

University College Birmingham

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Summer Row Birmingham B3 1JB
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Inspection dates	16 – 19 March 2009
Lead inspector	Dorothy Bathgate HMI

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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

The provider

3. The provider was formerly known as CREDIT. The training programme is based at University College Birmingham and leads to a master's level post graduate certificate in education (PGCE) validated by the University of Birmingham. It prepares trainees to teach in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (3-7 age-group). It works with 30 schools in and around the city of Birmingham. The vast majority of schools are situated in areas of high social deprivation.
4. The partnership aims to recruit trainees locally and train them to be teachers able to meet the requirements of the local area. This includes the needs of many schools with a high ethnic minority population. The training seeks to provide trainees with a wide range of experiences across school placements, including nursery and special schools.
5. The partnership is successful in recruiting each year its full target numbers of 25 trainees. At the time of the inspection there were 25 trainees retained on the one year course.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

6. The key strengths are:
 - the quality of leadership and management at all levels
 - the rigorous selection procedures which ensures the recruitment of high calibre trainees
 - the exemplary college and school-based training which fully equips trainees to teach in an ethnically diverse community
 - the excellent college and school-based training which equips trainees well to teach pupils who have a range of special educational needs
 - the high quality of mentors in partnership schools who provide trainees with outstanding support.

Recommendations

7. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:
 - develop a formal method for recording outcomes of weekly meetings for trainees and mentors to inform the mid point review
 - ensure that development plans include measurable success criteria.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

8. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is outstanding. There has been continuous improvement since the last inspection and all points for consideration have been fully addressed.

9. The partnership's rigorous selection procedures are very successful in selecting those trainees who have the capability to meet the Standards and achieve Qualified Teacher Status. The structure of the course, with the three key strands of Special Educational Needs (SEN), English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), is a key feature in attracting high quality candidates. The interview process is rigorous and candidates are assessed against a range of carefully selected criteria. A practical story-telling session with a group of children in a partnership school is also included. A strong emphasis is placed on testing interpersonal skills to assess candidates' suitability to work within the EYFS, often as part of a much wider professional team. Withdrawals from the course are rare. The vast majority of trainees enter the teaching profession successfully. Last

year, all trainees secured permanent teaching posts and most were in local schools. Above average numbers of those from minority ethnic communities enrol and do well. As an early years' provider, there is less success in attracting applications from men. However, the provider is not complacent and is actively seeking to attract successful applications through a range of recruitment strategies, specifically aimed at men. The impact of these strategies is reflected in a higher percentage of male applications being received for 2009/10. Unsuccessful candidates are provided with suitable levels of support and advice, so that they may consider applying again in the future. Past and present trainees speak highly of the support and guidance they receive from the time they are offered a place, through to their completion of the course.

10. The overall quality of the training at both the college and in schools has improved and is now outstanding. Consequently, trainees make outstanding progress from when they begin the course. Trainees attain well and no group underachieves. This is because of the thoughtful, tailored support which meets individual needs, at both a professional and personal level. Tutors are highly qualified and effectively model good practice. Teamwork is a strong feature across the training. Tutors work extremely well alongside experienced school based colleagues to teach much of the college-based training, thereby maximising early years and academic expertise. Schools provide a rich diversity of training opportunities. Placement schools are very carefully selected and monitored to provide trainees with high quality teaching experiences across both the EYFS and Key Stage 1. An exemplary feature of the training is the high priority given to preparing trainees to teach pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which includes a two week placement for every trainee in a special school.

11. The vast majority of trainees have gained a secure knowledge of working with this age group either through study at undergraduate level or working in schools as teaching assistants. Although their primary subject knowledge is often more limited, this is addressed well through college-based training and additional individual support where required. Furthermore, an effective peer support system provides trainees with good opportunities to support one another. As a result, trainees demonstrate good subject knowledge and demonstrate a secure understanding of the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Additionally, trainees are encouraged at all stages in their training to be reflective practitioners and they respond very well.

12. Learning resources are plentiful, allocated appropriately and used effectively. Partnership management is rigorous in assessing its distribution of resources against impact. Consequently, there are continual changes to the programme to improve trainees' outcomes. All trainees are supplied with Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's) and lap tops are allocated to those who need them. Trainees speak highly of the sessions led by the subject librarian during the induction fortnight to raise their awareness of available resources.

13. School-based training is outstanding and consistent in quality across the partnership. There are some exemplary features of this aspect of the training such as trainees' participation in Preparation, Planning and Assessment (PPA) time. Furthermore, excellent opportunities are provided for trainees to observe a range of teaching styles within the age range for which they are being trained, as well as

across Key Stage 2. Lead mentors and mentors in schools demonstrate exceptionally high levels of commitment and are fully involved in all aspects of the partnership. They meet regularly throughout the year and all mentors fully understand their roles in contributing to high quality outcomes for trainees. There is a clear, shared sense of purpose, supported by excellent communication. Mentors play a full part in evaluating, reviewing and improving the provision for the enrichment of trainees' learning. Training for those new to the partnership is highly effective, ensuring that procedures are swiftly adopted and consistently applied.

