undergraduate courses for early years and primary education, as well as postgraduate and employment-based routes for both primary and secondary phases. Eleven subjects are offered on the secondary programme, several of which are available through a flexible route. The university offers full- and part-time courses for those who want to teach in the post-compulsory sector, as well as part-time teacher education courses, based at partner colleges, for those already working in this sector. Further details on the provision in each phase are given in the relevant section of this report.

## A commentary on the provision

4. The following are strong features in all programmes:
  - the good progress made by trainees, an increasing proportion of whom come from non-traditional backgrounds
  - the very high-quality pastoral and academic support that plays a key role in trainees' achievement
  - strong and proactive leadership and highly productive partnerships that drive change with a shared sense of purpose and make a significant contribution to workforce development in the Black Country region.
5. The following recommendation should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:
  - share the considerable expertise within the partnership more effectively across phases so that all trainees benefit from the very best practice.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

6. The university offers a number of routes into teaching including three-year degrees in early primary education, primary education and primary education with a European language placement. In addition, there is a one-year postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) course covering the primary age range. At the time of the inspection there were approximately 70 trainees on the PGCE and around 350 on the other programmes. The primary partnership is extensive, involving approximately 450 schools in settings ranging from rural to inner-city, affluent to socially deprived, and ethnically diverse to predominantly white British.

### Key strengths

7. The key strengths are:
  - trainees' strong professional attributes that include their preparedness to teach pupils with additional needs and to work in diverse schools
  - the strong, proactive partnership typified by highly committed university staff and school-based mentors, excellent support for trainees and high levels of consistency which enable trainees to build on each experience and make at least good progress on the course
  - the cohesive nature of the course which combines school and centre-based training and opportunities for trainees to develop into highly reflective practitioners very well, through:
    - the use of research
    - highly reflective tasks and assignments
    - the outstanding use of a wide range of resources
    - excellent opportunities to prepare trainees to teach in a diverse range of schools
  - the thorough systems for gaining the views of stakeholders which enable the provider to have a wholly accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development and to develop a culture of self-improvement
  - the provider's plans for improvement which make clear expected outcomes for trainees and set measurable and challenging targets
  - the provider's ongoing commitment to equipping trainees very well to teach the full primary curriculum in a time of change and uncertainty
  - the recruitment of males on to the primary courses to above the national average.

### Recommendations

8. To continue the improving trend of trainees leaving the courses with outstanding attainment, the provider should:

- build on best practice in feedback and target-setting to make clear to trainees the steps they need to take to move from good to outstanding
- sharpen trainees' ability to meet the needs of more able pupils in their planning and teaching.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

9. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. The high quality of provision identified in the last inspection has been maintained. The result is that trainees' attainment is good and improving. Trainees meet the Standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) well. The proportion of trainees accurately assessed by the provider and its partnership as being outstanding has increased each year over the last three years. The development of strong professional attributes by trainees in their training and teaching is a key strength in this provider.
10. Trainees from the University of Wolverhampton invariably secure teaching posts in school. Over the last few years the trend has been for over 90 per cent to do so. This is because, right from the very beginning when expressions of interest are made, the provider's excellent arrangements for recruitment and selection identify the candidates with the strongest potential on its courses. It has been particularly successful in recruiting trainees from non-traditional backgrounds. Most success has been achieved in the recruitment of men to above both the sector and national averages.
11. Once on their chosen programme trainees benefit from courses which are strong and cohesive in nature. School and centre-based training combine very well. The professional studies element and placement opportunities, for example, promote equality and diversity. They challenge the trainees to consider the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The result is that trainees are very well prepared to teach in a diverse range of schools and very often, when appointed to their first teaching post, do just that. In their teaching, they reflect well on the learning needs of their pupils. They make good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who are less able in a particular subject. Their ability to challenge the more able pupils, although good, is less well developed.
12. In the training there is a very strong focus on the wider primary curriculum with very good attention to teaching the core subjects. The university, particularly so in this time of change and some uncertainty, has adopted a principled approach to the foundation subjects, combining well individual subject foci with cross-curricular links. For example, the university, in making use of its partners' strengths and expertise, has established art weeks in which trainees act as artists in-residence to develop their own and their pupils' skills. Coupled with sessions in modern foreign languages and relevant, challenging tasks and assignments the result is that trainees put theory into practice well and develop into highly reflective practitioners. From beginning the

programmes with a wide variety of starting points, they make at least good progress and emerge as predominantly good and increasingly outstanding trainees.

