

Manchester Metropolitan 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. The university is one of the largest providers of initial teacher training in the country. It works in partnership with schools locally and regionally to offer a range of routes into teaching in primary and secondary schools and the post-compulsory sector. For those training to teach in schools, one-year courses lead to a postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE), with a recommendation for qualified teacher status (QTS), mostly in either the 3 to 7, 5 to 11, or 11 to 16 age ranges. Four-year undergraduate courses are available for those training to teach in primary schools. Training for the majority of trainees is centred at the university's Didsbury campus; other training is based at the university's Crewe campus.
4. In addition, the university manages the provision at the Crewe campus and five further education colleges for teacher training in the post-compulsory sector. A one-year full-time programme at Crewe offers initial training for potential teachers and trainers in further education (FE). Two-year part-time programmes, based in the colleges, provide qualifications for those already

working in the sector. All post-compulsory provision leads to an award within the qualifications framework of the lifelong learning sector.

5. Primary and secondary provision offers placements in a range of schools, mainly located in Manchester, Cheshire and the local authorities on the Manchester fringes, but also including schools in other authorities such as Staffordshire. FE placements cover a wide geographical area centred on Manchester, Cheshire and the Wirral.
6. The university offers a number of short courses that enable potential teachers to gain the qualifications necessary to embark on an initial teacher training programme. These include six-month and nine-month enhancement courses in mathematics, a six-month enhancement course in physics, and one-week or two-week 'booster' courses in mathematics, physics and chemistry.
7. Management of all these programmes is located in the university's Institute of Education.

A commentary on the provision

8. The following are particular features of the provider and all its initial teacher training programmes.
 - Mentors and tutors provide strong support for trainees' personal and professional needs.
 - Members from across the partnership feel fully involved in the development of the programmes; programme evaluations take full account of their views.
9. There are particularly strong features in some programmes that could be applied to other programmes or aspects of the provision. In the post-compulsory sector, the university should:
 - ensure that all college-based and external mentors benefit from the same high level of training and support as those in primary and secondary schools
 - ensure that the use of data to analyse recruitment and selection and trainees' outcomes matches the highly effective practice in other programmes.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

10. The university trains teachers to work in the Early Years Foundation Stage and primary age phases. It offers two main training routes: a four-year undergraduate route leading to the award of Bachelor of Arts (BA) Honours

with QTS and a one-year postgraduate route leading to a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE). Both routes are provided at the Didsbury and Crewe sites. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,199 trainees on the undergraduate programme and 186 postgraduate trainees, including 29 taking the modern foreign languages specialism. More than 1,100 schools in 18 local authorities form the primary partnership.

Key strengths

11. The key strengths are:

- the sensitive, high-quality pastoral support for trainees, especially from personal tutors, which ensures trainees complete the course, make at least good progress and gain employment
- rigorous recruitment and selection procedures and the strong track record of widening participation for trainees with non-traditional academic qualifications
- the development of innovative units of study and option courses which allow undergraduate trainees to tailor the training to their needs and interests
- the high value given to the trainee voice in promoting higher-quality provision and trainee satisfaction
- the effective use of schools with specialist expertise to heighten trainees' knowledge and skills, especially in teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language
- the well-focused, distributive leadership and shared clarity of purpose that engage all trainers in driving improvement in the quality of provision and the outcomes for trainees
- the ongoing, thorough evaluation and critical reflection shown by leaders and managers, which are mirrored in trainees' development as thinking practitioners.

Recommendations

12. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:

- refine the use of the grading criteria to ensure that all postgraduate trainees and those working with them have a rounded, realistic understanding of trainees' performance to date and what they need to do to improve
- sharpen improvement planning further by identifying, wherever possible, measurable targets related to outcomes for trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

