

University of Worcester

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Inspection dates
Lead inspector

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Introduction

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

Key to inspection grades

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

Explanation of terms used in this report

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

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

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

The provider

3. The University of Worcester offers, within its Institute of Education, initial teacher education leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) in the primary and secondary phases. It also works in partnership with two colleges of further education to offer in-service initial teacher education for teachers in the further education system. The university also offers an employment-based route (EBR) leading to qualified teacher status, although this is accredited as a separate provider by the Training and Development Agency as the University of Worcester EBR and is the subject of a separate inspection report. This provision is fully integrated with the university's other initial teacher education programmes. There is close collaboration with a senior management group having oversight of all teacher education programmes.
4. The university has very close links with local authorities and other agencies in the region to ensure that its teacher education provision is closely aligned with regional needs. This includes masters-level and other programmes in professional development. The university's Institute of Education also takes the

lead in working with other departments in the university to ensure that teacher education takes account of developments in other aspects of the children and young people's workforce.

A commentary on the provision

5. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
 - the strength of the relationships with local authorities and other agencies and the way this leads to the accurate identification and excellent meeting of local and regional needs for teachers; this is evidenced by high levels of local recruitment and by the high proportion of former trainees in employment in the region
 - the strength of the partnerships with schools and colleges
 - the high quality of the personal and professional support for trainees ensuring that individual needs are met exceptionally well
 - the culture of continuous improvement that permeates all teacher education programmes.
6. A particularly strong feature of the provision is the close integration of all teacher education within the university and the effectiveness of the collaboration across all programmes. The very strong senior leadership team provides a clear framework and vision that leads to highly effective sharing of best practice and innovative developments. This has been instrumental in continually improving the quality of the provision and the outcomes for all trainees.
7. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees on all programmes:
 - using the expertise and diversity across the partnerships to improve trainees' understanding of teaching in a diverse society
 - undertaking more precise analysis of the outcomes for trainees to secure further incremental improvement.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

8. The University of Worcester offers a three-year Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in primary initial teacher education leading to QTS and full-time and flexible post-graduate routes in primary education. All post-graduate trainees are registered for the post graduate certificate of education. At the time of the inspection there were 357 undergraduate trainees and 112 primary post-graduate trainees. The partnership is well established and the university works in close collaboration with a range of schools in the region, and in particular, with schools in the nearest local authorities.

Key Strengths

9. The key strengths are:
 - rigorous selection processes leading to the recruitment of trainees that are self-motivated and demonstrate high levels of commitment and personal organisation, and to the high retention rates on each course
 - subject tutors' knowledge of the primary curriculum and their commitment to research that ensures trainees receive excellent up-to-date understanding of national initiatives and current primary subject knowledge
 - the clarity of the systems and documentation that enable partner schools to provide high quality training
 - trainees' ability to critically reflect and improve their practice
 - trainees' confident use of technology that enhances their planning and delivery of high quality lessons
 - highly effective personalisation of training linked closely with strong pastoral support that results in the majority of trainees making outstanding progress.

Recommendation

10. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment further, the university should:
 - develop further trainees' understanding of how to teach in a diverse society.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

11. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding as a result of a carefully personalised training programme. The majority of trainees make outstanding progress to attain at an outstanding level by the end of their training as a result of high quality training. Only a small proportion of trainees are judged to be satisfactory at the end of their training, and these have the potential to become at least good teachers over time. The proportion of trainees who are successfully awarded QTS and go on to secure teaching posts is well above the national average. Many former trainees are employed in schools in the region and often in partnership schools. There are no significant differences in the achievement of any identifiable groups.
12. The retention and employment rates for primary trainees are well above the national average. This is because procedures for recruitment and selection are rigorous and result in the majority of trainees demonstrating high levels of commitment and enthusiasm, together with the potential to become outstanding teachers. Interviews are highly personalised and draw on a variety of evidence, including relevant pre-course experience. This enables both the interviewer and the applicant to make informed decisions about the suitability of the candidates and the course and encourages a high degree of self-motivation, demonstrated through trainees' high levels of commitment and personal organisation. The university recruits effectively from a good representation of backgrounds, ages and ethnicities with many trainees bringing experience from a variety of prior professions. This diversity adds effectively to the overall experience of trainees. The university has been successful in exceeding its target to improve the number of men recruited into primary teaching. Recruitment from minority ethnic groups remains lower than sector average but this is representative of the local community.
13. All elements of the training combine very well to ensure that the majority of trainees make outstanding progress. Fundamental to this success is the high level of commitment and enthusiasm of all university-based trainers. They know their trainees very well, as a result of the effective selection and induction processes, and respond quickly and flexibly to trainees' individual needs. University-based trainers are highly experienced and know their partnership schools very well. They closely monitor trainees' progress to ensure that provision is tailored to meet their specific needs and to secure high-quality outcomes. Visiting school tutors actively monitor the quality of school-based training and are quick to implement intervention programmes whenever weak practice arises. The duty of care and attention to the personal well-being of all trainees is excellent.
14. Assessment systems are securely embedded and fully understood by trainees and trainers. School mentors play a vital role in the assessment of trainees and in monitoring their progress. They provide regular focused mentor sessions which include formal lesson observations and detailed feedback. They are trained well and carry out their roles and responsibilities with a high degree of

professionalism. Partners work together effectively in promoting trainees' learning and development which leads to coherent training experiences and accurate target setting to ensure trainees' good, and often better, progress. Handbooks make clear the roles and responsibilities expected for all stakeholders to enable them to provide high quality training. Well embedded communication systems ensure the university's response to concerns is prompt and very efficiently handled. Excellent communications also ensure the close monitoring of trainees' progress and development during teaching placements. Academic assignments are matched closely to support and develop trainees' understanding and skills in classroom practice.

15. Schools use a wide range of training strategies to support trainees' professional development. Schools greatly appreciate the support and training they receive and mentors work closely with visiting tutors to ensure that trainees have every opportunity to experience a wide range of teaching approaches and develop highly-effective skills in lesson planning and behaviour management. Recent training provided by the university for mentors has further strengthened mentors' ability to identify trainees who demonstrate outstanding skills in teaching and learning and to provide high levels of challenge. As a result, more trainees in this current cohort have been identified as outstanding in their levels of achievement. This is also because the quality of training and support is consistently high across the partnership. There is a strong sense of shared understanding and common sense of purpose throughout the whole partnership.
16. University-based training is well planned and includes a broad range of strategies to ensure trainees receive an outstanding training experience. School placements are very carefully planned to meet the needs of each trainee. Regular opportunities are woven throughout the training to develop within trainees a strong culture of reflective practice. Trainees say they appreciate the ways in which tutors lead by example and demonstrate best practice that can then be applied to teaching experiences. Very good use is made of outside speakers to further enhance training and development opportunities.
17. The majority of trainees demonstrate an excellent up-to-date understanding of national initiatives and current primary subject pedagogy. They use information and communication technology very effectively in their planning and teaching. This is because subject leaders possess expert knowledge of the primary curriculum through their on-going commitment to educational research. Course leaders ensure trainees' knowledge of learning, diversity, curriculum design and pedagogy is seamlessly woven into their training and combines with new knowledge and practices as they emerge. As a result, trainees are particularly well prepared to teach children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is reflected in their carefully prepared lesson plans. Equally, training and opportunities to teach pupils who speak English as an additional language are well embedded. However, trainees' understanding of how to teach pupils from a diverse range of cultural and other backgrounds is limited. In schools where this is not an immediate priority mentors do not routinely discuss this with trainees.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