13. Further strengths in training include the use of research and the outstanding use of a wide range of resources. Not only do trainees benefit from research undertaken by the highly committed university staff, they also benefit from their own research projects. Examples of research recently undertaken by trainees include: how the outdoor learning environment is used to stimulate learning and social interactions in the Early Years Foundation Stage; the impact of short, daily handwriting sessions on pupils' handwriting ability; and the impact of role play in motivating Year 4 pupils to write.
14. The outstanding deployment of resources is typified by strengths in information communication technology (ICT) to support trainees' and pupils' learning; the quality of partnership schools; and the commitment of university-based staff and school-based mentors to meeting the needs of their trainees. An example of high quality university-based staff input includes their role in national strategy work, particularly in phonics. In addition, subject tutors ensure all key resources are modelled in sessions before school placements, for example interactive whiteboards in all subjects and guided reading materials in English. Resources available to trainees are up-to-date, relevant and of high quality. The Learning Centre, for example, has themed resources such as puppets linked to stories for Literacy. The university has made very good use of any additional funding it has attracted. Its success has been demonstrated by the recruitment of men into primary training and the number of trainees improving their skills in speaking a modern foreign language, far in excess of the 16 places initially allocated.
15. A key strength of provision for trainees is the strong, proactive partnership which is typified by highly committed university and school-based mentors, high levels of consistency which enable trainees to build on each experience and make at least good progress on the course, and excellent levels of support for trainees throughout their training. The consistency and quality across the partnership is ensured through shared documentation outlining the roles of attachment tutors and school-based mentors very well. Particularly effective is the use of joint observations. All involved in the training have a consistent view of trainees' progress through very clear records such as the 'the learning journey' and 'what is a good lesson?' documentation and the record of professional development. Such systems allow trainees' needs to be identified quickly and challenging targets set accordingly. Trainees who, for whatever reason, are at risk of failing or who are struggling receive excellent support, go on to complete the course and secure teaching posts. Inspectors also saw examples of trainees with the potential to be outstanding challenged well through the targets they were set. The partnership's approach to promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity is outstanding.
16. The overarching result of this provider's outstanding overall effectiveness in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is seen in high trainee satisfaction rates, the qualities schools recognise in the trainees, and the over 90 percent

employment rates. Experienced professionals recognise the qualities of trainees from the university. These include: highly motivated trainees who, as seen in research projects, take the lead in their own professional development; their knowledge and understanding of pedagogy; their understanding of, and ability to promote, equality and diversity; their awareness of initiatives such as Rose and Williams and ability to apply them in school, as demonstrated in good quality phonic lessons and planning; and their preparedness to teach in schools with diverse needs. In addition, they reflect very well on their own teaching and the learning of their pupils; they quickly develop very good relationships with their pupils and colleagues; and they plan lessons with a clear focus on pupils' learning, complete with clear learning objectives and well thought out activities.

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

Grade: 1

17. The extent to which the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and to sustain high quality outcomes is outstanding. The excellent leadership of the programmes and the partnership evident at the previous inspection has been maintained by the current post-holders. Leaders have successfully inculcated a culture of self-improvement.
18. The provider evaluates its performance outstandingly well and draws successfully on the views of its stakeholders. 'The learning journey', for example, was established as a result of school-based mentor evaluations, as was the increased emphasis on safeguarding, assessment and planning for phonics. For the latter, a partnership school led a series of workshops to successfully heighten trainees' confidence in this area. The contribution made by stakeholders is therefore strong and includes trainees in research, local authority representation and input from specialists to run awareness sessions such as ones to promote greater understanding of Gypsy-Roma traveller children.
19. External examiner reports are used very well by the provider to quality assure its work and to set the agenda for improvement. An added feature of external examiner work here is their involvement by invitation in the robust moderation meetings to confirm the consistency of trainee attainment. Overall, the provider has a wholly accurate view of its strengths and any areas for improvement.
20. Equally outstanding is the provider's capacity to anticipate and respond to change. All suggestions made by the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully. For example, the quality of written feedback given to trainees by mentors has improved. Subject leaders collect and analyse the feedback given to check it is subject related. As a result, the university has through its virtual learning environment (VLE) provided school-based mentors with exemplars of good practice. Leaders have also demonstrated their awareness of changing demographics and have amended support for trainees and schools accordingly,

for example as a response to the growing proportion of Eastern European heritage children in some of the more rural areas of the partnership.