14. Trainees demonstrate significant strengths across many aspects of teaching. For example, their planning shows a clear understanding of play based learning across the six areas of learning recommended for children in the EYFS, they have an extremely well developed understanding of how to teach pupils with special educational needs, they demonstrate high levels of understanding and skill in ICT which are used creatively to support teaching and learning, and they have an exceptional understanding of teaching children for whom English is an additional language. All trainees evaluate their teaching well in terms of what it is that pupils know, understand and can do. They are able to use this information effectively to plan the next steps in learning for their pupils thus ensuring all pupils make good progress through building effectively on previous learning. As a result, trainees are becoming good and confident teachers.

15. Trainees are good role models who demonstrate the personal attributes needed to be an effective teacher. For example, they develop excellent relationships with both pupils and staff during school placements. Furthermore, they quickly become fully immersed in the life of the school, participating with enthusiasm in a wide variety of activities such as school clubs and parent consultation sessions. Consequently, where opportunities arise, many obtain teaching posts in one of their placement schools.

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

16. Inspection evidence confirms the provider's capacity to improve to be outstanding. This is underpinned by an excellent record of sustained improvement and a shared commitment across the partnership to continue to improve on what is already high quality work. Strong leadership and excellent training have led to improved trainee outcomes and an ability to take the required actions to make further improvements where necessary. For example, in response to feedback following external consultation on the Rose review, the provider has taken prompt action to ensure that trainees receive good input. Consequently, trainees can confidently discuss the findings of the report and they demonstrate an excellent understanding of its impact through their teaching of phonics and early reading skills. The partnership is in an excellent position to improve further.

17. There is a culture of on-going assessment against the standards which fully permeates the course. Trainees are assessed regularly, including grading of their

performance at the end of each placement. Trainees are involved in self-assessment with their personal tutors and mentors. They are clear about how well they are doing at each stage of the training. Furthermore, they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve; although there are no formal records of the weekly progress meetings held during school placements to support the mid-point review. Trainees make highly effective use of E-portfolios and an impressive software tool to record their evidence towards the standards. These are monitored regularly by tutors and mentors. The provider has recently introduced paired mentor observations to ensure consistency and accuracy in assessing and grading trainees throughout their training. Final assessment is carried out and moderated by a range of partnership staff to ensure there are accurate judgments about trainees' achievement and attainment.

18. Leadership is outstanding because there are robust and effective systems and procedures for managing and assuring the quality of provision across the partnership, including school-based training. The course leader and trainers at all levels play a highly effective role in ensuring consistency across all aspects of the partnership. The course leader knows partnership schools well and therefore knows where particular strengths can be found. This information is used wisely to plan a good range of experiences for each individual trainee. Remedial action, such as intervention, additional support, or extra training is swiftly put in place when there is any area of concern.

19. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that training is up to date and that trainees are fully aware of both national and local early years and primary initiatives. For example, there is regular attendance by a provider representative at Primary Strategy meetings. Additionally, the provider's recent involvement in the Partnership Development Schools Project, linked to the Forest Schools initiative, was pertinent for the inner city setting of many of the partnership schools. The provider makes highly effective use of senior staff from partnership schools, local authority consultants and guest speakers where particular expertise is required. Additionally, the provider brings in a variety of other partners and professionals, such as representatives from teaching unions, to provide as broad a range of experiences as possible for all trainees.

20. Subject tutors have an excellent understanding of developments in their subjects. In both English and mathematics, tutors give good attention to the most recent national initiatives and developments, such as the Williams report in mathematics. Tutors use subject specialist visits in schools to monitor effectively how well trainees transfer learning at the centre to classroom practice, during school placements. They effectively model high quality practice during college-based training sessions. For example, in mathematics, the tutor structures the sessions in the style of a three part lesson. All tutors are well qualified and their continuing professional development is given the highest priority to ensure best possible outcomes for trainees.

21. Self-evaluation is comprehensive and rigorous and fully supports planning for improvement. The provider has good procedures for involving all partners, including trainees, in self-evaluation and course review. External examiners' reports provide additional information which contributes to the process. Overall, this supports

effective action planning and gives a clear indication of strengths which can be refined, as well as identifying those aspects of the provision that require further development. The success criteria however, are not yet specified in appropriately measurable terms. Nevertheless, head teachers of partnership schools are fully aware of current action plans and know what their role is in helping to bring about further improvements.

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
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		1
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	1
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

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

¹ The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted July 2008; Reference no: 080128.

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