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A secondary initial teacher training
inspection report

2007/08

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Introduction

Manchester Metropolitan University works in partnership with 229 schools and colleges to provide secondary initial teacher training courses. It offers art and design, business with information and communications technology, design and technology, drama, English and English with special educational needs, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, physical education, religious education, social science with citizenship, and science. At the time of the inspection there were 820 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 revised report combines the judgements from a short inspection of the provision and of the management and quality assurance arrangements in 2006/07, with the judgements from the scrutiny of further evidence submitted to Ofsted in February 2008.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

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

Main inspection judgements

Quality of training: Grade 1

Management and quality assurance: Grade: 1

Key strengths

- a rich and diverse partnership providing high quality training and addressing the varying individual needs of trainees effectively
- effective and extensive collaboration between the university and its partner schools and colleges
- high quality subject training at university complemented by excellent mentoring in the majority of schools
- effective overall strategic management of the training programmes, including very effective cluster arrangements to secure high quality training
- very strong involvement of partner schools in the selection of trainees and in the planning, delivery, review and development of the programmes
- highly effective systems for monitoring trainees' progress
- comprehensive analysis of the range of evaluative data in order to assure the quality of the provision leading to clear identification of the key priorities for improvement.

The quality of training

1. The overall quality of the training is outstanding. Trainees make good progress towards meeting the Standards because the content of the training on all the programmes is relevant, coherent and up to date. The subject training in the university is of high quality and incorporates a careful balance of theory and practice. Training is enriched by a variety of inputs from specialists in partner schools and by a range of distinctive features such as the support for second languages in modern foreign languages, work involving a local art gallery in English, and fieldwork in geography. The course structure is well designed to build trainees' confidence and ensure their engagement with a variety of current educational issues such as teaching about global citizenship and social injustice.

2. Most school-based training is excellent. Professional and subject mentors ensure that trainees receive their full training entitlement. Trainees are encouraged to be reflective and to evaluate their own progress towards the Standards rigorously. Trainees receive detailed feedback on their teaching. Use of paired placements enhances the quality of training for trainees in subjects such as maths and geography.

3. The way the training takes account of trainees' individual needs is outstanding. The selection process supports trainees' individual needs through, for example, the follow up interviews in science in response to conditional offers. There are good opportunities to access booster courses in a range of subjects. Subject knowledge auditing and monitoring procedures are effective. Trainees are counselled onto two or three year programmes where these are better matched to their qualifications and experience. The match of school placements to trainees' professional or personal needs is very good. The support mechanisms are responsive to trainees' specific needs and remediation procedures are used effectively. The enrichment phase of the training is a valuable context for meeting individual needs allowing, for example, trainees to consolidate any less well developed areas of the Standards, or to engage in active research work in specific areas of interest.

4. The systems for monitoring trainees' progress are highly effective. Their strength lies in: alternating school and university-based review points; the frequency of, and detail included in, the review reports; and, the inclusion of all parties in the identification of review evidence. Trainees are fully involved in the review process. Review point judgements are informed well by clear progress indicators. These identify what excellent teaching looks like so that trainers and trainees can engage in discussions about improving quality. In English, for example, they are used very actively to challenge trainees.

5. The arrangements for ensuring the accuracy of trainees' assessment against the Standards are reliable. Moderation of assessment is rigorous as a result of, for example, the use of external examiners in all subjects and programmes, and an extensive pattern of joint observations of teaching by subject tutors and professional and subject mentors.

Management and quality assurance

6. The selection procedures are effective in selecting high calibre trainees. This is reflected in the high retention and completion rates achieved on the programmes. The information provided for potential applicants is clear and comprehensive. All programmes and subjects, except modern foreign languages, recruit well. The programmes have been successful in recruiting trainees from under-represented groups. The drive to increase the number of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds, supported by the successful involvement with related Training and Development Agency' initiatives, has been effective. There are comprehensive and effective procedures for monitoring the policies on equality of opportunity and race relations. Since the previous inspection a new equality of opportunity committee and a minority ethnic consultative group have been established. The latter group has been active in monitoring and reviewing the progress and experience of minority ethnic trainees on the course.