21. University-based staff use their involvement in regional and national groups well to inform their practice and to prepare their trainees for a career in teaching. For example, members of the ICT team have worked with colleagues from other providers in a regional forum to exemplify characteristics of strong ICT teaching. Leaders have also responded to the national themes and initiatives through, as examples, all PGCE trainees experiencing a two-day placement in special schools and around 60 trainees improving their modern foreign language skills. The promotion of modern foreign languages has been extended beyond the European language placement course thereby widening trainees' participation in this new addition to the primary curriculum. Indeed, the provider's ongoing commitment to equipping trainees very well to teach the full primary curriculum in a time of change and uncertainty is a strength.
22. The programme and partnership leaders' eye for best and current primary practice is one of the keys to the success of this provider in producing employable trainees who display increasingly outstanding attributes. Initiatives recently undertaken include focused visiting lecturer meetings delivering training in the teaching of phonics, and assessment for learning weeks leading to the improvement in both trainees' observational skills and their engagement with special educational needs co-ordinators. In addition, the introduction of special educational needs and English as an additional language has led to trainees having a greater understanding, both in theory and practice, of the Standards relating to achievement and diversity.
23. Also outstanding is the way the provider plans and takes action for improvement. Its improvement planning documentation is comprehensive and identifies the most appropriate priority areas. In addition, the plans are clear and identify key personnel, timescales and robust monitoring and evaluation processes. A very strong feature of the planning is the use of specific success criteria which highlight outcomes for trainees and trainers very clearly.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Context

24. The university works in partnership with around 200 secondary schools to offer ITE leading to the award of qualified teacher status (QTS). Full-time one-year and flexible part-time routes are offered. Trainees gain the award of PGCE, which includes academic credits at Masters level. The provider offers training in the 13-18 age range in business studies and psychology, and in the 11-16 age range in design and technology, English, ICT, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, and science. Some 205 trainees were recruited to start in September 2009, including a very small proportion taking the flexible route.

### Key strengths

25. The key strengths are:
- the recruitment of trainees from diverse backgrounds committed to their subject, who are energetic and enthusiastic about teaching in challenging contexts
  - exemplary tracking of trainees' progress and reflective practice
  - the expertise of subject specialists at the university and in partnership schools who are highly skilled in providing subject specific feedback
  - the skilful integration of professional studies, including assignments valued for their relevance by trainees and schools
  - the continuous and accessible pastoral and academic support provided for trainees, including swift and effective action if concerns are raised
  - the spirit of collaboration across the partnership between the university, schools, Black Country Challenge, and trainees, past and present
  - the vision of course leaders who embrace the views of different stakeholders and who exemplify and set high expectations

### Recommendations

26. To continue the improving trend of different groups of trainees progressing to outstanding attainment, the provider should:
- ensure that all subjects recruit and retain trainees from different groups in order to challenge subject stereotypes
  - evaluate the impact of training on trainees' continued effectiveness as experienced teachers in order to further refine provision
  - strengthen the role of the teacher moderators in providing evaluative feedback to the partnership about specific initiatives and innovations

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

27. The overall effectiveness of secondary provision is outstanding. Trainees make excellent progress in meeting the Standards and develop the professional attributes to succeed in challenging contexts. Consistently high-quality provision and quality assurance ensure that an increasing proportion of trainees make outstanding progress from a diverse range of starting points. The development, quality and use of the record of professional development by the partnership underpin course continuity and prompt a critical edge to communication. Attainment is good overall and systems to track trainees' progress as teachers are impressive. Trainees often continue their professional development and research with the university and quickly go on to fulfil posts of responsibility. Inspection findings confirm the provider's judgements about its provision in the secondary phase, as in the primary phase.
28. The provider recruits suitably qualified and experienced trainees with the potential to become highly effective teachers. University and school-based staff work collaboratively to ensure that priorities combine well when selecting trainees. For example, university approaches to widening participation and partnership schools' strategies to maximise the use of assessment have helped to sharpen interview procedures and shape pre-course tasks. Overall, recruitment is successful in attracting trainees from groups under-represented nationally; all recruitment targets are met or exceeded. Nevertheless, not all subjects achieve a balance or manage to address particular stereotypes. For example, males continue to dominate in design and technology. The range of subjects offered and the number of trainees recruited in each subject closely match local needs. As a consequence, most trainees gain employment in schools in the area, many early on.
29. Critical to the good or better progress made by trainees is the early and precise diagnosis of trainees' individual needs. Where appropriate, subject knowledge enhancement enables trainees to target areas of particular vulnerability. Inspection evidence complemented the convincing impact studies in the provider self-evaluation document (SED) documenting the swift and continuous progress made by trainees who were very well supported in strengthening areas of comparative weakness. In some subjects, for example science, weaknesses at the start of the course were identified as strengths at the end. Precise identification of trainees' strengths from the start enables them to value, apply and share areas of particular expertise and experience, evident for example through the high quality of trainees' action research.
30. Trainees speak very highly of the pastoral and academic support provided. The regular feedback built into course design is supplemented by generous informal access to mentors. Despite high levels of commitment to trainees' welfare a small but significant proportion withdraw or fail to complete within the year, usually due to personal rather than professional issues.