18. Leadership and management at all levels are able to demonstrate outstanding capacity for further improvements because self-evaluation across all areas of provision is rigorous and appropriately focused on improving trainees' outcomes. Self-evaluation involves all stakeholders, including former trainees and their schools. As a result of the comprehensive monitoring and in-depth review, action plans have led to a marked trend of improvement in progress and attainment for trainees since the previous inspection. In addition, significant investment has been made in the training of mentors to ensure they have the skills necessary to make secure assessments of trainees' progress and achievement and, consequently, the majority of trainees who complete the course are judged to be outstanding and this proportion is increasing year on year.
19. The university effectively demonstrates a relentless watching brief on change that guarantees there are no gaps in provision for trainees. It possesses an impressive track record to demonstrate its ability to anticipate and drive change at local and national levels. Tutors often use their own research activity to drive change and improvements in the provision.
20. Leaders at all levels are a committed and cohesive team that regularly and accurately reviews the impact of their work across all areas of provision. Strategies to address new initiatives and national developments in pedagogy are securely woven into the high-quality provision that has led to the university's success in producing first-class trainee teachers. For example, in anticipating both the findings and the report of the independent review into the primary curriculum, the university designed a series of new creative curriculum modules so that trainees could gain a working knowledge of how traditional curriculum boundaries can be blurred so that new knowledge and experiences could be introduced into the primary classroom. Resources are targeted appropriately to meet the demands created by change and innovation. Effective communications ensure all stakeholders are clear about areas for improvement and their role in helping to achieve them. Leaders also ensure provision reflects the most recent changes in national directives. For example, within the local region the university is leading the way for the launch of the new materials for teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, trainees frequently find that within schools they are at the forefront of innovative practice and are in a position to provide additional capacity within their placement schools.
21. Successful completion, retention and employment rates remain significantly above the national averages. With areas for further improving outcomes for trainees accurately identified, external and internal moderators are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. All leaders and trainers work effectively together to ensure that high-quality outcomes for all trainees are maintained.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

22. The University of Worcester provides initial teacher education in a range of secondary subjects: business studies and economics, design and technology, English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, psychology and science. Trainees are placed on either an 11-16 or an 11-18 route depending on a range of factors, including subject knowledge and experience. This is monitored carefully through the course to ensure that trainees are prepared for the most suitable age range. A flexible route is available for trainees in six of the nine subjects. Trainees can opt for additional pathways: teaching learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities; and citizenship. Trainees in physical education can opt for a 14-19 pathway. The provider also offers enhancement in three 14-19 diploma routes: business administration and finance, hospitality and society, health & development. The university is also the regional provider for developments in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). At the time of the inspection there were close to 200 trainees on secondary programmes.
23. All trainees are registered for the professional graduate certificate of education. All trainees then have the option to apply for the masters-level post-graduate certificate of education.

Key strengths

24. The key strengths are:
- the comprehensive and rigorous cycle of self-evaluation, improvement planning, implementation and monitoring with absolute clarity of focus on improving the outcomes for trainees
 - the coherence between the elements of the course and the impact of this on trainees' progress
 - the close attention to meeting trainees' individual needs, particularly in allocating school placements
 - extremely high quality personal support for trainees and the impact this has on their progress and on retention
 - the additional features of the course that lead to trainees being extremely well prepared for all aspects of teaching
 - the effectiveness of selection procedures in identifying trainees' potential to become at least good teachers.

Recommendations

25. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:

- develop further trainees' understanding of how to teach in a diverse society
- encourage all mentors to use a wider range of training strategies and match these more closely to the trainees' targets
- undertake a more precise analysis of trainees' achievements to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

26. The quality of the outcomes for trainees is very high as a result of outstanding provision. More than one-third of trainees are judged to be outstanding at the end of their training, with this proportion increasing significantly, and with most trainees judged to be good or better. Only a small proportion of trainees are judged to be satisfactory at the end of the training, and these have the potential to become at least good teachers over time. Trainees' final attainment is in line with their starting points in each subject. There are no significant differences in the achievement of any identifiable groups. The proportion of trainees who successfully complete the training and are awarded QTS, and the proportion who go on to secure teaching posts, have both risen to be well above the national average. Many former trainees are employed in schools in the region and many in partnership schools.
27. Trainees demonstrate marked commitment and enthusiasm for teaching and for their subjects. They are confident teachers and build effective working relationships with the students they teach. Many trainees need to undertake significant subject knowledge development; they do so rigorously and thoroughly, supported well by tutors and by staff in their placement schools. They apply this subject knowledge effectively in their planning and teaching. Trainees' understanding of the need to match teaching to the individual needs of students is a strength of many. Trainees have a good understanding of how to teach students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. This focus on individual needs is also demonstrated in trainees' high quality critical reflection and self-evaluation; this makes an important contribution to the progress trainees make throughout the course. A noteworthy characteristic of Worcester trainees is their preparation for teachers' wider roles in schools; for example their understanding of safeguarding, teachers' pastoral role and how to teach personal, social and health education. This is recognised and highly appreciated by the headteachers of partnership schools. It is one reason why so many former trainees are employed in partnership, and other, schools in the region.
28. Trainees' understanding of how to teach students from a diverse range of cultural and other backgrounds is less well developed, largely because mentors do not routinely support trainees in transferring the lessons learned from central training to their own practice. In schools where this is not an immediate priority mentors do not routinely discuss this with trainees. A small proportion of trainees have a limited understanding of subject pedagogy, although they are secure in their understanding of the practicalities of how to teach their subject.