13. Attainment has risen over the last three years and is good, nudging on being outstanding. Unvalidated data for the current Year 4 BA trainees, the first to follow the new degree structure, indicate that more than 50% were judged to be outstanding in their final placement. The attainment of PGCE trainees was outstanding in 2010, having been good in previous years. Trainees at Crewe do slightly better than those at Didsbury. Trainees are well prepared to enter the profession with a high proportion gaining employment, often within partnership schools.
14. The vast majority of trainees meet all the standards for QTS well. PGCE trainees, observed in the third week of their final placement, form good relationships with staff and pupils. They plan lessons carefully, often taking a risk such as hanging up cards with letters on for Reception Year children to find and use to create words. While most trainees show effective management of pupils' behaviour with a strong focus on praise and encouragement, a few still have to find what works best for them. Strong trainees use their assessment of pupils' learning to plan different learning activities and show a good level of critical reflection on their teaching. This also typifies the final year BA trainees, who confidently justify their teaching, showing a strong grasp of the links between theory and practice. They apply their knowledge particularly effectively in teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
15. Good retention rates and the growing proportion of good and outstanding trainees at the end of the programme are the result of highly effective procedures to recruit and select suitable trainees. The prime focus on selecting those with the potential to become outstanding teachers results in above average proportions of trainees from under-represented groups. Just under 30% of trainees have non-traditional academic qualifications; 15% of first year trainees came via access courses. The university is very successful in recruiting and retaining male trainees, especially to the PGCE programme. The Crewe-based programmes recruit an increasing number of trainees from Wales and Ireland.
16. Trainees comment on the challenge of the selection interview which, for those wishing to take the modern foreign language route, is conducted partly in the target language. They often cite the warm, welcoming atmosphere as the deciding factor in taking up the place offered. Good systems, including networking online and well-produced induction packs, enable trainees to get to know others and to prepare for the programme.
17. Trainees show suitable personal qualities for teaching: they are self-assured, reflective, enthusiastic and keen to do well. They have a clear overview of their progress and describe, for example, an 'incredible' development of skills. They attribute this development primarily to three things: the very good quality of the programme; the excellent support and encouragement from trainers; and trainers' clear expectation that trainees will take full responsibility for their own

learning. The most diligent trainees benefit highly from this, taking booster sessions to increase their subject knowledge, opting to work voluntarily in schools, and making optimum use of all their experience and training as evidence of meeting the standards for QTS. A small minority of postgraduate trainees do much less, leaving some gaps in their subject knowledge and relying almost solely on evidence from lesson observations and reports on their progress.

18. Trainees' progress against the standards is mostly recorded conscientiously, tracked carefully and reviewed regularly. A strong feature in this ongoing process is the constancy of the personal tutor: tutors know their trainees extremely well and trainees have faith in tutors. The initial needs analysis helps trainees to see the relevance of previous experience, to realise where development is needed and to set personal targets to ensure good academic and professional progress.
19. The collation of data on trainees' progress shows that BA trainees make very good progress over time from their starting points, which are low for some trainees. This cumulative progress is also true of the PGCE trainees over the full programme but towards the end of the year, as at the time of the inspection, the picture is distorted by the use of different grade criteria for the first and final placements. As significant challenge is built into the grading criteria for the second placement, the progress of some trainees appears to stall when they have actually moved on. Discussions with trainees and school-based trainers indicate that some have expectations of performance that are too high, based on the grade at the end of the first placement. For example, trainees who have been graded as outstanding are not always clear enough about how to improve.
20. Both the BA and PGCE programmes are challenging; elements are revisited and have good links with school-based training. The new BA degree is coherent and carefully structured to give trainees a holistic view of what one trainee described as, 'how children tick'. It also gives good opportunities for trainees to follow personal interests in Years 3 and 4 through option courses and research. For example, the Year 2 unit on inclusion and diversity complements very effectively the placement when trainees work with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in a range of settings. Trainees specialising in the Early Years gain a good grounding in key principles and effective practice in learning through play, using the outdoors and working with others. PGCE trainees benefit from input from a nursery practitioner.
21. All trainees receive up-to-date, high-quality training in the theory and practice of teaching reading. Effective links between sessions in English as an additional language, modern foreign language teaching and English reinforce the importance of trainees' subject knowledge and of activities to promote speaking and listening. Similarly, school-based tasks, such as looking at the reading development of a child, involve trainees in using a range of assessment strategies. Trainees speak of being inspired by trainers modelling effective teaching of phonics. Regular, well-focused tasks ensure trainees, especially those working with younger pupils, develop their own bank of ideas and

resources and a good understanding of synthetic phonics. However, a small minority of trainees working in Key Stage 2 are not so confident in teaching phonics or in delivering a structured programme to develop older pupils' reading skills.

