

Bath Spa University

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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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. Bath Spa University is a well-established provider of initial teacher education. It offers a range of programmes leading to qualified teacher status in primary, secondary and further education. Primary and secondary trainees complete a one-year, full- or part-time postgraduate course leading to a Postgraduate or Professional Graduate Certificate in Education. In further education, successful trainees become qualified teachers in learning and skills with either a Certificate in Education (Lifelong Learning) or a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (Lifelong Learning).
4. For those wishing to teach in the primary phase, training is offered in either primary (the five to eleven age range) or early years (the three to seven age range). For potential secondary teachers wishing to teach in Key Stages 3 and 4, there is training in 10 subjects. A Key Stage 2/3 training course is currently in its last year of operation. Further education teacher training is provided in

partnership with Bridgwater College, Weston College and Wiltshire College, which are also part of the university's more extensive Wessex Partnership.

5. The university works in partnership with at least nine local authorities across the south west and the West Midlands. Further details of each programme are provided in the relevant sections of this report.

A commentary on the provision

6. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
 - the excellent progress that trainees make from their relative starting points
 - the quality of trainees' self-reflection and their strong commitment to their own professional development
 - the quality of the leadership and management in driving the development of well-designed and cohesive training programmes
 - the outstanding personal and professional support given to individual trainees.
7. A particularly strong feature of the primary and secondary provision could be applied to the further education programme, namely:
 - the sharp analysis of trainees' progress and attainment data to inform the planning and development of the training provision.
8. There are no common recommendations to improve the quality of the outcomes of the provision, because such recommendations are phase-specific and are therefore indicated in the relevant sections of the report.

Provision in the primary phase

Context:

9. The university works in partnership with 251 primary schools. At the time of the inspection, there were 216 trainees on the primary route and 124 on the early years route.

Key strengths

10. The key strengths are:
 - the clear vision and philosophy for learning which underpin all aspects of the training

- the outstanding progress made by trainees from their relative starting points in working towards achieving the Standards
- trainees' confidence and skill in managing pupils' behaviour and in teaching early reading, including phonics
- the quality of trainees' self-reflection and the way in which they actively take responsibility for their own learning
- outstanding leadership and management at all levels which involve all partners in shaping, evaluating and improving the training
- excellent central and school-based training which provides a seamless cohesion between educational theory and practice
- the outstanding attention paid to the personalised learning needs of each trainee and the support provided by personal tutors.

Recommendations

11. In order to improve recruitment and selection, the provider should:
 - increase the recruitment of suitable trainees from minority ethnic communities.
12. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of improvement planning the provider should:
 - ensure that improvement plans consistently identify success criteria with measureable outcomes.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

13. The primary programme is outstanding because the quality of training, assessment and provision across the partnership is of the highest quality and is leading to rapidly improving outcomes for trainees. Over recent years, trainees' attainment has been high but, as a result of the provider's introduction of a new assessment framework and more challenging grade criteria, there was a temporary dip in 2009/10. However, as a result of improvements in an already strong training provision, the provider's own detailed tracking and assessment data clearly demonstrate that the current cohort of trainees is attaining at a much higher level at this point in their training than the previous one. Inspection evidence confirms this, and the provider's own judgement that attainment is consequently good, with a rapidly improving trend.
14. The recruitment and selection of trainees are outstanding, with the number of applicants far exceeding the available places. This is because the provider has an extremely good reputation in the region and produces excellent publicity material and events to attract suitable trainees. At selection, very clear criteria are consistently and fairly applied because interviewers from across the partnership are very well prepared. They keep detailed notes which are used very well to inform feedback to unsuccessful applicants and guide successful ones regarding what they need to do to prepare fully for the course. This focus

on identifying and meeting trainees' individual needs, which informs their professional development and practice portfolio, is a particularly strong feature of the provision. As a result, withdrawal rates are very low and almost all of these are due to unforeseeable circumstances. The percentage of trainees who gain teaching posts at the end of training is above average. A number of effective strategies and events have been organised to attract suitable candidates from minority groups, and these have been successful to the extent that more men are now recruited. However, the proportion of trainees from minority ethnic communities remains lower than in similar providers.