31. In 2008/09 over 90 per cent of trainees progressed to good or outstanding attainment. Inspection findings suggest that the 2009/10 cohort of trainees is on course to sustain the improving three-year trend with attainments higher than the provider's average in mathematics, psychology, and physical education. Attainment in design and technology is high but more trainees have withdrawn from this subject than others. The recruitment of trainees representing different age groups and ethnic backgrounds has improved, whilst retaining the provider's traditionally successful balance of male and females. Generally the achievement of trainees in all identifiable groups is comparable and no significant groups achieve less well. Nevertheless, scope for further improvement exists within particular subjects.
32. Trainees achieve well across all groups of Standards. Trainees in 2009/10 are on course to sustain improvements made in professional knowledge and understanding following a concerted and effective drive to increase trainees' attainment the previous year. Trainees are confident communicators, manage behaviour well, build excellent relationships with pupils and staff, and share their subject knowledge passionately. Trainees define lesson objectives clearly and plan sequences of activities logically. The quality of trainees' self-reflection is consistently strong, analysing their impact on the progress of individuals or groups in order to differentiate starting points. Trainees value the way in which mentors model best practice.
33. The coherence between different elements of training and assessment contributes well to trainees' progress. The design of assignments relevant to current issues in schools contributes to the strong commitment of partnership schools to continuing professional development. For example, a growing proportion of newly qualified teachers and school-based mentors work with the university to gain accreditation at Masters level. Local resources are used very effectively to stimulate and support collaborative work between trainees and established teachers. For example, trainees shared the impact of the creative partnerships initiative on teaching core subjects imaginatively. Past trainees shared a film documenting their success inspiring challenging pupils, used as a training resource with established teachers.

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

Grade: 1

34. The provider has outstanding capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and is able to exemplify continuous improvement since the previous short inspection when management and quality assurance were rated highly. Strong course leaders, new to their roles, have drawn very effectively on their previous experience of the partnership and knowledge of the local context. The new steering committee brings additional clarity to the task of refining any remaining inconsistencies in the quality of provision, taking opportunities to respond to educational change and promote innovation. For example, building on a strong track record in individual subjects and reflecting the thrust of the new secondary curriculum, the introduction of an early two-day placement by

cross-curricular groups of trainees is highly rated by trainees and partnership schools. There is an excellent balance between national concerns in secondary schools for example e-safety, and local issues for example about regional variations in vocational provision.

35. Plans for further improvement are aspirational and very well informed by different stakeholders' views. High expectations are consistent across the partnership. Strengths and weaknesses are evaluated systematically and the information is used judiciously. For example trainees are strategically placed in schools very well matched to their needs. The vast majority consider the range of schools they experience complementary, welcoming challenges because the partnership is explicit in its drive to prepare trainees to succeed in a range of educational settings. While the provider is outward-looking, well aware of initiatives elsewhere, there remains a strong emphasis on taking ownership of new initiatives through adaptation and innovation.
36. While the distinctive characteristics of individual schools are embraced, quality assurance is sufficiently robust to ensure that provision is consistently high quality. In line with recommendations at the last inspection the professional tutors in schools fulfil an enhanced quality assurance role. Regular communication and joint observations contribute to continuous monitoring of overall quality by university and school-based mentors. Teacher moderators, recruited from partnership schools often because they are excellent practitioners, add to quality assurance procedures by monitoring a sample of schools. However, their focus is insufficiently precise to provide specific feedback, for example about the impact of recent initiatives.
37. The university has achieved modest improvements in attendance at mentor training held centrally, and additional training through local clusters of schools is proving effective. The provider is very successful in stimulating collaboration across partnership schools through a shared interest in educational issues. The record of professional development is highly regarded across the partnership not only because it is purposeful and practical but also because its development symbolises the partnership at its best; evolving continuously and collaboratively to develop procedures and practice well-suited to the needs of trainees, the university and partnership schools.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Context

38. The university offers a one-year graduate teacher programme leading to QTS for trainees in the primary and secondary age range. Training on this employment-based route is provided in secondary subjects: English; ICT; mathematics; modern foreign languages, Urdu, art, physical education, music and science. The university has up to 110 allocated places for trainees aspiring to teach in the secondary age range and 30 primary places, including early years. The partnership involves around 120 schools.