22. The high level of commitment and support from centre-based and school-based trainers has a significant impact on trainees' academic and professional progress. Critical, sharp but supportive marking of assignments gives trainees a clear picture of how they can improve. Trainees know that support sessions in key skills, including the use of academic references, have enhanced the quality of their work. On placement, trainees benefit from much conscientious mentoring and support. The quality of oral feedback to trainees is often high: school-based trainers are accurate in their judgements; raise salient points; give helpful suggestions on how trainees could do better; and set clear short-term targets. Written feedback is not always so clearly related to pupils' learning and what will make an immediate difference.
23. Although there are some minor inconsistencies in the quality of mentoring, the overall quality of the provision across the partnership is outstanding. School-based trainers understand what is expected of them and know the university will step in with support when asked. The streamlining of documentation, in response to evaluations from schools, has lessened formal demands. Many trainers conduct more observations than required but there is little record of their work in monitoring trainees' planning, evaluations and selection of evidence for meeting the standards.
24. The partnership shows high commitment to, and effectiveness in, promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity. For example, all trainees benefit from training in a modern foreign language and from the development of innovative support strategies, such as Year 4 trainees mentoring Year 3 trainees in compiling placement files. Trainees' progress is enhanced by an outstanding use of resources. Trainees' needs are considered carefully in the allocation of placements, and in ensuring that they gain experience in teaching pupils in a range of social and cultural contexts. Placements in schools with specialist expertise contribute strongly to enhancing trainees' knowledge and skills especially in teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language
25. The increased investment to improve the extent and quality of provision in information and communication technology has resulted in much higher levels of trainee satisfaction and also in much increased use of online contact and support materials. There is a strong feeling of sensitivity to trainees' needs and views. One trainee commented that easy access to support from trainers and other trainees was a key factor in keeping her on the programme. Likewise, course leaders ensure that the PGCE trainees following the modern foreign languages programme gain the maximum benefit from their placement abroad, are given tutorial support to assess their progress, and are as well prepared to start their final placement as other trainees.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

26. The programmes are very well led and managed. There have been significant changes in personnel and organisational structure since the previous inspection, and these have been managed well so as to sustain empowering leadership and effective team collaboration. The appointment of a leader of primary partnership and the shift to leadership of programmes across the two sites have unified the provision and given a collegiate sense of purpose. Action to improve the quality of provision has been mirrored by rising levels of trainees' satisfaction and attainment. Schools recognise trainees' improved knowledge of assessment for learning and increased skill and confidence in teaching early reading. The high value placed on seeking and acting on trainees' views has been a significant factor in the ongoing development of the BA programme.
27. Self-evaluation is thorough, accurate and based on comprehensive evaluation of the provision and outcomes for trainees. The programmes are under constant review at all levels. Representatives from the partnership welcome the increased rigour in seeking the views and ideas of school-based trainers. The annual partnership report gives a clear overview of trainees' evaluations of the overall quality of school-based training and the impact of improvement actions during the year. Similarly, centre-based training is evaluated rigorously in respect of expected outcomes for trainees. One recent unit leader's report, for example, used qualitative, quantitative and comparative data in evaluating changes made, such as the positive impact from the issue of theory briefing sheets to support trainees' assignment writing. Programme leaders are quick to respond to relevant points raised by external examiners and to make amendments to organisational arrangements which are unclear or which hinder trainees' progress. A good example is the extended paired placement for Year 1 BA trainees with a clear requirement for class teaching.
28. Data on trainees' recruitment, attainment and satisfaction levels are analysed thoroughly and compared against sector and national figures. As a result leaders have a very good understanding of how different cohorts and groups perform. The identification of weaker aspects of the course prompts action: for example, stronger training in how to teach structured phonics has had a marked impact on trainees' confidence and competence. From their analyses of trainees' teaching and subject knowledge, English programme leaders are now aware of the need to strengthen trainees' word-level and sentence-level awareness to ensure best-quality teaching in reading for older Key Stage 2 pupils.
29. Quality assurance is strong. Centre-based trainers conduct joint observations and judgement reviews with school-based trainers, and senior moderators visit placement schools. Occasional concerns about a school's capacity to manage training lead to agreed support or to schools withdrawing from the partnership for a period. The decision to make link tutors responsible for local clusters of

schools has been effective in increasing class teachers' and training coordinators' attendance at, and involvement in, training and consultative sessions. The recent emphasis on supporting trainers in the use of the grade criteria to judge trainees' attainment has reinforced expected practice but there is still some way to go to iron out minor inconsistencies.

30. Trainers respond very effectively to national priorities in initial teacher training and use trainers' research interests and expertise to ensure trainees are aware of current issues and educational debates. The high-quality professional development sessions in early reading have targeted all centre-based trainers involved in primary and secondary programmes. As a result tutors have a sound grounding in subject content and how to evaluate the quality of trainees' teaching of reading, including the teaching of phonics. The combining of university tutors' specialist expertise together with prompt sheets and a DVD of clips of phonics teaching, compiled by staff at 'Leading Partners in Literacy' schools, shows the effective use of expertise and resources across the partnership to improve outcomes for trainees.
31. The partnership is very effective in anticipating change. At both Didsbury and Crewe, tutors are conducting mini-pilots of new training approaches that aim to foster trainees' awareness of how to develop listening, speaking and literacy across the curriculum. Centre-based trainers are working with schools in trialling new ways of working: one school, for example, is providing support for trainees specifically in 'Every Child a Reader'; while another school is taking full responsibility for the professional development of 20 first-year BA trainees. Outcomes show significant benefits in professional development for school staff as well as high trainee satisfaction levels regarding content and context.
32. Improvement planning is cohesive; the improvement plan amplifies the key priorities identified in the self-evaluation document and is supported by other detailed plans related to each action. In this way, all staff are fully aware of what is intended and why, and are engaged in making it happen. Some success criteria lack the precision needed to allow critical evaluation of impact and there is only tentative use of quantitative targets related to outcomes for trainees. Given the growing critical analysis of data related to trainees' progress and attainment, programme leaders are well placed to set challenging targets for further improvement.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