15. A very clear and well-articulated philosophy, which has the needs of learners at its heart, underpins all aspects of the primary and early years training programmes. As a result, trainees consistently make good or better progress relative to their starting points, which are accurately assessed. Trainees are highly reflective and take full responsibility for the improvement of their own learning and classroom practice. This is exemplified by the way in which trainees make consistently well-evidenced claims that they have met their targets and can demonstrate progress in achieving their grades.
16. The support of highly effective personal tutors in helping trainees make such good progress is outstanding. This is because tutors ensure that the training is extremely well focused on meeting individual trainees' needs by arranging additional input and experience when necessary. For example, an extra two-day course in phonics and early reading was arranged at the end of the first placement for trainees who needed it and this resulted in greatly increased levels of trainee confidence during their second placement. A key strength is the cohesion between central and school-based training; the structure and content of the training provide well-timed opportunities for trainees to put into practice in their teaching what they have learnt about in theory. For example, after some central training and an assignment on assessment, trainees were able to demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to assess pupils' progress in their second school placement. Highly successful cross-curricular projects model outstanding primary practice and trainees describe many aspects of these as 'light bulb' moments. Training in phonics and early reading and in managing pupils' behaviour are particular strengths because trainees confidently demonstrate good or outstanding practice in these areas of their teaching.
17. The school-based elements of the training are also outstanding because they are very well planned to develop trainees' pedagogic skills. Lesson observations are evaluative and provide clear targets for improvement. Weekly reviews record how school-based tasks, lesson observations and training in school are linked to ensure trainees' rapid progress towards meeting the Standards. Personal tutors monitor reviews closely and this enables them to provide early intervention and support when necessary. Placement schools are well chosen and fully committed to the training. They provide a wide range of observations, activities, guidance and support to develop trainees' expertise. As a result, trainees demonstrate strengths in professional attributes, skills, knowledge and understanding. A significant advance in improving trainees' awareness of what they need to do to improve their grades has been the development of profile

characteristics for each grade. This has also helped trainers and trainees triangulate accurately the interim and final placement assessments, which provide a clear indication of trainees' progress towards the Standards as well as clear targets for improvement.

18. Highly effective systems are well established to ensure that the best possible use is made of available resources. The library, training materials, equipment and published guidance for trainees and trainers are of very high quality, particularly with regard to training in information and communication technology (ICT), phonics and early reading. The attractive university grounds are used very well to demonstrate extended teaching and learning outside the classroom, and the training rooms are equipped to the highest standard. Trainees and trainers make very good use of the virtual learning environment to support their work. At the same time, centre-based trainers are very experienced and well qualified, and external experts and partnership staff make a valuable contribution to the training.
19. Although the partnership is very large, the quality of provision is outstanding. Excellent communications and the very high quality of support and guidance enhance the cohesion between central and school-based training. Group training for mentors is detailed and very well planned and is supported by exceptionally well-written guidance in mentors' files and via the partnership website. A tutor then undertakes further individual training and the provider keeps accurate records to ensure that all mentors are fully prepared to support trainees during their school placements. Further close links across the partnership have been forged through a wide range of projects which place the provider at the centre of the local educational community.
20. All policies and practices to ensure equality of access and opportunity are securely in place and rigorously applied. The support for trainees' individual training and personal needs is exemplary, for example by ensuring that school placements are located to ensure that trainees with childcare responsibilities are not disadvantaged. Although there have been no recorded incidents of unlawful discrimination or harassment, trainees say that they would feel confident in making such disclosures. Trainees have a very good understanding of how to support pupils who speak English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and they are very well prepared to teach in a diverse community. This is because they are able to supplement already effective training in diversity and inclusion by professional development days which they can use to address areas of weakness or follow up specific interests.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

21. Outstanding leadership and management at all levels ensure that the training provision is being constantly improved so that it accurately meets the emerging

needs of trainees. Leaders of both primary and early years programmes are highly regarded across the partnership. They are exceptionally effective because rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems enable them to have an extremely clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and this is reflected in a very detailed and accurate self-evaluation document. Every aspect of the training is rigorously evaluated across the partnership by trainees, schools or tutors and careful analysis of this feedback accurately informs improvement planning. The wide dissemination of the outcomes of evaluation and the considered response to the issues raised demonstrate the provider's commitment to listening to the views of trainers and trainees. Management boards and committees operate extremely efficiently and provide a suitable balance of support and challenge to course leaders.