### Key strengths

- the high level of support for trainees and the rapid response to meet identified learning needs, which lead to trainees' good progress in secondary and often outstanding progress in the primary phase
- the rigorous selection procedures and challenging pre-course tasks that lead to the recruitment of trainees with the potential to become good or better teachers
- the strong leadership from the well-qualified and highly committed university team whose extensive subject knowledge makes a good contribution to the development of trainees' increasingly effective practice
- the outstanding way in which the partnership anticipates change and prepares trainees to respond to change at local and national level
- the common sense of purpose across the whole partnership, supported by good communication, positive working relationships and a clear commitment to ensuring that all trainees fulfil their potential.

### Recommendations

39. In order to improve the proportion of trainees whose attainment is judged as outstanding and secure better progress for those trainees judged to be satisfactory at the end of the training, the provider should:
- strengthen the role of the professional mentor, in particular, in the secondary phase to ensure that the quality of training offered in all partner schools matches that of the best
  - improve further the ability of all trainees to reflect perceptively on how their teaching has an impact on pupils' learning
  - ensure that improvement planning at all levels focuses more clearly on measurable outcomes to enable the impact of actions taken to be more precisely measured.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

40. The overall effectiveness of the university's employment-based provision is good and has a number of outstanding features. Trainees' overall attainment by the end of the programme is good and improving. The different elements of the training combine effectively and are focused appropriately on meeting individual learning needs. As a result, completion rates are high and trainees make good and increasingly outstanding progress. This is particularly the case in the primary phase where all trainees completing the training have met the Standards to a good or better level for the last two years and current trainees are on target to attain at a similar level. Progression rates to employment are good. Although trainees in both phases evaluate the training very positively, not all trainees in the secondary phase hold positive views on the relevance and validity of the professional studies element of the central training. The university is aware of the need to develop this aspect of provision further, in particular in the context of the trainees' specialist subjects.
41. Trainees are adept in building good working relationships with their pupils. Partnership schools value the very good contribution trainees make to the wider school community and to initiatives beyond the classroom, such as running after school clubs and other activities. The university's high expectations and, similarly, the trainees' high expectations of their own performance underpin the thorough understanding they develop of the professional attributes needed to become a successful teacher. Primary trainees have made very good progress in the teaching of phonics due to tailored training at the university and subsequent follow-up in schools, including contributions from an advanced skills teacher and a leading literacy specialist. Although all trainees willingly accept shared responsibility for meeting their own professional needs, their skills of self-evaluation are sometimes under-developed. Invariably, trainees have good ICT skills and put these to good use in the planning and implementation of their lessons. Good subject knowledge and a sound awareness of educational change enable trainees to make a useful contribution to curriculum development in their employing school.
42. Trainees achieve well because of the good quality of the training and the high level of collaboration between tutors. Taught programmes are designed and implemented to ensure that good practice is modelled, secure subject knowledge is developed and to address important issues, such as early reading, the Williams and the Byron reports and initiatives in the 14-19 curriculum. University tutors know their trainees very well. Excellent personal and professional support results in a rapid response to address identified additional learning needs. Trainees' performance is rigorously tracked and reviewed at regular intervals by all of those involved in the training. Evaluations of trainees' teaching practice are generally accurate and appropriately related to the Standards for newly qualified teachers. The best feedback to trainees is analytical, constructive, related to previous outcomes and records clear and specific guidance on what they need to do to improve further. Although all mentors are highly supportive, not all of them set improvement targets that are

sharply focused on learning and this constrains the ability of a minority of the trainees they support to review their practice.