33. The university offers one-year initial teacher training programmes for those wishing to teach in secondary schools leading to a post-graduate certificate of education (PGCE). Undergraduate programmes leading to a Bachelor of Arts (BA) Honours degree with qualified teacher status in mathematics education or physical education (PE) are being phased out: the PE course has trainees in the final year only; the mathematics education course recruited for the final time in 2010. At the time of the inspection, 659 trainees were on the PGCE programme and 66 were completing courses on the undergraduate programme.
34. One year PGCE courses are offered in art and design, design and technology, drama, English, English with special educational needs, geography, history, mathematics, music, music with specialist instrumental teaching, modern foreign languages (French, German and Spanish), religious education, science, social science with citizenship, psychology, business with information and communication technology, and physical education.

Key strengths

35. The key strengths are:
- the clear identification of trainees' needs leading to high-quality training, notably in managing pupils' behaviour and aspects of inclusion
 - the well-planned experiences in contrasting schools and excellent mentoring which lead to strong challenge and support for trainees
 - trainees' good development as reflective practitioners
 - the excellent management of the programme at all levels, which makes use of a wide range of data to identify priorities and acts effectively to bring about improvement
 - all trainees feeling very well supported in their personal and professional needs
 - the close collaboration between partnership schools and the university to sustain and improve the quality of provision.

Recommendations

36. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
- strengthen improvement planning by making more use of sharp, measurable criteria that relate to trainees' outcomes
 - ensure trainees' progress in developing their subject knowledge is monitored more effectively throughout the course in all subjects.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

37. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding.
38. Trainees' attainment is good and improving. The proportion of trainees who show outstanding characteristics by the time they qualify as teachers is increasing. The attainment of male trainees and trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds has also risen. These positive trends can be traced to the continuous improvements made to the quality of recruitment, selection, training and assessment.
39. Trainees frequently meet the QTS Standards very successfully, because their training is securely framed by the standards and expectations are high. Trainees are receptive to advice, committed and willing to try new ideas. Through their training, they become well practised in reflecting and researching in order to improve their knowledge and skills. This shows in the clarity and creativity of much of their teaching and the insight and rigour of most evaluations. Trainees have a good or better understanding of the curriculum in the subjects they teach and of developments in the wider curriculum.
40. Trainees understand how 'Every Child Matters' relates to their professional practice. Moreover, they show an unusually strong understanding of the link between effective learning and good behaviour. They use a broad range of strategies to manage behaviour with confidence; they recognise the barriers to pupils' learning and have strategies to overcome them. They plan activities to strengthen pupils' literacy and numeracy although, in a few cases, their understanding of how to develop pupils' spoken communication, team work or thinking skills is less well developed.
41. The rigorous application of clearly defined selection criteria ensures that trainees recruited are well suited to the course. In many subjects, the great majority are very well qualified academically and through experience. The university has increased the recruitment of under-represented groups and to shortage subjects by providing targeted taster experiences and highly regarded pre-training booster courses where needed. At interview, tutors record detailed information about trainees' strengths and areas for development; they use this very well to ensure that trainees progress rapidly from the earliest days of the course. This begins an impressive process of individual guidance and support which contributes strongly to the above average retention rate. The proportion of trainees gaining employment at the end of the programme is also above average.
42. The quality of training and assessment is consistently high and, as a result, most trainees make good progress. Past and present trainees say the university's professional practice training is memorable, influential and linked effectively to teaching their subjects. Managers enhance training through making good use of specialist expertise within and beyond the partnership.

Resources, notably those that trainees access through the virtual learning environment (VLE), are stimulating and useful. Through well-conceived assignments, trainees make good use of action research and benefit from having other trainees share their results.

