

Primary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on

Birmingham Credit at the Birmingham
College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Summer Row
Birmingham
B3 1JB

A full inspection report
2005/06

Managing Inspectors:
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Introduction

The Birmingham CREDIT Partnership works in partnership with 23 schools to provide a primary initial teacher training (ITT) course leading to a postgraduate certificate of education. At the time of the inspection there were 24 trainees.

Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a full inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

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

Main inspection judgements

Standards achieved by the trainees: Grade 2

Quality of training: Grade 2

Management and quality assurance: Grade 2

The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- the structure and content of the course, which gives trainees a good grounding in early years practice
- the quality of the course management
- the quality of college-based training, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT)
- the selection procedures
- the attention paid to supporting trainees' individual needs.

Points for consideration

- increasing the trainees' understanding of how to set precise learning objectives against which pupils' progress can be assessed
- helping trainees to extend the learning of those pupils who make rapid progress in lessons
- improving the trainees' proficiency in planning plenary sessions
- ensuring that school-based staff are fully secure in the grading criteria when assessing the trainees' teaching.

Standards achieved by trainees

1. The trainees are committed to raising pupils' achievement. They know the needs of the children they teach and use their knowledge of assessment to plan suitable activities. Trainees provide appropriate levels of challenge for young pupils including those for whom English is an additional language. They design activities and support materials that are well matched to pupils' language needs. For example, they pay great attention to integrating pupils from families seeking asylum. The trainees gain particularly good insight into children's learning and development during their special school visit and put this to good use on their final school experience in mainstream schools.

2. The trainees seek and act promptly on advice given by school-based tutors. They are committed to reflection, self-evaluation and improvement. Consequently, they adapt their practice in line with recommendations made by the class teacher and draw on input from centre-based training sessions. This is especially evident in their effective management of pupils' behaviour during lessons when, for example, they use positive reinforcement to maintain successful control of the class. Relationships with pupils and other adults are very good. The trainees interact sensitively with pupils and offer encouragement.

3. The trainees have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and its structure. Most trainees demonstrate a good knowledge of child development and language development which allows them to make good progress towards meeting the Standards. However, some pupils' misconceptions in science go unchecked and trainees are sometimes slow to identify learning opportunities which arise during the lesson. For example, in a lesson on floating and sinking, the trainee concentrated solely on aspects of the design of model boats rather than exploring why some objects float, others sink, and materials such as sponges float at different levels in the water.

4. Classrooms are well organised and provide rich learning environments which are designed to stimulate pupils' curiosity and motivation. Displays of pupils' work are well used to support and celebrate their learning. Trainees use a wide range of resources effectively to support their teaching. They make good use of interactive whiteboards and digital cameras.

5. The trainees' lesson planning is detailed in terms of the activities for pupils, key vocabulary and questions to ask the pupils. However, learning objectives are not always precise. Some describe activities rather than learning outcomes that can later be assessed in order to judge the pupils' progress. Planning takes good account of the needs of children with varying abilities, and strategies for offering differentiated support are identified. The best trainees provide immediate extension work for those children who exceed expectations, although some have not considered fully how best to extend the learning of those children who make rapid progress.

6. The trainees are familiar with a wide range of learning and teaching methods. They are able to sustain pupils' attention. Opening sessions of lessons are particularly successful in generating pupils' interest. Trainees give clear instructions and they brief support staff well. They do not plan plenary sessions so well with the result that they sometimes miss opportunities to check pupils' learning. Classes are well managed. For example, transitions from whole-class teaching to group work are smooth.

7. The trainees' knowledge of formative assessment, levelling of work and target setting for pupils is good. Most trainees maintain comprehensive records of guided reading sessions and work alongside experienced teachers in determining the National Curriculum level of pupils' work. Not all trainees are familiar with the end of Key Stage 1 assessment arrangements.

8. Trainees willingly participate in out-of-school activities and attend information meetings for parents. They know how to carry out a risk assessment for outside visits.

The quality of training

9. The structure and content of the training programme fully meet the Requirements. Since the previous inspection, a complete revision of the content and structure of the modules has been very effective in establishing a secure basis for high quality training. The inclusion of three strands of deeper study in special educational needs (SEN), ICT and the teaching of English as an additional language is a further powerful adjunct to trainees' learning and their preparation for a career in teaching young children. The net result is a course which underpins successfully the college's aim of producing highly skilled early years teachers.

10. Sufficient time is allocated to each element of the course. The training programme ensures that centre-based study is followed up effectively during school placements. There are strong links between the college-based learning of pedagogical knowledge and skills and its practical application in schools. The trainees' three school placements enable them to gain good experience of teaching the whole curriculum. In particular, the third negotiated placement ensures that any shortcomings or omissions identified in the first two placements are remedied. This good training is reinforced further through a series of well-chosen tasks. The trainees find the balance between centre-based training and school-based training meets their needs well. They have good opportunities to teach across the different levels of ability, observe skilled practitioners teaching and participate in formal and informal discussions with parents.