43. Most trainees evaluate their school-based experiences positively but the planning of the second school experience in the secondary phase is over-reliant on trainees and their school-based tutors. Occasionally, second school placements do not fully complement that of the employing school, or make best use of the culturally and educationally diverse opportunities available across the partnership. Although managed well in the primary phase, there are inconsistent approaches to the transfer of information on trainees' progress between secondary schools. Secondary tutors respond to aspects of concern but this response is reactive rather than a systematic approach to the overall quality assurance of the process at the planning stage to ensure that all trainees make rapid progress from the start.
44. Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures are characterised by high completion rates and improving retention in both phases. Challenging at-entry and pre-course tasks ensure the recruitment of trainees with the potential to become good teachers and provide a strong foundation for the early identification of individual learning needs. Although required academic qualifications at entry are sometimes waived, potential risks are calculated and take good account of each candidate's ability to succeed. Competition for places is high with many courses over-subscribed. A research project is underway to identify ways in which the university can increase further the number of trainees recruited from under-represented groups. The proportion of male trainees recruited to the primary phase is relatively high.
45. The provider ensures the highly efficient and effective deployment of all available resources. The well-qualified and research-focused university team demonstrate a clear commitment to securing high quality outcomes across all aspects of the training. Their expertise is valued partnership-wide and seen as making a good contribution to the professional development of staff in partnership schools; for example through their involvement in research and providing access to Masters level accreditation. Excellent use is made of external expertise to enhance the training. Trainees have very good access to up-to-date technology at the university. They make good use of on-line resources available through a VLE. The very good communications across the partnership have been developed further; for example, the use of e-notebooks has enabled improved communications between trainees and university tutors. The efficient use of the collective resource of the university and the partnership schools is highly effective in ensuring that trainees meet the standards well.
46. The overall consistency of the quality of training is good. There is a shared sense of purpose to achieve the best outcomes for all trainees in this strong and cohesive partnership. The very good communications established between the university and the schools are valued and act as a key driver for trainees' successful outcomes. Trainees are effusive in their praise for the high level of support offered and trainers' good response to meet their identified learning needs. Although never less than satisfactory, in a minority of instances school-based mentors work is not as effective as it could be. In some cases, mentors

have limited experience in teacher training or have insufficient time to fulfil the role to the expected high standard. A minority of trainees do not consistently receive their entitlement to protected time with mentors or for independent study.

47. The principles of equality and diversity are promoted very well across all aspects of the training. An accurate and thorough initial needs analysis leads to the development of detailed initial training plans. Trainees feel well-supported and confident that, if concerns are raised, the action taken will be rapid and effective. Personalisation is a key feature of the training. The programme of professional studies pays due regard to the promotion of equality and diversity. Activities are designed to develop trainees' awareness of the skills needed; for example, in working with pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. As a result, trainees have a good understanding of related issues but not all of them have the opportunity to practise these skills in their lessons. Recruitment of black and minority ethnic trainees across both phases, and male trainees in to the primary phase, is improving. The implementation of the university's equality and diversity policies is monitored appropriately and good account is taken of trainees' views.

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

Grade: 2

48. The leadership and management of the provision and the partnership demonstrate good capacity to secure further improvement in achieving high quality outcomes for trainees. The overall proportion of trainees judged to be good or better has increased and all trainees in the primary phase have completed the training to a good or better standard for the last two years. Retention and employment rates are good.
49. The success of the training is underpinned by a strong and collegiate approach, in a partnership that is valued by headteachers for the good contribution it makes to recruitment and workforce development in local schools. Effective leadership and very good communications drive a clear sense of purpose and a strong partnership in which roles and responsibilities are understood well. Differentiated approaches and flexible attendance have improved school-based trainers' access to professional development sessions at the university. The university team make early visits to trainees in schools with less experienced mentors, or where particular concerns are raised. Moderation processes include joint observations between university tutors and school staff. This has supported the accurate overall judgement of trainee performance very well.
50. Established central quality assurance arrangements are increasingly successful in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees by the end of the training. Self-evaluation takes account of a range of relevant information, including trainees' views, external examiners' comments and the provider's own evaluation of individual partners' contribution to the training. Nevertheless, university evaluations of each school's contribution are not formally shared and schools

are not engaged systematically in the evaluation of the training experiences they provide. There is scope to strengthen the quality assurance role of the school-based professional tutor, in order to ensure consistent, timely and proactive intervention in cases of trainees' identified need, and to increase further accountability in partnership schools.

51. The partnership demonstrates outstanding capacity to anticipate change and respond to new developments in order to secure further improvements in outcomes for trainees. For example, in the partnership's response to National Curriculum priorities to prepare trainees for the new secondary curriculum, workshops on e-safety and in the introduction of new programmes, such as the well-received subject route in Urdu. In primary, this response is underpinned by a keen focus on subject initiatives, practical application of the creative curriculum and evidence of the latest thinking in drama and music. As the partnership covers much of the Black Country, it is integral to, and supportive of, the 'Black Country Challenge' initiative to raise standards in local schools. University trainers are experts in their subject field and participate in research and development activity at local and national level.
52. Key issues arising from self-evaluation that have the potential to make a difference to trainees' outcomes are identified and appropriate action is taken. For example, the introduction of more efficient and effective tracking of trainees' progress has led to earlier intervention, improvements in retention and in the number of trainees attaining at the higher levels. Revisions to individual training plans, arrangements to support the development of subject knowledge for teaching and the trainees' induction programme have resulted in improved evaluations of these elements of the training.
53. Although the self-evaluation process is thorough, action points and success criteria in improvement plans lack detail in relation to the development points identified through the university annual monitoring review and the self-evaluation document. Actions to bring about further improvements are insufficiently focused on measurable, intended outcomes for trainees. The plan is monitored to ensure that work is on track, but there is scope to include more interim milestones for evaluating the impact of actions taken. Nevertheless, the partnership has ensured that the majority of trainees fulfil their potential, as indicated by the high completion and good progression to employment. It is aware of the need to strengthen the involvement of partner schools in quality assurance in order to improve further the quality and consistency of school-based training.