43. In most cases, trainees' knowledge of their subject and how to teach it is extended in a sustained and effective way throughout the course. Searching, sometimes ambitious, audits inform the training programme, the matching of school placements and extra tutoring. Trainees are supported effectively to identify and pursue targets which challenge them. Many have well-filled portfolios of evidence illustrating their progress and the review process helps to raise their expectations. However, in a small minority of cases, the development of trainees' subject knowledge is not monitored closely or regularly throughout the course.
44. The quality of provision across the partnership is excellent. School-based trainers contribute impressively to developing trainees' strengths and meeting their needs. They take full advantage of opportunities to observe and discuss different approaches to teaching and coach trainees' skills; many give particularly clear, detailed feedback on trainees' teaching. The professional and subject mentors, with the subject tutor, form a strong triangle supporting individual trainees' progress and well-being. The high frequency of visits by university tutors to schools, usually involving joint observations, ensures that trainers share a good understanding of trainees' progress and how to accelerate it. This exemplifies the provider's thoughtful and highly effective use of resources.
45. Trainers across the partnership use a thorough and robust six-point review process consistently well to monitor trainees' progress. They identify trainees' emerging needs and set challenging targets. Trainees progress rapidly, although there is some variability in the rigour with which mentors follow up individual targets. In the best cases, trainees show clear progress in using assessment information to match their teaching more effectively to pupils' needs or giving pupils greater opportunities for independent learning.
46. The introduction of enhanced levelled descriptors, mapped to Ofsted criteria, for assessing trainees is deepening understanding on all sides of what counts as good performance and is also successfully raising expectations. An increasing proportion of strong trainees achieve very highly so that, in many areas, they exceed expectations for the QTS standards. Assessment is rigorous and moderated; all available evidence indicates it is accurate.
47. Schools do much to ensure the quality of their own provision. In some cases, mentors are trained mainly within school, but when they do attend university training they say it is very useful. When school-based trainers do not attend meetings, a visit is made by a university tutor. Systems for communication work effectively and headteachers express positive views about the way the partnership works. They particularly praise the swift, constructive response of university staff when problems arise. A structure of local cluster groups has led to excellent examples of sharing good practice between school-based trainers.

48. All trainees, including those from identified minorities, feel very well supported in their personal and professional needs. They report no incidents of bullying or harassment and have confidence in systems to protect their welfare. As a result of the training they receive and their experience in complementary school placements, trainees feel well prepared to teach pupils from a wide variety of different backgrounds. Trainees promote equality in their teaching very effectively; for example, they explain confidently how to handle bullying or a racist comment in the classroom. They understand the need to take account of cultural differences and challenge stereotypes. As a result of the strong emphasis given to inclusion in the training, trainees adapt their plans very effectively to meet the different needs of pupils. Where trainees have only limited experience of teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the gifted and talented or those who are learning English as an additional language, they benefit from further targeted experience in the final enrichment phase of their training.

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

49. The provider has outstanding capacity to sustain high-quality outcomes for trainees and to take action to improve further where needed. Leaders and managers have a very strong track record of making decisions that lead to improved provision and outcomes. For example, the improving trends in retention and attainment owe much to developments in subject courses, increased investment in resources to support the partnership, and improved processes for assisting and monitoring particular groups of trainees. Change is managed very effectively. For example, the new PGCE course in PE has made a very successful start and developments in the science course have led to improved outcomes for trainees. Changes to the induction phase of training appear to have boosted the progress of some trainees. Programme managers ensure that new staff are carefully inducted and benefit from mentoring in their roles. Meetings of partnership representatives and a steering group enable schools to play an influential part in key decisions. However, understanding of the partnership's priority areas for development was less evident in schools which have not been involved in meetings.
50. Leaders and managers seek the views of others and respond very effectively where relative weaknesses are identified. For example, responses to the 2010 NQT survey indicated a smaller-than-average proportion of trainees rated as good or better their training on aspects of inclusion and behaviour management. In response, programme tutors strengthened those aspects of training swiftly and very effectively, as evidenced by the views of current trainees. Moreover, inspection evidence identified that current trainees have a broad and comprehensive understanding of issues regarding behaviour management and many can apply them effectively in their teaching.