11. The SEN elements of the course are very strong with substantial direct experience assured through visits to special schools as well as experience within mainstream school placements. These visits give trainees very good opportunities to observe and teach in special school settings and to apply their knowledge and

understanding with specific groups of pupils, such as those with severe learning disabilities.

12. College-based modules are well structured and address fully the curriculum and professional development needs of early years teachers. They are explicit as to which Standards are to be addressed and which elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are to be covered. The trainees are provided with a clear training programme which enables them to manage their reading and course work efficiently.

13. The arrangements for ensuring trainees are highly competent in using ICT are exceptionally good. Careful assessment of their needs, outstanding resources and well differentiated programmes result in the majority of trainees developing skills which go well beyond the minimum requirements for meeting the Standards. Tuition in basic skills is coupled to a comprehensive package of training in the use of ICT software and hardware in the classroom and includes sessions on curricular use in special school settings. The regular links made with ICT in taught modules ensure trainees are very well placed to use their ICT knowledge and understanding in planning for children's learning.

14. The training is delivered by tutors who possess very good early years subject knowledge and substantial recent and relevant early years teaching experience. Clear reference is made to *Excellence and Enjoyment* and the literacy and numeracy strategies in building up the trainees' knowledge of technical terminology in the core subjects. The English training ensures that all aspects of teaching communication language and literacy are addressed well. Direct reference is made to recent research and current issues; for example, the recent report on the use of phonics to promote the teaching of reading.

15. Training sessions are well planned. Purposeful activities promote reflective thinking and lively discussion. Good use is made of the trainees' prior knowledge and experience of early childhood development. For example, in a session on teaching and learning, trainees were seated in mixed ability groups so that those with greater understanding of early years teaching were able to support and assist the learning of their peers. This strategy was effective in allowing the majority of the group to put forward their ideas and hypotheses. A range of teaching strategies are explicitly modelled during the training in order that trainees understand how to use the techniques themselves. The team-teaching approach adopted in college-based training sessions works very well with early years and subject specialists working closely together. It provides trainees with a good model for working with teaching assistants.

16. The training is referenced well to the Standards. Tutors refer constantly to them during taught sessions so that trainees gain a good understanding of how the college-based training enables them to gather evidence of meeting the Standards. Assignments are also cross-referenced to the Standards and trainees receive regular feedback on their progress. However, not all school-based staff are secure in their

use of criteria to identify the elements which distinguish outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate lessons.

17. The procedures for identifying and addressing weaknesses in the trainees' subject knowledge are very effective. The additional individual tutorials provide a very strong system for evaluating the progress of each trainee and gauging where more help may be needed. The system ensures that nobody is left to flounder. College tutors have a very good understanding of the needs of individual trainees.

Management and quality assurance

18. Information on the course for prospective applicants is succinct, clear and comprehensive. The partnership has met its target for recruiting from under-represented groups. The selection criteria and procedures are thorough, well documented and explained openly to applicants prior to the interview. Staff from partnership schools are involved extremely well in the selection process through assessment of a school-based task and by being part of the interview process. The whole selection process is very successful. High quality trainees are admitted to the course.

19. The partnership agreement is clear. Roles and responsibilities of trainees and trainers are set out plainly at all levels and funding arrangements are transparent. The range and number of schools in the partnership are sufficient to enable trainees to gain good practical experience and learn from experienced practitioners. The partnership is expanding to provide trainees with even more opportunities to learn from experienced practitioners. The addition of special schools as associate schools enables trainees to get a thorough overview of the needs of pupils in such settings. The partnership has recruited well qualified tutors with relevant experience. There is a helpful and well structured induction process for new staff which is designed to ensure their smooth transition in to higher education. This year, the provider has initiated differentiated training to enable less experienced and new mentors to receive more focused training and support.

20. The overall management of the course is good. The partnership, through its committees, has reviewed and radically overhauled the course content and structure in light of observations made in its first inspection. The enhancement plan sets out clearly the priorities for development and the great majority of these have been carried through very well. Time deadlines have been met and the partnership has established a course which, in its second year, is well structured to produce highly competent teachers.

21. The partnership has excellent resources at its disposal and the college is increasing their licences for e-books to assist trainees in their school and college-based assignments. The virtual learning environment has been updated to allow for easier access for all, particularly school-based mentors. This is allowing more mentors to access the training materials and information from training sessions.

22. The partnership has good systems for monitoring and checking on the quality of the training. There are regular surveys of trainees and schools to gain an insight into what works well and where improvements can be made. Training sessions conducted by centre-based staff are monitored by headteachers from partnership schools who provide written feedback and evaluation.

23. There are good systems for moderating the trainees' performance within school placements. Regular observations by school-based staff are supplemented by periodic observations by college tutors and joint observations by school and college tutors. The process is enhanced by the contribution of an outside observer. Plans are in hand to engage external assessors to refine further the moderation process.