

# LearnEd

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Provider address	Shotton Hall Conference Centre Old Shotton Peterlee Co. Durham SR8 2PH
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Inspection dates	5 - 8 May 2009
Lead inspector	Angela Milner HMI

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Reference no. 080190

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## Introduction

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

### Key to inspection grades

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

## The provider

3. LearnEd works as a collaborative partnership consisting of an excellence partnership, schools in Durham, Gateshead, North Tyneside and local universities. It provides employment-based initial teacher education (ITE) leading to the award of secondary Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) across a range of priority and non-priority subjects.
4. The partnership aims to recruit trainees to secondary priority subjects and trains them to help meet the requirements of the local area. This includes the needs of schools facing challenging circumstances.
5. The partnership is successful in recruiting to or exceeding its full target number of 17 trainees and as a result has been awarded additional priority placements in mathematics. At the time of the inspection there were 17 trainees on the one year course; this includes one self-funded trainee.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Key strengths

6. The key strengths are:
  - strong leadership and management with an outstanding capacity to sustain high quality outcomes and secure further improvements
  - dedicated commitment to equality of opportunity through the promotion of equal and fair access to high quality training for all
  - careful attention paid to meeting trainees' individual needs to ensure the majority progress to fulfil their potential
  - effective coherence of the centre and school-based training programmes which prepares trainees well for their role as secondary teachers
  - rigorous selection procedures leading to the recruitment of high quality trainees that helps to meet the needs of local schools
  - well developed moderation procedures which ensure the accuracy of trainees' assessments.

### Recommendations

7. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment the partnership should:
  - improve the quality and consistency of the feedback provided to trainees to ensure they know how well they are progressing in relation to the Standards.
8. In order to improve the quality of training across the partnership the partnership should:
  - improve the quality of subject pedagogy training for the minority of trainees who need to make stronger progress
  - seek ways of enhancing the skills and understanding of new subject trainers.

## Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

9. The overall effectiveness of the LearnEd EBITT in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good. A clear trend of improving outcomes is evident. Many aspects of the partnership's work are judged to be good and some aspects are outstanding. This confirms the accuracy of the provider's own self-evaluation. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the quality of feedback provided to trainees and in subject pedagogy training which limits the progress and attainment of a minority of trainees.

10. The overall attainment of trainees is good. Inspection evidence confirms that the majority of trainees make good progress and attain high outcomes given their ability and starting points. There has been a steady trend of improvement over the last three years in outcomes for trainees and more trainees completing the course successfully. The provider enjoys a good reputation locally and the majority of trainees gain employment either in partnership schools or within the locality.

11. The rigorous and effective recruitment and selection procedures promote equality and diversity and lead to the large majority of trainees fulfilling their potential. Partnership schools are fully involved in the selection of candidates. The interview process is well designed to select candidates who have suitable qualities for teaching. It effectively assesses subject knowledge, presentational and writing skills. As a result, applicants' strengths and training needs are accurately assessed and trainees are able to enhance their subject knowledge before starting the course through attendance at booster and enhancement courses. Recruitment and selection procedures are regularly reviewed and the provider's steering group ensures that relevant statutory requirements are met. Training and Development Agency (TDA) allocations of training places have been exceeded for the last 3 years in mathematics and the provider recruits well to meet the secondary priority subject needs within its locality. The proportion of trainees from some under-represented groups remains low but is improving.

12. The quality of training and assessment is good. There is a particularly effective link between recruitment and selection and training and assessment through the summer induction week in the trainees' first placement school. Here detailed initial needs assessments are used to inform good quality individual training plans. These plans are regularly reviewed during the course to guide trainees' personalised training programme and set targets for the next stage of their development. This careful focus on induction ensures that the majority of trainees make good progress from the start of the course. Continuous monitoring of trainees' progress and the provision of specialist support to meet areas of need ensures that the majority of training focuses on maximising potential and meeting individual needs well.

13. The centre based generic programme is well structured and coherent. It makes a good contribution to the overall training programme and supports subject and school based training well. It is particularly good at enhancing trainees' knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning and developing their skills as

reflective practitioners. Relevant, high quality sessions on 14-19 developments, the every child matters agenda, thinking skills and working with other professionals are delivered by expert practitioners including LearnEd managers, local authority consultants, members of the partnership and colleagues from local universities. A particular strength of the programme is the way it contextualises current issues through the use of exemplar visits. These include visits to areas of cultural diversity, practical experience of teaching in schools with significant numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and time spent in a special school observing the every child matters agenda in practice. Trainees are encouraged to explore educational issues in greater depth through reading, a useful action research assignment and through school based enquiries which are well supported by professional tutors in schools.

14. The quality of school based training is good. School-based training is most effective where there is a long standing partnership and relationship with LearnEd and experienced, knowledgeable and highly committed professional tutors co-ordinate and quality assure the generic and subject training experiences well. Many trainees also benefit from their immersion in subject departments and schools and their ability to access up to date school and local authority professional development courses, for example, in relation to assessing pupils' performance (APP). Good links between first and second placement schools, including the use of joint observations undertaken in both contexts by professional tutors, ensure a smooth transition between placements and add to the coherence of the provision. Training is less effective in schools that are new to the partnership or where subject trainers provide good mentoring support but insufficiently challenging subject training. As a result there is some variation in the quality of trainees' knowledge and understanding of subject teaching across the partnership. Inspection evidence also identified a lack of consistency in the quality of feedback to trainees including the need for a clearer focus on the Standards.