22. The provider's quality assurance systems are also extensive and robust. Internal systems to assure the accuracy of judgements about trainees' progress and assessment, including their final grades, are rigorous and comprehensive. External examiners' and verifiers' reports further ensure that systems are secure and that judgements are accurate. These reports are detailed and based upon the rigorous interpretation of evidence and the provider responds positively and swiftly to any issues raised in them.
23. The provider anticipates and responds well to change and local and national initiatives. National priorities are well integrated into the training, and the university has made positive contributions to major initiatives such as assessment for learning in primary English teaching. Locally, the university has played a significant role in initiating projects, supporting schools and developing innovative solutions to long-standing issues. The establishment of a very active forum for headteachers has helped to steer this and has generated opportunities for trainees and teachers to undertake school-based research. This has had a positive impact on trainees' understanding and confidence as well as supporting school improvement within the partnership.
24. Longer term improvement planning operates within a clear cycle of development. The process effectively draws together the outcomes of internal and external monitoring and evaluation into a coherent format which identifies clear priorities and actions for improvement. All partnership schools are sent a summary setting out how the training has been, and will be, improved, helping schools to appreciate how they are contributing to improvement and showing how it can benefit their own staff development plans. The improvement plan itself makes strong links between actions and their impact on outcomes for trainees, but opportunities are missed to quantify such impact. For example, one target in the current improvement plan is to raise the percentage of grade 1 and 2 trainees but the plan does not indicate what this percentage aims to be, so success cannot be clearly measured.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

25. The secondary programme offers training routes in art and design, design and technology, English, ICT, mathematics, modern languages, music, physical education, religious education and science. The provider offered a Key Stage 2/3 programme in science, mathematics and modern languages for the last time in 2010/11.

Key strengths

26. The key strengths are:
- the rate of progress made by all trainees and the accuracy and thoroughness of the tracking of that progress
 - the quality of trainees' lesson planning, their attention to their students' needs and their willingness to be creative
 - the professionalism of trainees and the way they reflect on their training needs and seek out opportunities to improve their practice
 - the quality of leadership at all levels and the understanding of what counts as outstanding outcomes and provision
 - the much improved and very effective recruitment and selection procedures which lead to the enrolment of high quality trainees with a broad range of experience
 - the comprehensive and personalised training which links theory and practice very well
 - the commitment of all partner schools to the programme
 - the outstanding personal and academic support given to all trainees.

Recommendations

27. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- ensure that all verbal feedback on trainees' teaching balances the encouragement of reflection with a clear and precise account of the strengths and areas for development arising from the lesson
 - make greater use of professional tutors and link tutors in the formal quality assurance of school-based training to inform improvement planning.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

28. Trainees' attainment is good. Careful analysis by the provider indicated that the drop in higher grades in the year prior to the inspection was linked to

considerable under-grading because of the unfamiliarity of school-based trainers with the new profiling system. Current data, which are more accurate and reliable because of the security of the evidence base, indicate that there is a significant increase in the proportion of trainees this year on track to achieve the highest grades. The overwhelming majority of trainees, and groups of trainees, are consistently making good progress from their starting points. There are no significant differences in the outcomes of different groups. Inspection evidence confirms the provider's self-evaluation that, in spite of last year's dip in attainment, there is a rapidly improving trend.