51. Changes to training take full account of recent national initiatives. Trainees show growing confidence in catering for the wider needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In addition, they show excellent awareness of recent changes to the ways pupils' individual needs are supported in schools. They have a good understanding of recent curriculum changes in their subjects: for example, science trainees are familiar with the implications of 'how science works' and English trainees understand the way the Assessing Pupils' Progress initiative contributes to effective teaching and learning. Trainees appreciate their role in developing pupils' key skills, such as literacy, and are able to describe how they adapt their teaching to accommodate the needs of poor readers.
52. Programme managers and course tutors ensure that trainees are fully aware of impending changes in secondary education. As a result trainees understand how curriculum developments for the secondary phase, including the English baccalaureate, will affect the status of their subjects. The range of provision caters well for local and national needs. For example, tutors and trainees have also participated constructively in local initiatives such as the Greater Manchester Challenge. The university provides training in a very broad range of secondary subjects and recruits substantial numbers to the nationally recognised priority subjects. More unusual or innovative areas of focus, such as training in psychology or social science with citizenship, also contribute to satisfying the needs of employing schools in the north-west region.
53. Self-evaluation is realistic and accurately identifies areas of strength and areas where additional improvements are needed. Evaluation draws on a wide range of sources including trainees' assessments, external examiners' reports, newly qualified teachers' surveys and regular feedback from trainees. The effective analysis of data, including comparisons with outcomes elsewhere in the sector, helps leaders and managers to benchmark provision against other training providers. Subject leaders make increasing use of data on groups of trainees to monitor the impact of changes. In addition, programme managers' actions to reduce variation across subjects are proving effective. Course developments take full account of views from across the partnership; as a result, all members of the partnership feel fully involved in course review. School based trainers generally receive the trainees' evaluations of the training they provide. However, programme managers could do more to provide partnership schools with comprehensive feedback from a broad range of quality assurance measures.
54. The thorough and perceptive review process runs throughout the year and is very effective in allocating resources according to need. The impact of action taken as a result of improvement planning is monitored carefully. Some aspects of the improvement plan itself focus more on provision than outcomes and success criteria are sometimes vague about the degree of difference expected, for example, in the standards attained by trainees or the impact on the pupils they teach.

Initial teacher education for the further education system

Context

55. The university works in partnership with five further education colleges to provide full-time one year pre-service and part-time two year in-service training for teachers and trainers across the further education sector. Courses lead to the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS). They meet the statutory requirements and are endorsed by Standards Verification UK. At the time of the inspection, 188 trainees were following these courses, of whom 5% were from minority ethnic backgrounds and 64% were female.

Key strengths

56. The key strengths are:
- very good pastoral, academic and specialist support by tutors and mentors that helps trainees at risk of leaving and those with additional learning needs to stay on the course and achieve successful outcomes
 - effective use of excellent resources that enables trainers and trainees to promote understanding and learning
 - high quality training sessions that link theory with practice very effectively and promote best practice for trainees to emulate in their own lessons
 - highly effective anticipation of change and corresponding innovations that inform trainees of current initiatives which they deploy successfully in their teaching practice.

Required actions

57. In order to improve the quality of provision, the partnership must:
- monitor more rigorously college based and external mentoring and target-setting so that all trainees benefit from the good practice which exists in some partners
 - monitor more rigorously the quality of lesson observations so that trainees benefit from consistently good feedback and accurately graded judgements.

Recommendations

58. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:
- ensure that all trainees are prepared fully to work in the diverse lifelong learning sector and to promote equality and diversity in their lessons

- improve the collection, accuracy and analysis of data to ensure that the outcomes inform the self-evaluation and quality improvement processes fully
 - increase the advice, guidance and support for mentors, especially those in providers outside the partnership, so that all trainees gain from improved subject-specialist support and observation feedback.
59. In order to improve recruitment and selection processes, the partnership should:
- increase the promotion of the provision to groups under-represented in teaching in the lifelong learning sector and analyse recruitment and selection data by different groups.
60. In order to improve its capacity to improve, the partnership should:
- improve self-evaluation so that it is accurate, evaluative and rich in evidence to support judgements.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 3

61. The overall effectiveness of the partnership in securing high-quality outcomes for trainees is satisfactory. Trainees' attainment is satisfactory, rather than good as judged by the university. Most trainees on the pre-service course attain at a good or outstanding level by the end of their course; just under two thirds of in-service trainees attain at a similar level. Trainees' attainment varies considerably between the partner colleges. Of the current trainees, many make good progress and achieve well, while others progress and achieve at satisfactory levels. The grades awarded for the achievement of current trainees are mostly accurate, but a few are optimistic. Trainees' overall success and retention rates have declined since 2008 and, in 2010, were well below sector averages. Success rates for pre-service trainees have declined over four years but remain high. Success rates vary significantly between partner colleges and increased between 2009 and 2010 in only one partner college. In each of the last two years, more than a quarter of trainees did not complete their course. Pre-service trainees aged under 25 are more successful than older trainees. Most trainees have a wide and diverse range of teaching experience at different levels and with learners of different ages and abilities. Not all pre-service trainees have a sufficiently wide experience of different types of provider in the very diverse lifelong learning sector.
62. The quality of trainees' work is variable. The large majority make good progress during the course; they produce very high-quality assignments and teach good or better lessons. Other trainees produce satisfactory assignments, teach reasonably well and make satisfactory progress. Practical assignments are good in most cases and trainees are generally reflective practitioners. Most improve the quality of their assignments during the course. The majority of

trainees make good progress in their coursework activities because of the very good pastoral, specialist and academic support they receive from their tutors and mentors. Other trainees do not make such good progress because of the variability in the quality of mentoring. Trainees are aware of important developments in the lifelong learning sector and talk with confidence about such matters as equality of opportunity, bullying, the 14 to 19 agenda, the Every Child Matters themes, minimum core curriculum and safeguarding issues. They are less confident about diversity.