29. The high completion and employment rates indicate that the trainees recruited are highly suitable for the course with the potential to become at least good teachers. Selection procedures are extremely effective in identifying this potential; this is important as, particularly in shortage subjects, a significant proportion of trainees are not from traditional subject backgrounds. Much effective work has been done in increasing applications in all subject areas enabling the university to make selections from stronger fields. While recruitment from under-represented groups is lower than national levels, it is entirely appropriate for the region.
30. The overwhelming majority of trainees make significant progress from their starting points and attain at least at a good level. This is because the tutors set high expectations, have a clear understanding of each trainee's strengths and areas for development, and ensure the training is matched well to trainees' professional development. Very good early identification of strengths and needs leads to trainees making rapid early progress. There is a very good balance of a more holistic view of trainees' progress with close attention given to individual and groups of the QTS Standards. Trainees receive frequent and informative feedback on their teaching and progress, and they are set targets that ensure they know what to do to develop further. Their own periodic reviews complement the feedback from mentors and contribute well to their professional development.
31. There is strong coherence between the different elements of the course and trainees are able to combine these well to ensure their overall progress; this coherence is generally supported well by mentors. Trainees often work in strong 'mentoring departments' where they work with a number of teachers trained by the university as mentors. In these cases, trainees receive high quality feedback and develop rapidly through the use of a range of approaches to training. Within each subject, tutors and mentors have a shared understanding of good practice and strive to present trainees with a clear vision of what constitutes excellent teaching in their subject. This is achieved through the full involvement of mentors in course review and development, and the good attendance and high quality of mentor meetings. A small minority of mentors do not support trainees well in developing deep understanding of subject pedagogy alongside knowledge of how to teach their subject. One mentor put this very well as 'moving them from the how to the why'. Additionally, in some schools trainees experience a narrow range of training strategies with little use of collaborative teaching or the use of coaching matched to trainees' specific targets.
32. The extremely high quality personal support for all trainees is a noticeable feature of the training. When trainees experience difficulties and need additional support there is very rapid detection and speedy and effective intervention. One particularly strong feature is how well the tutors know the partnership schools to ensure that trainees are matched carefully to schools that are best able to meet their professional needs, carefully balanced with personal circumstances. This clearly demonstrates highly effective use of the resources available and contributes to the high retention and successful completion rates.

33. The university rightly prides itself on turning out well-rounded and well-prepared trainees. This is done through additional pathways, supplementary options and extending the training beyond what is required to meet the QTS Standards. This is particularly noticeable in the attention given to: teaching students who are gifted and talented, and to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; 14-19 diplomas; and work on STEM developments. These enable all trainees to have secure understanding of these issues while providing greater depth to meet individual interests and aspirations.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