## Initial teacher education for the further education system

### Context

54. The university works in partnership with ten further education colleges and two other organisations to provide pre-service and in-service training for teachers and trainers across the further education sector. Courses lead to the diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector (DTLLS). They meet the statutory requirements and are endorsed by Standards Verification UK. The partnership offers full-time pre-service, and part-time in-service provision, including skills for life courses. At the time of inspection, there were 862 trainees enrolled on these programmes, of whom 133 were on the skills for life courses.

### Key strengths

55. The key strengths are:
- the good progress made by most trainees, including those with very difficult personal circumstances
  - very high quality pastoral and academic support from tutors and mentors that successfully retains trainees at risk of leaving and enables them to achieve
  - very informative and constructive feedback to trainees on their teaching and assignments which plays a key role in helping them to make good progress
  - highly effective use of resources by trainers and trainees to support teaching and learning
  - very good promotion of equality and diversity in training and by trainees in their lessons
  - very good awareness of, and responsiveness to, local and national initiatives.

### Recommendations

56. In order to improve the quality of the provision, the partnership should:
- improve the monitoring of the quality of mentoring so that all trainees benefit from the best practice, some of which is excellent
57. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:
- improve the quality of target-setting so that individual learning plans are more meaningful and clearly identify how trainees can make further progress
  - improve pre-service trainees' understanding of important policy issues in the lifelong learning sector
  - refine further the systems to determine the level of trainees' attainments so that trainees are more aware of their achievement and progress.
58. In order to improve its capacity for further improvement, the partnership should:

- ensure that the very effective self-assessment process, that draws on a wide range of evidence and culminates in an annual monitoring report, is accurately reflected in the self-assessment document, so that all partners are clear about the partnership's strengths and areas for development.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

59. The overall effectiveness of the partnership in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good. Trainees' attainment is good. Supported by a thorough moderation process, the team considers the attainment of trainees at the pass/fail boundary very rigorously. However, the system recently introduced by the university to judge attainment is not yet fully understood or applied consistently within the partnership. Trainees at risk of not completing the course receive extra support to help them to succeed. Most success rates have improved over the last three years and are good, with no significant differences for any groups. Trainees on the skills for life provision, that includes literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, are particularly successful.
60. Trainees progress well because they develop their academic writing, research skills and assignments so effectively during the course. Their assignments are logically structured and well-written. They contain evidence of clear analysis, critical evaluation and accurate referencing. Skills for life trainees with little or no teaching experience when they start the course make at least good progress and develop a wide range of effective teaching skills. The development of trainees' skills in reflective practice is high. Trainees are adept at embedding numeracy and literacy in lessons to develop their students' skills. The use of the electronic personal development plan is very variable. In the best cases, trainees use it clearly and effectively to aid and demonstrate their progress.
61. Trainees are enthusiastic, motivated and keen to progress. Most trainees improve their teaching skills to a good standard by the end of their course. Most have used the theory gained from the course to inform and improve their teaching practice. Trainees' subject knowledge is good. They use their industrial and commercial experience in lessons to enrich learners' experience. Trainees plan lessons in great detail with clear and specific learning outcomes. Trainees use a wide range of teaching methods, questioning techniques and learning activities in their lessons. They have a good rapport with their students and have a genuine commitment to personalised learning. They do not, however, always use a wide range of assessment methods to check exactly what students have learnt. A few trainees experience difficulties in managing challenging groups of students. Most trainees have a wide and relevant range of teaching experience.
62. Recruitment and selection arrangements are detailed, thorough and applied consistently. Teacher trainers make good use of the selection activities such as micro-teaching and reflective writing to identify trainees' initial strengths and areas for development, but they miss opportunities to set particularly

challenging targets for more advanced trainees. The analysis of recruitment data by different groups of trainees is under-developed. Despite not marketing its provision directly to under-represented groups, the proportion of such groups has increased and success rates have improved. Managers collect destination data which show that about two-thirds of trainees progress to teaching in the lifelong learning sector. Actions are planned to improve the survey coverage and response rate. The diagnosis of trainees' literacy and numeracy needs is good, but a few trainees do not receive support promptly.