63. Strengths in trainees' teaching include their use of a wide range of learning activities and methods, very effective use of high-quality resources, good support for their learners, good development of their learners' confidence and speaking skills, very effective strategies to engage disaffected learners and good consideration of health and safety issues. Trainees' areas for development include: planning to meet individual needs; ensuring learning materials contain correct grammar, punctuation and spelling; considering more innovative teaching and learning activities; taking opportunities to promote equality and diversity in their lessons; and avoiding excessive talking at their learners.
64. Recruitment and selection arrangements are satisfactory. The university provides a familiarisation programme for refugees that enables progression to the pre-service course. A successful bridging course enables trainees with lower level qualifications to progress to the second year of the DTLLS provision. The partnership does not, however, promote its DTLLS provision specifically to under-represented groups, nor does it set targets for the recruitment of under-represented groups. The interview process is good. Interviewers use selection criteria to ensure equality of opportunity. They check thoroughly applicants' motivation and potential to work in the lifelong-learning sector. The pre-service selection process no longer includes a diagnostic assessment of trainees' individual needs in language, literacy, numeracy, or information and communication technology, although partner colleges use a development package to strengthen trainees' skills once the course starts. Trainees complete a writing exercise at interview to assess their suitability for study at Masters level and self-assess their needs during induction. Trainees benefit from a very thorough induction which outlines the course content clearly and emphasises what is expected of them. The partnership's analysis of application, interview and acceptance data for different groups of trainees and the use of comparative data from the learning and skills sector are underdeveloped.
65. Training and assessment are satisfactory overall. Some aspects are strong: for example, training sessions are very good, with trainers modelling best practice, which trainees aim to replicate in their lessons. Trainers make very effective links between theory and practice. Pre-service trainees benefit significantly from their micro-teach sessions. The pre-service course provides trainees with initial ideas about how to address their learners' needs for additional learning support and about behaviour management. The additional support and guidance they receive from their placement tutors and mentors are invaluable.

66. Most trainees receive very helpful assessment and observation feedback that contributes to their development. Staff assess trainees against the professional standards reliably but the process is occasionally mechanistic, rather than being an opportunity to challenge trainees. Tutors usually mark trainees' work rigorously and provide very helpful and carefully considered guidance to support trainees' development. Occasionally, they do not comment on spelling, grammar and punctuation errors which distort trainees' intended meanings. Clear and effective systems are in place across the partnership for the moderation of assessment decisions on assignments.
67. The use and value of individual development plans are very variable. In the best examples, trainees use them to very good effect and find them really valuable. In the less effective examples, trainees do not reflect on the impact of the changes made in their teaching practice and written assignments. The focus and usefulness of trainees' own target-setting are very variable. In the best cases, trainees set very pertinent targets which will really help them to achieve and progress. In other cases, their targets are too general and relate mostly to the completion of work and deadlines. Targets written by tutors and mentors are also of variable quality. Most are particular to the trainee and provide a realistic progression route; a few are very broad and could apply to any trainee. Mentoring is generally good: trainees meet frequently with mentors, both formally and informally. In addition, mentors give very good guidance to trainees, particularly in relation to their lesson planning and classroom management. However, meetings between trainee, tutor and mentor to share targets are infrequent and the advice, guidance and support for mentors, especially those in providers outside the partnership, are not strong enough to ensure that all trainees benefit from effective subject-specialist support and observation feedback.
68. The quality of provision across the partnership is satisfactory, supported by partnership teams who meet formally to address quality assurance matters. The review of moderation documents and course files at monthly meetings helps to address mentors' concerns and to standardise assessment of trainees. The quality of feedback comments on lesson observations varies. The best are very good and include valid comments and accurate judgements about trainees' lessons; a minority of others are very brief and focus too much on teaching rather than learning. Support for mentors is satisfactory overall but the partnership could do more to monitor the quality of mentoring. The communication and support for mentors working in colleges outside the partnership are particularly underdeveloped.
69. The use of resources is good. Trainers make very effective use of high-quality teaching resources which aid trainees' understanding and learning. Trainees also make very good use of excellent resources, such as the production of very effective games and activities, to help their learners learn. They use information and learning technology creatively to develop speaking and listening skills for learners for whom English is an additional language. In the best examples, the VLE provides trainees with access to a range of additional resources, including materials relevant to their assignments. Trainees submit assignments, receive feedback and engage in discussion forums through the

VLE. In other partners, too few materials are posted on the VLE and its use and the use of discussion tools are underdeveloped. Trainers, tutors and mentors have good experience and appropriate qualifications. Staff development is good but participation, especially by mentors, is variable.

70. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The course content includes an appropriately wide range of topics that relate to promoting equality and diversity, including legislation and policy, inequality in society, and understanding and challenging discrimination. The course handbook gives an overview of equality and diversity but little contextualisation of how to embed such matters in curriculum planning. Trainees do not fully understand how to promote or celebrate equality and diversity in their own subject areas. Pastoral and academic support from tutors and mentors are very good and help trainees at risk of leaving to stay on course and achieve. The specialist support for trainees with additional learning needs is also very good and encourages them to meet the demands of the course and helps them to complete the course successfully. For example, one trainee states that this is the first higher-education course in which he has succeeded, and this is due to the depth and continuity of the support received.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 3

71. The partnership has a satisfactory capacity to secure improvements. The evaluation of performance in order to improve the quality of provision by managers at all levels is satisfactory. The self-evaluation process is systematic and inclusive. The views of trainees and partner college staff inform the self-evaluation process. College self-assessments and the partnership's self-evaluation process interrelate effectively. Colleges perceive that they are equal partners in the self-evaluation process, which leads effectively into improvement planning and relates to the university's strategic plan. Self-evaluation is very open and honest: it includes many areas for improvement as well as strengths and responds to comments from the external examiner. However, many of the self-evaluation statements are descriptive and include only limited reference to the impact of the actions taken on the quality of trainees' experiences. Insufficient use of data analysis to benchmark provision and outcomes contributes to judgements being over-inflated.
72. Leaders and managers respond effectively to feedback from trainees. For example, they have made improvements in the organisation of the VLE and have strengthened training in assessment. As a result trainees understand more clearly how to use writing frames to interpret learning outcomes.
73. The effectiveness of the partnership in planning and taking action for improvement is satisfactory. Action planning is in line with the university's cycle of review and completion of the self-evaluation process. Outcomes from self-evaluation relate clearly and effectively to the improvement plan. The colleges have generally thorough and structured quality systems for reviewing their

provision. Quality manuals outline clearly the overall framework, terms of reference and guidelines for various processes. Colleges have identified a number of actions for improvement and made changes to the course based on feedback from trainees and self-evaluation. While most colleges have good systems overall, some have not yet acted on the focus area that identifies improving the observation skills and judgements of mentors. College course reviews often use good target setting systems. Strong organisational systems produce an evidence trail through output recording and analysis of external examiner reports and trainees' voice. However, the partnership's consistent and rigorous monitoring of quality improvement plan targets, so that trainees benefit from improved quality of provision, is underdeveloped

74. Planning includes a strong focus on the inclusion of language, literacy, and information and communication technology in the minimum core content, but the focus on numeracy is less evident. The impact of improvement planning is not always effective in promoting rapid improvement. For example, most trainees' success rates by course or provider have not increased in the last three years. Although many of the areas for attention from the last report have been addressed, others, such as the use of trainees' individual learning plans and the monitoring of mentoring arrangements, remain.
75. The partnership's capacity to anticipate change and prepare for, and respond to, national and local initiatives is good. The highly effective anticipation of change and corresponding innovations inform trainees of current initiatives which they deploy effectively in their teaching practice. The university has responded appropriately to the 14 to 19 agenda by integrating the secondary and post-compulsory education and training strands in its structure. In improvement plans, managers have identified external factors likely to have an impact on provision, such as the impending review of qualifications, and have taken appropriate action. Managers have introduced an appropriate consideration of wider educational issues which impact on practice. The partnership has increased its focus on functional skills and behaviour management appropriately. Colleges have integrated into their courses a focus on such areas as employability skills, safeguarding, and the qualifications and credit framework. Managers ensure that trainees are up to date with current developments; trainees record such information and evaluations in their files.
76. Partner colleges have prepared their employees, including in-service trainees, thoroughly for current and expected developments in the sector through relevant staff development activities. Senior college managers value professional development highly and resource it generously. They are responsive to the changing needs of the programme and provide a professional approach to recruiting middle managers who will mentor and support staff and trainees as part of their role. Course teams meet regularly and produce action plans which they monitor frequently. College quality assurance systems for the in-service provision integrate well with partnership processes.

Annex: Partnership colleges

The partnership includes the following colleges:

Macclesfield College
Mid-Cheshire College
South Cheshire College
Trafford College
Wirral Metropolitan College.

Summary of inspection grades

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	3
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	2	3
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1	1	3
	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	3
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1	1	3
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1	1	3

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	3
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1	1	3
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	1	2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		1	1	3