34. The provider's capacity for improvement is outstanding. The continuous improvement of the provision is driven by strong senior and subject leadership. High quality outcomes have been sustained where they were already at a high level, and significantly improved in other areas; there is a marked trend of improvement. The proportion of trainees judged to be outstanding is increasing and overall attainment is improving. Retention, successful completion and employment rates have improved and are now sustained at levels significantly above the national averages. Improvements have been made to the procedures for monitoring trainees' overall progress; these have led to improvements in the feedback and targets set for trainees and to their progress. This has been instrumental in raising trainees' attainment. Even greater collaboration between subjects means that best practice is now effectively shared to the benefit of all. There is a strong culture across the secondary provision of always striving to improve. The university is highly effective in anticipating and responding to external change, as well as identifying for itself improvements and further developments.
35. All relevant changes that could have an impact on trainees' outcomes, and on preparing them for the early stages of their teaching career, are included in the regular reviews of the course. The university's response carefully considers the implications across the partnership, with a clear focus on ensuring that trainees maintain or further develop their understanding. The impact of actions on the outcomes for trainees is monitored carefully. The outward-looking nature of the provider means that it is well-tuned to external developments. The high quality of self-evaluation means that it is fully aware of internal drivers for change.
36. Secondary trainees have a deep understanding of the recent changes to the curriculum; many have contributed fully to discussions in their schools. They are also fully aware of developments in 14-19 education and the implications for their own subjects. They are up-to-date with current debates about teaching in their specialist subject. Trainees are also aware of how changes to the primary curriculum, and the reviews of teaching of early reading and mathematics, have implications for their secondary subject teaching. Senior managers and tutors are always considering ways of ensuring that all trainees are prepared well for the full role of teachers in secondary schools. Tutors use their own research and work in their subject fields to ensure they themselves

are fully informed about relevant developments. In some cases, they are initiating or fully involved in key developments.

37. The cycle of self-evaluation, improvement planning, taking action, implementing change and monitoring is rigorous. Self-evaluation involves all of the partnership, including former trainees and their schools, provides comprehensive data and information, and is incisive. It covers all aspects of the provision and is securely based on the analysis of the impact on outcomes for trainees. The evaluation leads to clarity about what is working well and what needs further development or improvement. Improvement planning is informed well by the self-evaluation, and is focused precisely on key priorities and on improving outcomes for trainees. All actions are monitored in terms of their impact on the outcomes for trainees. Schools in the partnership are clear about the priorities for improvement and about their role in securing them.
38. The current self-evaluation and improvement planning are securely based in detailed analysis of the outcomes for trainees, particularly attainment of the QTS Standards; this has led to significant improvements in the quality of the provision. However, there is some lack of focus on the fine detail of trainees' achievements to secure further, more incremental, improvement.

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Context

39. The University of Worcester operates in partnership with two further education colleges to provide in-service training for teachers and trainers from settings across the further education system. The trainees are from a wide range of subject and other specialist areas. Some of the trainees are new to teaching and others have had considerable experience. The trainees in one partner college include a significant number from further education settings outside the college. At the time of the inspection, 99 trainees were enrolled on a course leading to the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) at level 5. The diploma is validated by the university and endorsed by Standards Verification UK. It satisfies the Secretary of State's requirements for further education teachers. Courses are designed for part-time attendance, on one day each week over two years. Trainees attend additional study days throughout the year to focus on and improve specific aspects of their teaching, knowledge and understanding. In-service provision in the two partner colleges was evaluated by the inspection.

Key strengths

40. The key strengths are:

- the good support for trainees which enables the majority to make good progress
- the ability of trainees to reflect on their practice to support their progress
- the collaborative and productive partnerships
- the quality of the monitoring and action planning for improvement.

Required actions

41. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment the partnership must:

- ensure that all trainees teach in suitable accommodation.

Recommendations

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

- improve the availability and quality of mentor support for trainees who work in further education settings outside colleges
- improve trainees' understanding of how to teach in a diverse society
- ensure that all trainees have an appropriate breadth of teaching experiences.

43. In order to further improve the quality and consistency of the provision the partnership should:

- implement systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of contributions made by mentors to the training programme
- undertake a more precise analysis of trainees' achievements to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

44. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good. Trainees' attainment is good in both partner colleges. Retention rates are high. Most trainees remain on their training programme and successfully complete the course. The provider's self-evaluation indicates an improving trend in success rates. The variations in retention and success between the two partner colleges are not significant and have usually been due to a loss of trainee teaching hours leading to a withdrawal from the course. The partnership provides good support to those at risk of leaving. There are no significant variations in the attainment of different groups of trainees.
45. The partnership's data states that 84% of trainees who completed the programme in July 2009 were graded as good or better. Using its new and more thorough numerical grading system, and based on trainee assessments throughout the current academic year, the partnership expects this to have increased to around 89% for those trainees completing in July 2010. Trainees make good progress as a result of the good personal and professional support which is effectively tailored to their individual needs. Most trainees continue to progress well after their training and many take on course leadership and mentoring roles. Those from other further education settings often increase their teaching hours to become full-time trainers or secure a teaching post in a college setting.
46. Trainees are highly motivated to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. They receive good support, coaching and advice from their tutors and mentors. As a result of their training they have a better understanding of the characteristics of good teaching and learning and they make improvements in their professional practice. They are better able to plan lessons to meet individual needs, to provide differentiated learning opportunities and to make better use of technology in their classes. Their classroom management improves as a result of the training. They are more adept at managing the teaching and learning environments of different groups of learners at a variety of levels of learning. Trainees are encouraged to take risks in planning teaching and learning and they develop a wider range of teaching methods and strategies to better engage and interest learners. Frequent peer observation plays an important role in developing trainees' understanding and self-confidence.
47. Trainees improve their self-evaluation and critical awareness through good development of reflective practice. The partnership has focused on this aspect of training with clear success. The effective training and modelling of professional practice have encouraged trainees to analyse and successfully develop their own teaching and learning. In particular, it has heightened their

awareness of personalised learning and their ability to introduce more effective ways to engage their own learners. Good attention is paid to raising awareness and developing knowledge of national initiatives, for example, Every Child Matters, safeguarding and developments in provision for 14-19 year olds.

48. Most trainees are assigned a mentor who is also a subject specialist. This, combined with good support from their own college subject department, assists them in the development of their subject knowledge and how to apply this to their teaching. Mentors are clear about the particular needs of their mentees and they support them well. A few trainees do not have the support of a subject specialist mentor and rely on the college to support them in further developing and updating specialist knowledge. A small number of trainees from settings outside the colleges have less frequent contact with mentors and are sometimes not able to have face-to-face meetings. Both have an inhibiting, but not overly significant, effect on these trainees' progress.
49. As a result of their training, trainees have a good general awareness and understanding of how to promote equality and diversity and have a clear focus on meeting individual needs. Promoting equality and diversity is integrated well into the training programme. However, for many, their training has insufficient impact on their professional practice; where they do develop understanding, this is often the result of discussion with colleagues rather than the application of strategies and approaches learned as a result of training sessions or critical reflection about their performance. Most trainees are satisfactorily prepared, through their training, to teach in a culturally and otherwise diverse society.
50. The partnership ensures that minimum requirements for breadth and range of teaching experience are met. However, some trainees do not have the opportunity to teach across a wide range of levels or to teach 14-19 year olds as well as adults. The range and breadth of teaching experience is often narrower for those who are employed in further education settings outside colleges and some have part-time or temporary contracts which limit the scope and extent of the teaching experience available to them.
51. Recruitment and selection are thorough and pay good attention to equality and diversity. The trainees recruited are suitable for the programme. Trainees on the course broadly reflect the different groups in the local area though the partnership acknowledges the need to improve recruitment of minority ethnic groups in one partner college. Further work is now being carried out to address this concern. It was noted in one partner college that the number of male trainees recruited was relatively small compared to the number of females. Careful promotion has now redressed this imbalance successfully. Procedures are clear, consistent and well understood across the partnership. Potential trainees are guided towards other courses when an interview indicates that they do not meet the criteria for the DTLLS programme. Recruitment is wide ranging and includes a significant number who work in further education settings external to the partner colleges. The process is used well to gather information to identify individual needs, strengths and areas for development, to plan training and to set clear targets to ensure that trainees make progress from the start of the training. All trainees are assessed to determine their levels

of literacy and numeracy and their skills in the use of information and communication technology. Appropriate and well tailored support is then offered by the partner colleges. Trainee recruitment is matched to individual needs. Appropriate account is taken and credit given for prior learning and achievement.