29. Trainees plan lessons very well and define equally well what they want different groups of students to learn. They are well prepared and creative and their plans and management of classes show that they know how behaviour and learning are linked. Trainees ensure tasks are well matched to students' needs and they have a very good understanding of the range of special education needs and/or disabilities for which they must cater. They are strongly committed to their schools and involve themselves fully in school life. Although they reflect very well on their teaching, and seek out the experiences they need to improve their practice, their written reflections on lessons do not always focus sufficiently on the progress made by groups of students.
30. The provider is having significant success in recruiting trainees onto the programme who are well suited to teaching and who have very clear expectations about the demands of the training year. There has been a year-on-year improvement in the recruitment of trainees with higher grades of first degree and of those whose varied backgrounds bring diverse experience to the programme. The provider has also taken calculated risks in selection in the sure knowledge that support will be there to help those who need it. General improvements to procedures have ensured that the provider can now identify more accurately prospective trainees' communication and interpersonal skills. All these improvements have led to higher completion rates which are now consistently above the national average. Subject knowledge enhancement courses have been very successful in equipping trainees with the essential skills they need at the start of the course. Information about trainees' strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, as well as all other information from the recruitment process, feeds very well into the trainees' professional learning and practice portfolio and ensures a smooth transition onto the programme.
31. The training and assessment are universally highly regarded and there is very strong coherence between centre- and school-based training. The quality of central training is high. Subject coverage is thorough and enhanced by the contributions of skilled practitioners from schools and external agencies. Programmes are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect national priorities. The block structure of the programme supports trainees particularly well in the development of their teaching and professional links with the schools. Trainees on the Key Stage 2/3 programme have benefited hugely from their training and have gained a particularly good insight into transition between the phases as well as into the role of the subject specialist in primary education.

32. The professional studies programme delivered by schools during central training is a strength of the programme: it is very successful in allowing trainees to get an early insight into school life and to have opportunities to work in a cross-curricular way with their peers. The level of personalisation of the training is outstanding and particularly evident during the second central training phase, where the level of tailoring to trainees' needs often results in a complex and highly varied training programme. Intervention is strong, both to stretch the most able and to support those trainees experiencing difficulties.
33. Schools make a significant contribution to developing trainees' wider skills and the level of collaboration across the programme ensures that trainees gain experience in a broad range of contexts. At the same time, new opportunities for learning are continuously being created. For example, the 'situated learning' seen most significantly in science and physical education has helped trainees explore areas of their subject pedagogy on a one-to-one or small group basis with students in schools. This work has also had a strong impact on students' engagement with their subjects.
34. Probably the most significant change to the training and assessment of trainees has been the introduction of profile characteristics for assessment and development. These are now very well understood and applied by all trainers. Profiles motivate trainees to move to the next level and gather the evidence to show that they have done so. The new system has been instrumental in ensuring that trainees are fully involved in the assessment of their progress. Mentors write very thorough and focused weekly records, targets are focused and measurable and the reports are very detailed and relate well to both the Standards and the profile characteristics. Verbal feedback to trainees on their teaching, while detailed and thorough, does not always have the right balance between opportunities for reflection and a clear indication of strengths and areas for development arising out of the observation.
35. Resources have been well targeted to bring about improvements since the previous inspection with developments, such as the introduction of the link tutor and the range of experts now employed to supplement course leaders' skills. Decisions on the deployment of resources are strategic and linked very well to development priorities which are, in turn, linked to trainees' outcomes.
36. The commitment of partnership schools to the programme is very strong. School-based trainers identify greatly improved communication, systems and support as key factors in helping them to carry out their roles effectively. The university, in turn, is very committed to 'its' schools and has a detailed knowledge of their potential as training venues. Training for school-based trainers is of a high quality and all trainers are very well versed in moderation procedures at all levels. The recently introduced link tutors provide valuable cross-subject moderation and strong support. The provider has ensured equality and diversity are at the heart of the training by including them in the profile characteristics and regularly reviewing progress in that area. This is backed up by very good and varied training on diversity which results in trainees being well prepared to teach in a diverse society. There are very high

levels of pastoral and academic care for trainees to ensure that all can make the levels of progress expected of them.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