63. Training and assessment are good. Trainees receive very constructive feedback on all aspects of their professional development. Trainers mark trainees' assignments carefully, correct grammar and spelling thoroughly and provide detailed formative feedback. Trainees use blogs effectively to discuss and reflect on issues of concern, to seek reassurance and test out ideas. Mentors meet trainees frequently and provide very good support. Trainees value highly the subject-specific advice they receive from mentors and consider it instrumental in their professional development.
64. Tutors are very effective role models and so trainees model their practice in their own lessons. Trainees benefit from discussing their targets at review meetings and after observations but some targets are insufficiently challenging and individual learning plans are not used to maximum effect in a minority of partner organisations. If a trainee has difficulties, tutors and mentors react quickly to provide very good pastoral and academic support. Not all trainees on the pre-service course have a sufficiently in-depth understanding of important issues in the lifelong learning sector, such as the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, curriculum developments for young people aged 14 to 19, safeguarding and community cohesion.
65. Resources at the university and in partner organisations are good. Trainees develop a very good range of teaching and learning resources. The university provision enables trainees to develop their ICT skills particularly well. University teacher trainers are well-qualified, experienced and skilled practitioners, who maintain a strong engagement in research. The university prioritises the deployment of resources for skills for life teacher education courses, in order to support workforce development in the region. A high proportion of trainers and mentors participate in the many relevant staff development activities on offer.
66. The quality of provision across the partnership is good. The range of quality assurance processes is wide. It includes very effective annual monitoring activities, joint observations, team teaching and joint marking. Assessment moderation between the university and partner colleges is well-established, but the guidance to organise this process is under-developed. Operational meetings are effective and include contributions from partners towards curriculum and module developments. Communication in the partnership is good. Providers work closely with their university link tutors who are accessible and provide good advice. The partnership considers the advice of external examiners seriously and takes appropriate actions to address areas of concern. Staff welcome proposals from trainees on areas for improvement and amend

curriculum content and timing as a result. The systematic formal monitoring of the quality of mentoring is under-developed.

67. The promotion of equality and diversity is embedded well within the courses and, as a consequence, trainees' awareness of relevant policies and best practice is good. Trainees are well equipped to teach in a diverse society although a minority do not recognise the wider dimensions of cultural and socio-political diversity. Trainees take significant steps to accommodate the needs of learners requiring additional learning support. They plan well for the use of differentiated materials, activities and assessment strategies to meet the wide ranging needs of those they teach.

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

Grade: 2

68. The partnership's capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to secure further improvements is good. Trainees' success rates have improved each year since the current courses started. The self-evaluation process, as reflected in the university's annual monitoring report is very good. It draws appropriately on qualitative and quantitative evidence from a variety of stakeholders to inform its accurate judgements. Managers use trainees' views well to evaluate aspects of the provision. Partners' self-assessment reports are evaluative and highlight key strengths and areas for improvement. However, the university's self-evaluation document for this phase bears little resemblance to the other quality documents cited above. It is too descriptive and suggests grades that are overly generous.
69. The partnership's capacity to anticipate change and prepare for, and respond to, national, regional and local initiatives is good. Managers at all levels anticipate change very effectively. The university responds to local needs and works closely with its partners regarding shortage subjects and the promotion of placements for pre-service trainees. Partners have a good understanding of lifelong learning in the West Midlands, especially in relation to skills for life need and provision. The university leads skills for life developments in the Black Country region and, in response to local need, it offers integrated teacher training routes and staff development programmes in all three skills for life areas: literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages. University trainers participate in research and development activity at local and national level and involve current and former trainees.
70. The effectiveness of the partnership in planning and taking action for improvement is good. Managers amend their improvement plan frequently to take account of new intelligence and developments. They check the implementation of the plan rigorously at monthly programme management meetings with partners. The university has taken very effective action over the last four years to support weaker partners and it facilitates the sharing of good practice between partners. Although the quality of mentoring has improved since the last inspection, this remains an area for further development. Good

use is made of external examiners' reports and feedback from trainees and partner organisations.

## Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Birmingham Metropolitan College  
City of Wolverhampton College  
Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering, Cosford  
Dudley College  
South Staffordshire College  
Sandwell College  
Solihull College  
South Birmingham College  
Telford College of Arts and Technology  
Walsall College  
Worcester College of Technology  
Wolverhampton Adult Education Service.

## 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?		1	1	2	2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	2	2	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1	1	2	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	1	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?	1	1	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	2	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?	1	1	2	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?	1	1	2	2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?	1	1	2	1
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?	1	1	2	2

<sup>1</sup> The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11; Ofsted November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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