

Kingston University

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address

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Inspection dates
Lead inspector

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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. Kingston University works in partnership with around 500 schools to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in both the primary and secondary phases. The partnership is located across 19 local authorities most of which are London boroughs.
4. The primary programme offers two training routes to QTS, a three year BA Honours degree with QTS and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) award with QTS. Currently there are 269 students following the three-year BA course (across all three years) and 158 trainees on the one-year PGCE course, 38 of whom are specialising in primary modern foreign languages. Both primary routes cover the 5-11 age range.
5. Currently there are 69 trainees on secondary programmes which provide training leading to QTS and the award of a PGCE in the following subjects: business studies, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science.
6. The university is providing good initial teacher education and its trainees achieve well. There is much consistency between the phases with regard to both the many strong features and also the few areas for improvement. The provision is underpinned by a strong sense of collegiality amongst the centre-based staff. There are good links between university staff and partnership schools although further work is needed to ensure that all partners are fully involved in evaluation and driving improvement.

A commentary on the provision

7. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:

- the high-quality recruitment, selection and induction procedures which identify enthusiastic trainees who have the potential and the commitment to become good teachers, and help them to make a good start to their course
- the very good individualised, professional and personal support which enables most trainees to make good progress
- university staff who are experienced and enthusiastic and who demonstrate high levels of expertise and model good classroom practice.

8. The following areas require further development to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:

- the rigour of monitoring to ensure that systems are consistently applied so that all trainees receive high quality school experiences
- the greater involvement of all partners in evaluation and improvement planning with a stronger focus on outcomes for trainees
- the identification and use of examples of excellent practice within the provision to spread best practice across subjects and phases.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

9. Kingston University works in partnership with around 250 schools to provide initial teacher education leading to QTS in the 5-11 age range for a BA Honours degree with QTS and a PGCE award with QTS. At the time of the inspection, there were 269 trainees following the three-year BA course (across all three years) and 158 on the one-year PGCE course; 38 of these are specialising in primary modern foreign languages. The partnership includes schools across 19 local authorities, of which 17 are London boroughs.

The Key Strengths are:

10. The key strengths are:

- the high quality recruitment, selection and induction procedures which identify those with the potential to be good teachers and enables trainees to make good progress from the start
- the strong personalised approach to academic guidance and pastoral care
- the tailoring of centre-based training to meet trainees' needs
- the preparation of trainees to teach pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Recommendations

11. In order to improve the quality of training across the partnership the provider should:

- consider how to improve the rigour of monitoring to ensure a clearer picture of quality and consistency across the partnership.

12. In order to strengthen management's assessment of performance and the impact of action planning the provider should:

- consider how to involve all partners in evaluation and proactive planning for improvement with a clear focus on the impact on outcomes for trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

13. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good.

14. Trainees are confident, reflective practitioners with a clear sense of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, and fully accept their personal responsibility for actively pursuing opportunities for their own professional development. They understand how to build on pupils' learning over a sequence of lessons and are developing a range of teaching strategies and skills to meet the different needs of pupils within their class.

15. The number of applications the provider attracts far outweighs the number of places available, so the provider is able to select those with the greatest potential to become good teachers. It does this very well. Selection procedures are rigorous and very good use is made of a wide range of activities at interview to assess each individual's experience, strengths and needs, and their potential to become a good teacher. As a result, most trainees attain the standards for qualified teacher status at a good level and almost half at an outstanding level. This represents good progress from their starting points. Recruitment of under-represented groups is good overall, with higher than the national average numbers of post-graduate males and of minority ethnic trainees on both post and undergraduate courses. Recruitment materials promote positive role models of these groups, and care is taken to support them through the interview process and beyond. However, the number of men on the BA course is currently below average and the provider has not yet used the data available to analyse the possible reasons for this.

16. A particular strength of the selection procedures is the use of subject knowledge audits. These identify which applicants should be offered a place, and also ensure that, where necessary, those that are successful have tailored support from the beginning of the course, or, in the case of post-graduate trainees, personalised pre-course tasks. This helps trainees make good progress from the outset and is consolidated through regular and timely audits which monitor the development of trainees' subject knowledge. These are used to inform both centre-based training and individual action plans. Since the last inspection, clear prompts have been developed for both university liaison tutors and school-based mentors to use in giving subject-specific feedback to trainees on their teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is having a positive impact on developing trainees' knowledge of progression in learning in these subjects, although, as the provider has rightly identified, there is still a need to ensure there is consistent practice across the partnership. Subject leaders are increasingly using the information available from this feedback to check how well trainees are teaching their subject and to identify further training needs.