37. There have been significant changes to the leadership and management of the secondary programme since the previous inspection. All areas of concern identified in the previous inspection report have been rigorously addressed, with some, such as the quality of the training and assessment procedures, becoming strengths of the provision. The current leadership is characterised by its commitment to outstanding outcomes for trainees and outstanding provision. There has been an increasingly sharp focus on supporting trainees to make the best possible progress, and assessment systems developed over the last two years have created a culture of high expectations. As well as greatly improving the rate of progress made by trainees, there has also been an improvement in employment rates. The provider responds well to the needs of local schools, even when it means difficult decisions being taken, such as the closure of the Key Stage 2/3 programme. Bath Spa trainees are seen by partner schools to be of high quality and a significant number become newly qualified teachers in local schools, with many subsequently taking up posts of responsibility within the partnership.
38. Systems for monitoring trainees' progress are very rigorous. The weekly monitoring of mentoring records ensures subject course leaders have their fingers on the pulse and the five progress review points are used very well to analyse trends as well as to identify outcomes for individuals. Leaders and managers are well trained and have regional and national profiles in their subjects or as a result of their management skills. Leaders are responsive to schools and trainees, and both feel confident that their concerns and ideas will be carefully considered and acted on very appropriately. The level of consultation across the partnership is also high and ensures that schools are involved at a strategic level as well as in day-to-day management. External examiners have a very clear brief and set sharp targets which are very well responded to by the course and programme leaders. The use of an external independent verifier has added further rigour to moderation. Link and professional tutors give the provider a clear picture of the overall quality of provision in schools. However, neither are exploring the quality of, for example, mentor training and feedback.
39. There has been significant change to the curriculum to ensure it is better suited to trainees' needs. Phase programme leaders for primary and secondary have worked closely together to share the best practice and to bring a harmonised approach to initial teacher education at Bath Spa. Leaders have exploited the expertise of partnership schools and the training is creatively enhanced by a wide range of partnership work such as the 'situated learning' projects with a

number of schools and examples of trainees working alongside teachers on research projects.

40. Self-evaluation is rigorous and based on a range of outcome data which are interrogated carefully to identify priorities for development. Very good use is also made of a range of evaluative data, both internal and external, to inform reports at programme and course level. An external consultancy ensures an additional layer of rigour in monitoring and evaluation. The congruence of the self-evaluation document and the development plan facilitates and streamlines improvement planning. Review is regular and consistently focused on trainees' outcomes. Self-evaluation outcomes and improvement planning are shared regularly with schools and this ensures that that all partners are aware of the priorities for each year. Skilled and very well-informed non-teaching staff support improvement planning very well by collecting and organising the data.

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Context

41. All the university's further education teacher training is based at its three partner colleges. The Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector and the Certificate to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualifications are embedded into Year One of the Certificate in Education (Lifelong Learning) and Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (Lifelong Learning) awards, but not separately endorsed. The requirements for the Diploma to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector are met by the full two-year, part-time in-service programme.
42. At the time of the inspection, there were 20 trainees at Bridgwater College, 50 at Weston College and 38 at Wiltshire College. The overwhelming majority of the trainees are employees of these colleges. The rest work in other settings, such as the police force or ambulance service.

Key strengths

43. The key strengths are:
 - enthusiastic trainees, most of whom make excellent progress in their professional development
 - the strong emphasis on critical reflection that enables trainees to evaluate their teaching thoughtfully and improve their practice
 - the high level of support and tutors' rapid response to meet trainees' varying needs, which play a key role in trainees' good professional development
 - the highly effective teacher training and mentoring, supported particularly well by the programme leader, that enable trainees to achieve well

- the well-designed course that enables trainees to link educational theory and research very effectively to their own practice
- the very detailed and constructive feedback on teaching and assignments that motivates trainees to improve still further
- the excellent use of up-to-date resources and technology by trainers and trainees to support teaching and learning.