15. Assessment judgements are rigorously moderated by visits to schools from university tutors, the LearnEd manager and the external moderator. Intensive, full day final assessment visits by subject specialist, university tutors are used well to ensure trainees have met the Standards. Portfolios of evidence are carefully moderated at an end of year verification meeting of the provider's steering group. Although benchmark statements are used well to assess trainees' performance, they are not always used as well as they could be to set focused development targets to maximise the progress trainees make in their subject teaching.

16. The quality, deployment and use of resources across the partnership are good and impact positively on trainees' progress. The allocation of resources is transparent and clearly understood by partners. Resources are used to support trainees' needs well. For example, to provide additional specialist mentoring and professional development courses for physical education trainees to enable them to develop expertise across all six areas of the national curriculum.

17. A strong common sense of purpose has been created across the partnership. Good relationships, effective communication and detailed systems for support and guidance establish high expectations and secure high quality outcomes. The comprehensive partnership handbook details clear roles and responsibilities and

good use is made of the published criteria for the selection and de-selection of partnership schools. All professional tutors are members of the provider's steering group and play an effective role in many aspects of its provision and in quality assurance procedures. The steering groups has correctly identified inconsistencies in training in schools new to the partnership and the quality of some subject training as the areas of provision in need of further development.

18. The partnership values and respects diversity and shows an outstanding commitment to promoting equal opportunities and ensuring equality of access to high quality training for all trainees. This ethos underpins the provider's trainee-centred approach, documentation and practice. Policies and procedures for promoting equal opportunities are rigorously monitored by the steering group. Trainees are well prepared to teach pupils from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and differentiate their planning well to cater for the learning needs of pupils of differing abilities. Very good support is provided for trainees with a declared disability and for those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Trainees feel able to raise any concerns in the secure knowledge they will be efficiently and professionally dealt with by the LearnEd manager. As a result of the excellent focus on trainee entitlement most trainees make expected progress and completion rates are high.

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

19. The provider's own self-evaluation grades its capacity to improve as good but inspectors judged this to be outstanding. This is because the provider has demonstrated the capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and also to take the necessary actions to secure further improvement.

20. Leadership and management at all levels are excellent. The management team know in detail the strengths of their provision and can use this information to plan good quality experiences for individual trainees. They also know where weaknesses may arise, so that issues can be dealt with swiftly and intervention or extra training put in place when there is an area of concern.

21. A strong sense of commitment and good communications exist between LearnEd staff and school based professional tutors. Highly effective leadership from committed steering group members provides both challenge and support and an excellent forum for constructive discussion and self-criticism. It secures good quality training and development for professional tutor colleagues and that the targeting of resources is responsive to need. The steering group provides very good succession planning and a commitment to continually building capacity. For example, subject tutors have become professional tutors and ex-trainees have become subject trainers. The steering group has recognised the need to provide more targeted support for schools new to the partnership and to further improve the quality of subject training in schools. New professional tutors appreciate the opportunity to be involved in associate school second placements before becoming full partners. They also appreciate, for example, the recent introduction of joint observations and the

formal and informal opportunities provided to learn from each other and gain from the expertise of more experienced steering group colleagues. Professional development activities for professional tutors have begun to focus on improving the rigour of subject training in schools. Greater attention now needs to be paid to enhancing the skills and understanding of new subject trainers and facilitating opportunities for them to work together as a community of subject trainers and practitioners.

22. The steering group rigorously monitors and moderates trainees' progress at half-termly intervals. There is a continuing trend of improvement in outcomes for trainees, recruitment from under-represented groups, employability and the numbers of trainees who complete the course successfully. The majority of trainees achieve their potential because of the high levels of individualised support they receive. Very good systems are in place to quality assure trainees' experiences and to ensure they receive their generic training entitlement and that the majority of trainees receive their subject training entitlement. Trainees are increasingly positive about their training experiences and have nothing but praise for the provider and the schools they have visited and worked in. The views of tutors and trainers are also valued and taken seriously. Any concerns are acted upon immediately and forms part of the provider's evaluation and review procedures in order to further improve and develop provision.

23. Strong leadership anticipates and drives change and ensures timely and effective actions are taken to ensure continuous improvement of the provision. As a result, the provider is responsive to new initiatives and is highly responsive to internal and external benchmarking activities about Standards and requirements. The provider is responsive to external scrutiny from its own external moderator and has addressed issues raised in its previous accreditation report.

24. Comprehensive, high quality evaluation and action planning processes show the provider's commitment to achieving high quality outcomes and demonstrate an outstanding capacity to improve. Management at all levels evaluates performance extremely effectively. Outcome and progress data is used well to evaluate the success and the impact of actions taken. All aspects of provision are carefully evaluated and reviewed by a range of stakeholders and the results are presented to the provider's steering group for consideration and action. Planning for improvement is excellent and is based on an accurate and honest self-assessment of the provider's own performance. Detailed action planning takes place over a three year period with clear aims linked to a small number of key priorities. Annual objectives are carefully constructed and regularly monitored against detailed success criteria. This high quality action planning includes clear actions, responsibilities, timescales and detailed procedures for review and evaluation. These prioritised and targeted actions have clearly impacted on improvements to provision and to increasingly high quality outcomes for trainees. Furthermore, a working group of managers, tutors, trainers and previous trainees worked extremely effectively to compile the accurate annual self-evaluation document and to bring the provider's own evaluation and review annual cycle in line with the TDA's self-evaluation requirements. The partnership continuously strives to improve the quality of its provision by ensuring it is providing high quality training for all trainees and helping to meet the workforce needs of local secondary schools.

## 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

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

### Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

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

<sup>1</sup> 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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