

University of Leicester

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A secondary initial teacher training
short inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

The University of Leicester works in partnership with 76 schools to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT) courses in citizenship studies, English, English with media studies, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, science (which includes combined science and biology, chemistry and physics with core science) and social science. All courses train teachers for the 11-18 age range but some mathematics trainees and those trainees following the combined science routes train to teach the 11–16 age range. At the time of the inspection there were 158 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: 2

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The next inspection of this provider will take place in accordance with the Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework.

Key strengths

- the coherence between the different elements of the training
- the teacher development pack, which supports the professional studies element of the course
- the very good communication and the excellent relations between the university and its partner schools
- the very good monitoring and assessment of trainees and in particular the excellent end of phase reports
- the highly qualified skilled and experienced teacher trainers both in the university in partner schools
- the way in which the provider meets the individual needs of its trainees, particularly in relation to pre-course preparation.

Points for action

- ensuring the effective involvement of school-based tutors in evaluation of the partnership and communicating outcomes of trainee evaluations to partner schools in a timely manner
- increasing the involvement of school-based tutors in the selection process and in the partnership steering group.

Points for consideration

- developing the content of subject training in modern languages
- ensuring that all sessions in the professional studies course model good practice.

The quality of training

1. The quality of training is at least good and some elements are outstanding. Course content is very good and is regularly reviewed and updated. Challenging assignments and a good range of directed tasks provide very good opportunities for focused work in schools. Trainees have good opportunities to attend optional workshops to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. The partnership ensures that all trainees gain a well-balanced experience across all relevant key stages.

2. All the elements of the programme combine very well to secure trainees' progress towards the Standards. The teacher development pack is an impressive resource for the professional studies element of the course with excellent coverage of topics such as *Every Child Matters*, teaching English as an additional language, developments in the 14-19 curriculum and assessment for learning. Strong references are made to educational research and extensive bibliographies effectively guide trainees into further areas of reading and study. Collaboration between university tutors is good, ensuring that aspects of professional studies are effectively integrated within specific subject training. This is especially so in English and citizenship studies. Subject training is generally of very high quality but trainees in modern foreign languages have received little input on teaching languages in primary schools. Information and communication technology is embedded in all subjects to ensure that trainees are well prepared for how to use it in their teaching.

3. Central training sessions are well planned and include a good range of teaching approaches. This is particularly the case in subject sessions, where tutors consistently model good practice. However, occasionally sessions in the professional studies course are overly didactic and fail to model good practice.

4. The individual needs of trainees are very well met. Specific subject knowledge related work and good attendance on subject knowledge booster and enhancement courses ensures that trainees are well prepared for their training and that personalisation of learning begins before the start of the course. These excellent pre-course tasks are used effectively to identify gaps in subject knowledge. Relationships and communication between trainees, university tutors and school-based tutors are excellent. Trainees value highly the level of support they receive. Training is enhanced through the effective use of a virtual learning environment, which enables trainees to share teaching resources, gain access to course notes and communicate with each other.

5. Procedures for the assessment of trainees against the Standards are comprehensive and ensure that progress is monitored rigorously. The teacher development record provides both a clear overview of trainee progress and a highly effective mechanism for moderation. Lesson observation forms are used very well to evaluate teaching and targets clearly identify what trainees need to do next to improve. Individual action plans underpin progression and further development. The end of phase reports, which provide a comprehensive assessment of trainees' progress, are an excellent example of the robust monitoring and assessment

procedures in place and of the skill and commitment of the school based tutors who compile them.

Management and quality assurance

6. The selection process involves very well structured selection activities that include challenging tasks and interviews. These ensure trainees joining the course are well qualified and committed to teaching. The use of school-based tutors contributes to this but is not a sufficiently consistent feature of the process. The very good efforts made to recruit trainees from minority ethnic groups ensure that the partnership exceeds its targets and have led to a substantial increase in the proportion of trainees from minority ethnic groups since 2005. Clear guidance is provided for candidates with disabilities or specific learning difficulties to ensure that their individual needs are taken into account in the selection process.

7. Highly effective management of the partnership is now in place. Lines of responsibility have been identified and roles are clearly defined. In particular the delegation of responsibility for developing quality assurance processes is adding a sharper edge to evaluation of the provision. Subject programmes are managed well and in some instances outstandingly so.

8. Relationships and communication between the university and its partner schools are excellent. Schools view university tutors as accessible and very supportive. There is an excellent sense of partnership among all concerned. Collaborations between partner schools and the university are strong, for example, in relation to ad hoc working groups and those working on research projects. School based tutors make a significant contribution to the centrally taught provision. Those experienced in the role provide training for new colleagues. Their involvement in the reflective exercise, on the quality of placements at the end of the course, is a positive aspect of partnership and quality assurance arrangements and provides insight into effective practice in other schools. This strengthens and enhances partnership links. Despite this, attendance of school-based tutors at meetings of the partnership steering group is poor. The provider is aware of this and is taking steps to revitalise the composition and contribution of the steering group to the management of the partnership.

9. Excellent partnership documentation includes very clear statements of the roles and responsibilities of all involved and very good guidance for school-based tutors. As a result, they demonstrate very good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of their roles. Very effective training is provided for the school-based tutors and attendance at the training, at least of a representative from each school, is very good although, for some, attendance can be difficult due to the distance to travel. University tutors are, without exception, highly qualified, skilled and experienced teacher trainers. Many contribute to national debates about their subject areas.

10. Robust processes are in place for the internal and external moderation of assessments, which ensure that the assessment of trainees is rigorous, consistent and accurate. This includes very effective in-school monitoring and moderation of the assessment of trainees' progress and the end of phase reports and assessments. In addition, the regular and rigorous moderation visits made by university tutors test the validity of school-based judgements, thereby ensuring consistency and comparability across the partnership.

11. A developing range of effective systems to evaluate the quality of provision is in place, with more planned to ensure there is a full quality assurance cycle covering all aspects of the partnership. There is also detailed analysis of internal and external data, including some excellent benchmarking analysis of provision against other ITE providers. At present however, systems to accurately record trainee evaluations of their first placement and then provide timely feedback to schools are not in place. Nor does the provider currently formally involve all school-based tutors in the evaluation of the partnership. The provider is aware of these shortcomings and is implementing plans to remedy them as well as reviewing how it might communicate the outcomes from the evaluation of provision to partner schools.

12. A comprehensive annual monitoring process including subject and whole course reviews takes place. The partnership has been responsive to internal and external feedback and evaluation. The course development plan indicates that the partnership is anticipating and planning for future change and its self-evaluation illustrates clear awareness of strengths and also of existing areas for development, including those in its quality assurance procedures.