Recommendations

44. In order to sustain high quality outcomes, the partnership should:
- systematically measure attainment, so that all trainees are clear about the progress they make and the standard they reach on completion of their course
 - recruit a higher proportion of trainees from underrepresented groups
 - improve trainees' understanding of the breadth and range of equality and diversity issues so that they can embed these more confidently and knowledgeably in their teaching
 - focus improvement plans more sharply on the impact they will have on trainees' outcomes.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

45. Inspection evidence confirms the partnership's judgement that trainees' overall attainment by the end of their course is good. This represents excellent progress for most trainees.
46. Trainees make such significant progress because they apply very effectively to their teaching what they learn on their course and take very seriously the constructive feedback they receive from tutors and mentors. Trainees are enthusiastic, as well as highly reflective, and talk candidly about their strengths as teachers and the areas they wish to improve further. Whatever their starting point, by the end of the course, trainees have grown considerably in confidence and are very proud of the progress they make.
47. Trainees draw very effectively on their vocational or commercial experience to make learning relevant for their own students. They plan their lessons meticulously, often to incorporate imaginative activities and assessment methods, to ensure that all their students achieve well. They use a wide range of different teaching approaches and are not afraid to experiment. As their own course progresses, trainees become increasingly adept at supporting the development of their students' literacy and numeracy.
48. Recruitment and selection arrangements are good. Trainees benefit from objective and helpful advice about the most appropriate teacher-training course for them, given their experience and qualifications. For a small minority, enrolment requires the formal accreditation of prior learning or the acquisition of the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualification at level 3

at one of the two partnership colleges offering it. Consequently, a very high proportion of trainees complete the award successfully, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. Despite this success, the partnership has failed to stem the decline in recruitment over the last few years and has not attracted many trainees from under-represented groups.

49. Trainees are well qualified in their subjects and secure the required teaching hours, although a small minority struggle to find a sufficiently wide range of teaching opportunities. Induction arrangements are well organised and very effective. Appropriate systems are in place to assess trainees' subject expertise as well as their literacy, numeracy and language skills, and high quality support is provided where necessary. As a consequence of study skills support, many trainees make especially good progress in the development of their academic writing skills. Support within the colleges for dyslexic trainees is very strong and enables them to make good or better progress. One dyslexic trainee interviewed by inspectors explained how passionate she was about helping all of her students to achieve, recognising the barriers she had faced and how she had now overcome them, with excellent support from the college.
50. High quality training enables trainees to develop very good professional skills. Trainees report that they try to emulate the excellent practice modelled by their trainers. The different aspects of the course blend together well, enabling trainees to draw very effectively on their reading and research to inform their teaching. Many trainees, and particularly those who have not been in full-time education for a very long time, are surprised to discover how much they enjoy the theoretical aspects of the course. Evidence from former trainees suggests that success on the course is instrumental in inspiring many of them to go on to further studies.
51. Most mentors, including those who support trainees who do not work at partner colleges, provide excellent subject-specific advice and guidance. Tutors know mentors well and are quick to identify and remedy any concerns or areas for development. Mentors appreciate the high quality documentation and resources they are given to help them to fulfil their role, although not all are able to attend training events.
52. The strong emphasis on critical reflection is a key strength of the provision and trainees' evaluation of their own teaching has a clear impact on their ability and desire to continue to improve. Throughout the course, tutors and mentors help trainees to improve their reflective skills, so that lesson evaluations are personal and thoughtful and rarely shallow.
53. The assessment of trainees' teaching and written work is rigorous. The detailed, constructive feedback given by tutors and mentors is instrumental in enabling trainees to achieve to their full potential. In addition to regular informal feedback on their performance, trainees have very productive formal 'milestone' reviews, at which they discuss their progress with their tutors, draw on a range of evidence, agree on realistic action points and update their individual development plans. At these reviews, trainees use the recently introduced profile characteristics to grade attainment, whereby they reflect on

the extent to which they have met the characteristics of a satisfactory, good or outstanding teacher. The system, which is used in all phases, is still in its infancy and, while many trainees and tutors find this approach helpful, others feel it is unnecessarily complex.

