

Canterbury Christ Church University

Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU

A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2006/07

Managing inspector
Anne Feltham HMI

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Introduction

Canterbury Christ Church University works in partnership with over 160 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training courses. It offers secondary courses over a range of 7-14 and 11-18 programmes in design and technology, English, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, religious studies, science, and additionally in physical education, art and design, and citizenship in the 11-18 programme; as well as three vocational 14-19 courses in art and design, business and leisure and tourism. At the time of the inspection there were 369 trainees.

Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a short inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

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

Main inspection judgements

Management and quality assurance: Grade: 1

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- very effective recruitment and selection procedures
- very well structured training courses, offering a choice of programmes across a wide range of subject strands
- high quality central training, led by knowledgeable and experienced specialists
- a high degree of consistency of approach and quality in school-based training
- innovative arrangements for communicating effectively with the partnership over a wide geographical area
- very effective leadership and management at all levels
- a relentless drive for further improvement.

Points for consideration

- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of trainers supporting trainees on the 7-14 programme
- sharing existing best practice across subjects strands to develop mentors' understanding of their role in contributing to trainees' learning journals.

The quality of training

1. The course is designed very well to enable trainees to meet the Standards. Courses are structured very well and their content is highly relevant to the age ranges the trainees are training to teach. Content is reviewed annually and updated, for example to provide appropriate training in the implications of *Every Child Matters*. School experiences are linked very well to central training. In both professional studies and subject training, school-based tasks are designed effectively to ensure that central and school-based training complement each other fully. The coherence of the training programmes is a significant strength.
2. The timing and sequencing of school placements are generally very effective. However, for some trainees the late timing of the primary placement on the standard course reduces the effectiveness of their understanding of transition issues. The modular programme provides highly cohesive arrangements for the primary placement, which foster trainees' understanding of continuity and progression across phases. Beyond their two main school placements, arrangements for an additional placement towards the end of the course provide good opportunities for enhancing trainees' teaching competencies and addressing any other needs. This is particularly beneficial for trainees on the 7-14 programme, where meeting all Standards related to Key Stage 3 by the end of the first placement can prove extremely challenging. Similar arrangements for trainees on the 14-19 programme permit them to meet Standards at enhanced competency levels, adding value most effectively to their training.
3. The training takes very good account of the individual needs of trainees. Their strengths and areas for development are identified prior to, and during, their interview using well devised subject audits. As a result, trainees are set suitably individualised, pre-course tasks which prepare them effectively for the start of their training. The outcomes of auditing are used by subject tutors and mentors to set well considered targets for trainees' subject enhancement. Audits are drawn on very effectively by both tutors and mentors to inform central and school-based training. A strength is the very regular review of subject knowledge development throughout the course.
4. Internal and external evaluations show high levels of trainee satisfaction with the quality of training. The central subject courses are taught by experienced specialist tutors who plan their sessions very well. Most professional studies tutors are also subject trainers and this brings consistency and coherence to the training. Professional tutors and mentors in schools are proficient in developing trainees' ability to teach and developing their understanding of the wider professional role of the teacher. An outstanding feature is the individualising of trainees' learning through the use of the course tasks, the learning journal and the support and guidance provided by all trainers. This effectively enables trainees to take responsibility for their own development throughout the course.

5. The trainees' progress is monitored thoroughly by the university and school-based trainers. The trainees' learning journals are a powerful tool in developing their professional understanding and their ability to reflect on their practice; they provide a key source of evidence for tracking their progress. Evidence of trainees' achievement of the Standards is systematically and comprehensively collected in the well-devised record of development. In conjunction with the journal, this enables trainers to see clearly the areas where trainees need further experience or support. Most trainees are conscientious in making thoughtful and perceptive entries in their journals and their mentors are similarly attentive in checking and commenting on their progress. However, in a small number of subjects the quality is more variable and not all mentors make sufficient reference to the trainees' targets or to the Standards.

6. Assessment arrangements are comprehensive, and rigorous procedures are in place to assess trainees' achievement against the Standards. Trainees receive extensive formative and summative feedback on their progress. The reports on trainees' school placements are particularly helpful in giving a clear picture of their strengths and areas for development. Assignments are thoroughly marked and moderated. Regular and extensive observation of trainees' teaching is undertaken by all trainers and arrangements for internal and external moderation of judgements are robust.

