

University of Surrey

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address

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Inspection dates

8–12 November 2010

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. Surrey University works in partnership with three colleges of general further and higher education to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to the certificate in education, the professional graduate certificate in education or the foundation degree in teaching and learning. The three colleges also offer a range of levels of award for teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, accredited by Edexcel. All these qualifications meet statutory requirements and confer the status of qualified teacher, learning and skills (QTLS) for the further education (FE) phase.
4. There are currently 246 trainees undertaking teacher training across the partnership. All trainees are in-service and undertake the training part time. Around half are employed directly by one of the three colleges. The others are employed as teachers or trainers in a variety of external settings.

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
 - the high attainment rate of the large majority of trainees
 - the clear and supportive advice and guidance given to trainees who do not come from traditional educational backgrounds or who lack standard educational qualifications
 - the highly committed, knowledgeable, experienced and effective teacher trainers
 - the significant impact of the academic advisor role and the good practice group
 - the good progress made in addressing areas of weakness identified at the last inspection.

Required actions

6. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment the partnership must:
 - implement explicit indicative criteria to enable the partnership to assess the extent and rate of trainees' progress and their levels of achievement throughout their course.

Recommendations

7. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment the partnership should:
 - ensure that the setting of learning targets for trainees is more precise and detailed and more consistently monitored, especially for those trainees who require more explicit support and guidance to help them improve
 - improve the communications between subject mentors, teacher trainers and trainees' line managers so that trainees receive better coordinated tuition and feedback throughout their course.
8. In order to improve the consistency of provision, the partnership should:

- explore and exploit more fully opportunities for trainees to benefit directly from university resources and promoted activities.
9. In order to improve how effectively the management at all levels assesses performance, the partnership should:
- use data and quality assurance systems more incisively and consistently to gain an evaluative view of the quality of provision across the partnership as a whole.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

10. The university secures good outcomes for its trainee teachers. Almost all trainees successfully complete their course and their attainment is good. There is no discernible variation between the attainment of identifiable groups of trainees. Trainees reach their individual level of attainment without a clear or common understanding of the criteria used to assess it. The profile of attainment grades for those trainees completing in 2010 is not based on clearly differentiated criteria agreed across all members of the partnership. Inspectors agreed with the current evaluation of the standard of practice reached by trainees in two colleges, and judged that in one college the evaluation was too generous.
11. All trainees grow considerably in confidence and resilience as a result of the very good support they receive from their mentors and tutors. They develop assured skills in managing a classroom, studio or workshop, and know how to build and exploit good rapport with students and with customers or clients with whom trainees might be working. Trainees have good subject knowledge and understanding, which are further extended by mentors. Many possess valuable commercial or industrial experience and this is well used to give their teaching currency. They use resources creatively and are prepared to experiment with a range of approaches to teaching, reflecting critically and learning from their experiences. Trainees are able to apply the concepts of learning that they have studied to their own teaching practice in a direct and productive way, giving their teaching a sound theoretical foundation.
12. A minority of trainees intervene too infrequently or inconsistently in their lessons to check their students' learning, and they lack variety of method to do this effectively. Many trainees do not fully appreciate the value of peer learning, and so they rarely create opportunities in lessons to use it.
13. Recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous, transparent and fair. The thorough initial assessment and profiling of trainees leads to their being placed on the most appropriate type and level of course, which contributes significantly to their good attainment. A few individual training plans lack the level of detail of most, and this impedes the progress that these trainees might otherwise make. Since all trainees are already in service when they start their course, their particular qualities and needs as incipient qualified

teachers are readily available to tutors at the point of enrolment, and the training teams make largely good use of this information. Particularly effective support and advice is given to those who do not come from an established educational background or possess traditional generic qualifications, and for whom the more academic parts of the training may appear daunting. With excellent pastoral support, these trainees thrive. The partnership embraces and successfully meets the challenge of training people from a wide range of settings and backgrounds.

14. Training and assessment are good. Teacher trainers are highly experienced and skilled, and model good practices to their trainees in ways that the latter find engaging and stimulating. They give trainees a good understanding of theories of learning and how to apply them, and in developing their techniques as practitioners they give them confidence and a wide range of strategies upon which to draw. Pastoral and tutorial support for trainees is good. Both teacher trainers and subject mentors give effective formative assessment to trainees which helps them to reflect constructively on their own areas of relative weakness. Trainees appreciate the supportive tone of this critical dialogue. However, the setting of learning targets following such verbal and written feedback often lacks precision and detail. This impairs the progress of a few trainees, particularly those with less confidence who require more explicit direction to help them improve. Despite much effective independent feedback to trainees following lesson observations, communications between teacher trainers, subject mentors and trainees' line managers are occasionally confusing for trainees. Mentors are often not aware of what has been covered in training sessions nor what the incremental standards are that apply to formal observations. Their evaluation of lessons tends to be more generous than that given by teacher trainers.
15. Arrangements for mentoring trainees have improved significantly since the last inspection. All trainees have a mentor who in almost all cases is closely matched to their subject specialism, so that their specific pedagogy is developed with particular subject relevance. The partnership has developed effectively flexible ways of ensuring that mentors benefit from some training and guidance in how to carry out their role. An early joint observation with an experienced teacher trainer allows new mentors to gain good insight into how to conduct a lesson observation. Mentors give very generously of their time and advice, although the frequent informal dialogue that takes place occasionally substitutes for regular, more formal exchanges. Too many mentors, moreover, are also trainees' direct line managers, which hampers the progress of a few trainees by curtailing the degree to which they feel able to confide in them when they face difficulties.
16. Across the three colleges in the partnership there are variable levels of commitment to, and deployment of, the grading of trainees in their work. This variability, together with the ill-defined indicative criteria and characteristics of different standards of teaching by trainees, impairs their potential progress. Trainees lack the means to know just how much progress they are making because the partnership has no common quantitative measures with which to evaluate the rate or extent of their progress through the course. Neither are