54. Trainees value very highly the exemplary support they receive from their tutors, mentors and university staff, all of whom make a significant contribution to their personal well-being and professional development. This high level of support is pivotal in ensuring that trainees, many of whom struggle at times to balance employment and other commitments with part-time study, remain on track and complete the course successfully.
55. The quality of training and mentoring is very high at all three colleges, in part due to the rigour of the moderation process and also as a consequence of regular meetings for course managers. The programme leader and a colleague, whose role is described as a 'field affiliate', play a key role in maintaining the consistency of standards, as well as identifying and sharing best practice.
56. Trainees confirm that they benefit from excellent resources, most notably access to well-qualified tutors and mentors. They make very good use of on-line resources, technology and up-to-date training materials, largely as a result of the enthusiasm of the programme leader, who has created his own website and keeps colleagues notified on a regular basis of new developments and resources. Trainees also consider the university's field affiliate, who contributes very productively to training sessions, observations, writing materials and moderation, a key resource.
57. Trainees are very keen to promote equality and diversity. They plan their lessons carefully to accommodate the differing needs of their students. They are knowledgeable about learning difficulties and disabilities and have a good understanding of safeguarding. There are pockets of excellent practice, whereby trainees seek out ways in which they can promote diversity through their teaching and challenge their students' attitudes. However, a minority of trainees have an underdeveloped understanding of equality and diversity and take a more reactive approach.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

58. The programme's capacity for further improvement is good, although the partnership in its self-evaluation document judges it to be outstanding. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the composition of the partnership, with one college joining and another long-standing partner leaving at the end of the current academic year. In addition, much has changed within the colleges, while at the university the administration of initial teacher education for further education has recently moved to the School of Education alongside primary and secondary provision. The university has been involved successfully in this type of provision for more than 15 years and

employs a very experienced programme leader, supported by a field affiliate on a fractional contract.

59. Notwithstanding the many changes and a degree of uncertainty within the sector about funding and policy changes, the programme leader and course managers continue to work together very effectively to sustain the high quality of training identified at the last inspection. The programme leader is particularly good at nurturing the relationship between the partners, keeping in touch and maintaining a culture of continuous improvement.
60. Quality assurance is comprehensive and rigorous, especially in relation to the moderation of written assignments. Partnership-wide self-evaluation is a continuous process, emerging from day-to-day contact between partners as well as regular course managers' meetings. It involves all partners and draws appropriately on a good range of sources. For example, the partnership regularly seeks the views of trainees and acts promptly to resolve any problems. Given the small cohesive nature of the partnership, university tutors, course managers, trainers and mentors know each other and the trainees well and can usually identify and address areas for improvement quickly and effectively. The quality assurance of mentoring is largely effective, although it relies more on informal discussions and feedback rather than any systematic process.
61. The partnership routinely analyses retention and pass rates by gender, ethnicity and disability and has not identified any discernible differences in performance over the last three years. The partnership is only just beginning to measure the extent to which the proportion of satisfactory, good and outstanding teachers changes each year. Until this year, it has not been able to base judgements securely on an analysis of trainees' progress and attainment. This is because, following a period of consultation and pilot projects, it has taken a cautious approach towards grading trainees' attainment against the profile characteristics.
62. Since the last inspection, the partnership has placed more emphasis on equality and diversity within the curriculum and this has been successful in raising its profile with trainers and trainees. The extent to which this is reflected in trainees' planning, resources and attitudes is good, but not yet outstanding, as suggested in the partnership's self-assessment document.
63. The action plan for improvement is a very useful practical working document that identifies key priorities arising out of the self-evaluation process and reflects the partnership's commitment to continuous improvement. In a few cases, however, the plan focuses on inputs and processes without identifying how the planned actions will have an impact on trainees' performance, thereby making it difficult to measure success.
64. The partnership's capacity to anticipate change and prepare for, and respond to, national, regional and local initiatives is excellent. A wide range of research activity underpins developments, particularly as a consequence of the programme leader's involvement in many local and national professional

networks. The findings from research projects and activities are disseminated well and used to inform partnership developments. All partners keep up to date with developments in the lifelong learning sector and this, in turn, has an impact on trainees, who are very well informed about the wider political context within which they work.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Bridgwater College

Weston College

Wiltshire 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	1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	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	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1	1	1
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	1
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 November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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