Management and quality assurance

7. Recruitment strategies and procedures are both rigorous and imaginative, resulting in the recruitment of high quality trainees. Information for prospective trainees is full, clear and accurate in both paper-based and electronic forms, with updating underway to reflect the provider's new university status. The course recruits to target in the great majority of subjects, although not yet in the vocational 14-19 strand. Selection and interview procedures meet the Requirements in all programmes and subjects. Interview procedures are clearly defined, and the university attempts to involve school-based partners at interview wherever practicable. The university gathers and analyses data, and continues to make good efforts to widen participation, including in the recruitment of trainees from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, exceeding year on year the Training and Development Agency's voluntary target.

8. The considerable strengths in partnership management set out in the previous inspection report have been fully maintained and further developments launched. The university's partnership with over 160 schools continues to provide a rich and varied setting for training. A particular strength is the way in which the partnership identifies and builds on the strengths of individual schools, for example the outstanding development of citizenship in one school. In addition to the established and effective partnership management groups, a partnership audit group has recently been set up to develop good practice further and bring about greater coherence across programmes, for example in coordinating school visits.

9. The high quality of overall leadership and management of courses, programmes and the department has also been maintained, and this has led to continuing improvement in all areas of training. The significant impact on training quality has been supported by the collaborative work of the team of programme directors for each of the four main PGCE strands. There is now a very high degree of consistency of structure and support documentation across programmes, and schools hosting relatively large numbers of trainees across different programmes have found this helpful. There remains some confusion, however, amongst school-based colleagues with regard to support roles and responsibilities for trainees on the 7-14 programme.

10. Similar moves at programme level to establish greater consistency across subjects are leading to high quality subject leadership and continuing improvement in courses. Management structures are now embedded and have the potential to foster further improvement in areas where practices vary between subject areas; for example, primary placement preparation and implementation and mentor training in the use of the learning journal.

11. A further development has been the establishment of a number of committees, to address issues affecting all courses and programmes. This warp and weft approach ensures that all central-based trainers develop a shared understanding of key areas of training across courses and programmes. This provides a rich network of knowledge and experience, shared effectively in order to benefit both trainees and their school-based trainers. For example, the new committee structure supports the department's developing work on equality very well: the widening participation committee has a very clear, well focused action plan which covers all programmes and subject strands.

12. Strong links between subject tutors and their school-based subject mentors result in high quality school-based training. In many subjects, such as art and design and citizenship, innovative and inspiring training secures the commitment of mentors to the partnership. It contributing very effectively to their own professional development. The establishment of four local training bases across Kent, with schools allocated to consortia, has resulted in increased opportunities for school-based mentors to meet. Local professional mentor meetings in the consortia have proved a very successful mechanism for developing a greater consistency of approach to training and sharing good practice between schools.

13. Communications are effective and enable trainers to work together across this large geographical area. Email is widely and effectively used. Trainees now use the virtual learning environment well to communicate and support each other, particularly whilst on school placements.

14. The department has a strong commitment to race equality: collaboration with the university's new manager for equality and diversity has resulted in progress since the previous inspection. School-based trainers apply their school's equality policies very effectively as they demonstrate their values to trainees, but they are not always fully aware of the university developments. Similarly, on a practical front, schools

help trainees very well to respond to any examples of inappropriate behaviour and language amongst pupils.

15. The quality of school-based mentoring is monitored very effectively. Improvements initiated at the time of the previous inspection now show an impact: the majority of trainees receive regular discrete training sessions, in addition to daily support. Course and programme leaders know their schools very well. They remain sensitive to changes in departments and schools, picking up issues about quality very effectively. They are swift to intervene on the rare occasions when trainees have difficulty in accessing appropriate support.

16. Subjects which were new at the time of the previous inspection have developed very successfully and been assiduously monitored by programme directors. Effective partnership across a range of schools, colleges, and the wider educational and business community, has resulted in the successful establishment of vocational subjects, citizenship, design and technology and ICT. A very clear and detailed action plan for ICT to address shortcomings identified in the previous inspection report has been implemented and monitored closely. This has led to improvements to the course. These improvements in training in new subjects reflect the high quality of departmental and programme-level leadership and management.

17. Action planning remains of very high quality. Review and planning processes at subject level have benefited from arrangements which bring course leaders together with programme and department heads. Many subject improvement plans are of very high quality. The improvement planning process is undergoing continuous refinement in order to bring all subjects up to the standard of the best.

18. The department is very responsive to both internal and external review, evaluation and inspection. Recent internal review, which also involved colleagues from two comparable higher education providers, has led to improvement in programme leadership and management. Response to external examination and Ofsted inspection is strong. Self-evaluation is full, detailed and accurate. The clear focus on research and development brings benefits both to trainees and to all trainers in the partnership. The 'strong record of innovation' reported in the previous inspection report holds good. There is no complacency and no standing still.