their final standards of attainment discriminated by reference to explicit, published grading criteria. This blurs trainees' aspirations for their final level of attainment and frustrates the more ambitious.

17. The colleges have good physical and learning resources and these are well deployed in pursuit of good outcomes for trainees. The primary human resources available to trainees, in the shape of the teacher training tutors, are excellent and many trainees speak of their teaching being transformed by what they have been skilfully taught. These teacher trainers maintain their professional currency well. However, with no education faculty within the university trainees have no planned access to an under- or post-graduate education research environment. Neither are trainees' own subjects enhanced by any university-sponsored activity to which they might have access. One college is able to make use of the university's virtual learning environment which it has purchased, but trainees in the other two colleges have no such access. Both teacher trainers and trainees derive minimal benefit from their connection with the university.
18. Since the last inspection, a new role of academic advisor has been created to enable the separate colleges to share and compare practices and to work towards more consistent standards across the partnership. This post, together with the good practice group that now meets termly, has had a significantly beneficial impact on the consistency of the work of the partnership. However, this work is still in its early stages and there is as yet limited quality assurance of some aspects of the provision, such as the contribution of mentors. The three colleges enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy, so there are distinct variations in quality between them. The learning experience of trainees who do not work in the colleges remains too uneven in quality.
19. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Trainees understand and practise principles of inclusion and social integration. Most are well prepared to teach in a diverse society and to work with staff and students from different backgrounds. In their teaching, and in their wider research and analysis, trainees demonstrate sensitivity to the varied needs of their students and respond well to them. These qualities make a significant contribution to trainees' good progress and attainment by equipping them with resourcefulness and flexibility in their teaching. In their planning of lessons, however, the promotion of an equality and diversity agenda to their students is not a high priority for many trainees; a few make no explicit reference to it and miss opportunities to draw direct attention to it. All trainees achieve at comparable rates, regardless of gender or ethnic background.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

20. The partnership has good capacity to improve its provision. Since the last inspection, all the identified strengths have been maintained or improved

further, and the majority of the areas in need of improvement have been at least partially remedied. The partner colleges operate in a spirit of mutual trust, respect, and shared purposes. The partnership's academic advisor has successfully facilitated professional dialogue and established regular meetings to debate ideas and share good practice. There is a readiness to learn from each other and to arrive at consistent standards and expectations without compromising autonomy of operation. However, much of this work is still in its early stages and its impact on trainees has yet to be fully demonstrated. Despite a wide range of mechanisms within each college to assure the quality of provision and evaluate its effectiveness, self-assessment across the partnership as a whole has yet to define its status and purpose and it is not collectively composed or owned. Similarly, there are very few data at partnership level with which the university may compare outcomes for trainees year by year, detect and analyse trends or anomalies in performance, or develop plans for improvement. To date, the separate colleges have not graded trainees against the same objective criteria and the moderation of this grading is not adequately coordinated.

21. The work of subject mentors has improved and now contributes significantly to the progress and attainment of trainees. Trainees also contribute regularly and systematically to the evaluation of the provision, and a number of recent improvements are attributable to this process of review. The relations between all parties participating in teacher training are good, but communications that focus on recording and monitoring each trainee's progress are not yet incisive or consistent enough to guarantee an even experience for all trainees across the partnership.
22. The partner colleges demonstrate a good, flexible capacity to anticipate and respond to change in the further education sector. Trainees are prepared in an effective and timely way for current innovations in further education, such as the development of credit-based qualifications and the replacement of key skills by functional skills. The content and shape of the courses are revised regularly to reflect national priorities in post-compulsory education and training. Teacher trainers have good training and development opportunities in their colleges to maintain their professional currency and keep abreast of developments in the further education sector.
23. The partnership has taken effective action to improve the provision since the last inspection. The courses continue to evolve through research, analysis and productive dialogue between the partners to serve the needs and interests of trainees. The university has responded to the clear need to give academic guidance and coherence to the colleges whose courses it validates by the appointment of an academic advisor, and his impact is significant in promoting dialogue and sharing good practice. However, a partnership-wide perspective of the provision is still in its early stages of development.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Farnborough College of Technology
North East Surrey College of Technology
Highbury 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

		ITE for FE
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?	2

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		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?		2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		2
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?		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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