52. The strong support trainees receive from their course tutors, link tutors, mentors and colleagues contributes well to the progress they make. Trainees appreciate and value this support which they consider to be professional, flexible and always readily available to meet their needs. Formal tutorials have been improved to focus better on effective and critical analysis of current performance and clear target setting for improvement. Informal discussions are effectively used to provide support between formal tutorial reviews. Feedback on teaching observations is detailed and constructive and is used well to set specific targets for improvement. Roles are clearly defined and well understood by both staff and trainees.
53. Resources are deployed effectively throughout the partnership. Much of the funding is deployed to partner colleges to maximise the impact on trainee progress. The funding entitlement for partner colleges is clearly defined and well monitored. The qualifications and experience of teaching staff in partner colleges is carefully and regularly checked. Opportunities for continuous professional development are available for both staff and former trainees, but the partnership does not routinely gather data on participation. Trainees have good access to a wide range of resources at the university. Resource allocation has been reviewed as a result of the recent reduction in the number of partner colleges. The role of the link tutor has been developed and extended successfully. The university has improved its on-line resources to improve access for trainees. Most trainees teach in appropriate and 'fit for purpose' accommodation. However, in some instances, insufficient attention is paid to the suitability of teaching accommodation for both the trainee and the learner group or to the accessibility of resources for some external trainees.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

54. The provider has good capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees, where these already exist, and to take the actions required to secure improvements where necessary. Despite considerable changes to the size and nature of the partnership in recent years, there has been an improving trend in overall success rates from 80% in 2007 to 87.5% in 2009. The quality of initial teacher education has improved and has become significantly more consistent across the partnership since the last inspection in 2007/08. The quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning has improved. Areas for development have been identified accurately and clear targets for improvement have been set. Many of these, such as improving the clarity of assignment briefs, tutorials and target setting have been achieved. There is a clear and well recognised culture of continuous improvement across the partnership.

55. Partnership working is strong. It is collaborative and productive and successfully operates at many different levels. The partnership works very successfully with a number of different organisations in the region, such as local authorities and the West Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training, to promote and often to be the driving force in new developments which impact on the further education sector. It works collaboratively with other departments across the university, using these partners successfully for cross-moderation and scrutiny. Within the university's Institute of Education itself, the further education partnership is now benefiting from strategic changes made to the management of further education and secondary initial teacher education. The good practice identified in secondary and primary teacher education is now beginning to be shared more effectively. Within the further education teacher training partnership there is a high level of shared commitment and enthusiasm for continuous improvement. Expectations are clear and high standards are expected. Communication is open and effective and the link tutors, along with the mentors, course leaders and managers play an important role.
56. The partnership has made improvements in its arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement. Regular programme advisory group meetings are valued and well attended. They are used effectively to identify areas for development, to plan for improvement and to identify and share good practice. The partnership makes good use of regular reviews, reports from external examiners, the views of trainees and monitoring reports from college course leaders and university link tutors. The partnership's evaluation of its performance is inclusive and self-critical leading to an accurate identification of its strengths and areas for development. This information has been used effectively to improve the quality of the provision and, in particular, trainee success. Some flexibility is permitted in self-evaluation to enable the partner colleges to link their evaluation of the training programme to the college's overall self-assessment. However, clear guidelines about expectations are provided by the university. The partnership has comprehensive arrangements for monitoring the quality of its provision. Monitoring and action planning have improved and are now good. Cross-moderation and scrutiny is wide ranging and useful to promote improvement. Some opportunities to monitor and quality improve have been missed. For example, the partnership has not yet implemented systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of contributions made by mentors to the training programme, to identify and share good practice. The partnership is aware that its focus on the success rates of different groups of trainees has been relatively recent. It is currently working to improve this information. The recent implementation of a more thorough and objective numerical grading system for trainees has enabled the partnership to identify potential outcomes more accurately and intervene more effectively to secure trainees' progress.
57. The partnership anticipates change well and responds to local and national initiatives effectively. It often plays a key role in the development of national initiatives in its local area. Partnership work to integrate new developments into the training programme have led to a high level of trainee awareness of some of the important issues in further education.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

- Bourneville College
- Halesowen College.

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

		Primary	Secondary	ITE for FE
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		1	1	2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	1	2	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1	1	2
	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
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1	1	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

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

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

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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