7. Representatives from partnership schools are actively involved in interviewing, and candidates are invited to evaluate the selection process. Considerable attention is paid to ensuring the procedures embody the principles of equality of opportunity. All the appropriate checks are carried out rigorously before trainees are accepted on to the course. Interview records are detailed and usually include reference to any developmental activities that successful candidates should undertake before commencing the course.

8. The management structures are clear, efficient and effective. They are focused on improvement and on securing the active involvement of partner schools in the planning, delivery, evaluation and development of the provision. In particular, the cluster arrangements work particularly well, facilitating good communication and promoting the effective delegation of responsibilities across the partnership. The partnership agreement is a very comprehensive document which sets out roles and responsibilities clearly and contributes significantly to the overall consistency of the provision. It incorporates a memorandum of understanding that has been extended recently to support a shared commitment to Every Child Matters. This has provided a useful focus for discussion across the partnership.

9. The committed and hardworking leadership team, ably led by the head of secondary programmes, ensure that the various training routes run smoothly. The arrangements for managing the complex pattern of school placements are particularly effective. Great care is taken to ensure that partnership schools are suitable venues for training. Careful attention is paid to matching trainees with suitable schools.

10. The leadership and management of the subjects are very good. All subjects are led by well qualified, very experienced and effective co-ordinators. Trainers have a good relationship with and knowledge of subject departments in partnership schools. Training offers a wide range of enrichment activities; for example, the

establishment of the Science Learning Centre North West on the campus has been a positive addition to the resources for training in science.

11. The arrangements for the training of university and school-based trainers are good. The regular cluster meetings and conferences for professional mentors have ensured that they are an active and well-informed group with very high expectations about school-based training and the contribution it makes to the overall provision. The successful pattern of delegation of responsibilities to professional mentors is exemplified by the emphasis on school-based generic training for subject mentors. Attendance at subject mentor training events is slightly uneven. Efforts have been made to provide a programme which matches the differing needs of subject mentors, promoting their wider professional development and securing their active involvement in course review and development work. Overall, the impact of these strategies has proved effective in securing consistently good mentoring across the partnership.

12. Professional mentors, working closely in partnership with both subject and link tutors from the university, carry out their role in supporting and assuring the quality of school-based training very effectively. Recently the pattern of monitoring visits by university tutors has been revised to strengthen the ways in which quality is assured. These, together with a range of other monitoring strategies, ensure the university has a very good working knowledge of the pattern of quality across the partnership. As a result it takes speedy and effective action to remedy issues which occasionally arise and is in a good position to target support to schools or departments which might require it. The university de-selects departments and schools where it judges good quality training cannot be provided.

13. The arrangements for monitoring the assessment of trainees are very good. There are secure procedures for the internal moderation of assignments and teaching quality. A particular strength is the active involvement of mentors in the process for example, of assessing the enrichment phase of the training. The final assessment of trainees is rigorous and accurate. The university has now established external examiners in all subjects. The external examiner process, as well as securing the reliability of assessment, is a key plank in the effective quality assurance of the programmes. The arrangements and brief for external examiners are very extensive and ensure that their reports are of very high quality. The good systems for tracking actions in response to examiners' reports are used consistently well across the subjects and programmes

14. There is a wealth of mechanisms in place to assure the quality of the provision and, as a result, the programme managers have a very clear and well-grounded set of priorities for development. They set these within a clear improvement strategy. Effective use is made of feedback from schools to review the pattern of training. Trainees routinely evaluate the programme and very good use is made of benchmarking data from, for example, the newly qualified teacher survey. At subject level, there is good evaluation leading to refinements and improvement in training. At whole programme level, the annual monitoring exercise and action planning process involve a very extensive analysis of the evaluative data. The

recent decision to align this process with the Ofsted inspection framework has enabled the programme leaders to sharpen and focus the quality assurance process effectively.