17. A strong feature of both courses is the personalised approach to meeting trainees' needs, which pays close attention to both individual academic guidance and pastoral care. Tailored action plans and individual support are underpinned by tutors

who know the trainees well and are committed to doing their best to help them reach their potential. They keep regular checks on how well they are doing and are quick to respond to problems and offer support and advice for both academic and pastoral issues. Formal scrutiny meetings led by course leaders take an overview of the progress of cohorts and identify the additional support, resources or challenge needed to ensure that trainees reach their potential. As a result, retention rates are high on both courses and the final attainment of trainees is good.

18. Centre-based training is highly regarded by trainees and they very much appreciate the way course leaders adapt training in response to their evaluations. The focus on active learning for the trainees helps them to understand how children learn best, and they are well-prepared to teach pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through a good combination of formal lectures, reading, external speakers and school-based tasks. There is an appropriate balance between ensuring equality of access to training and tailoring experiences to support individuals' needs and interests. For example, most post-graduate trainees benefit from the Professional Development Schools Project, which offers a practical introduction to high-quality classroom practice early in the course, and most first-year undergraduates have the opportunity to learn about good practice in teaching early reading through the Leading Literacy Schools Project. Complementing this are additional sessions in English and mathematics for groups of trainees needing to address aspects in their own knowledge. Trainees pursue particular interests and develop their expertise, for example through the alternative postgraduate placement, placements abroad for primary modern foreign languages students and a pilot project offering a group of second-year undergraduates additional experience in a special school.

19. Centre-based training is well supported by placements in schools. Improved communication means that schools are clear about what trainees have already learnt and what is yet to come. Where trainees have practical experience which complements course work, for example in a school with a high percentage of pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL), they are well equipped for this aspect of teaching. There is no systematic method of ensuring that all trainees have experience of schools with good provision for EAL or which are culturally diverse. However, university liaison tutors know their individual schools very well, and the good relationships they have built up with them over time enable them to tailor trainees' experience to make the most of the expertise available within the school. Individual action plans and the commitment tutors make to being readily available for their trainees are at the heart of the university's commitment to personalised training and support. There is clear evidence of much good practice, with targets from one placement feeding into the plan for the next and well-planned opportunities for trainees to address their particular learning needs or interests. Although the expectations are clearly set out in the provider's documents, there are instances where these are not being implemented in practice.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

20. The provider's capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to take the actions required to secure improvements where necessary are good.

21. Detailed information about applications, recruitment, retention and trainees' final attainment, extensive evaluations of training and feedback from external examiners are used well to identify strengths and areas for development. This evidence indicates that trainees make good progress from their starting points and that completion rates for both courses and all groups of trainees are high. The proportion of trainees judged to be good or better on both courses has consistently been high over a three-year period. Over the same period, the proportion of trainees judged to be outstanding has improved on the post-graduate course and remained constant on the BA course, such that on both courses it is almost half. Good use of internal and external moderation ensures the accuracy of final assessments.

22. Course tutors are alert and respond quickly to what is working well and where improvements or changes are needed. Trainees are routinely asked to evaluate training and this feedback is used well to adapt courses and inform action planning, although it tends to focus on their satisfaction with the content and delivery rather than the impact training will have on their own teaching. The actions taken in response to evaluations are appropriate and ensure that the large majority of trainees fulfil their potential and are well-prepared for their teaching careers. Tutors know individual trainees well, monitor their progress accurately and tailor individual action plans and appropriate support. Formal scrutiny meetings ensure that course leaders maintain an overview of both the progress of cohorts and the allocation of resources. Subject tutors use subject-specific feedback from school placements effectively to identify how well central training in science or additional support in mathematics are impacting on trainees' teaching, and use the evidence to improve the quality of training. However, an incisive focus on the impact of training on outcomes for trainees is not consistent across all aspects of training.

23. University liaison tutors know the individual schools in the partnership well and use the information during placements to meet trainees' individual needs. They regularly evaluate and report back on each school placement although there are no formal systems in place to corroborate this information with the outcomes of school inspections or the knowledge of local authorities. This limits the university's ability to monitor where the best practice lies, or to use the information to meet trainees' needs when initially arranging placements. The views of individual schools or local authority officers are sought on specific issues and a sample of schools evaluates the training at the end of each placement. This provides useful information about aspects where trainees demonstrate confidence and those where more input would be beneficial. However, these systems are not robust enough to ensure that all schools and local authorities routinely contribute to evaluation and strategic planning.

24. Strategic planning focuses on the correct priorities for maintaining and improving the high quality of provision. Success criteria tend to focus on the implementation of planned actions rather than the measurable impact on outcomes for trainees. The provider anticipates change well and responds appropriately to current and future national initiatives. This is particularly effective where it draws on audits of trainees' knowledge and understanding, works closely with schools to agree what constitutes good practice and provides training for tutors and school-based staff to ensure consistency of approach across the partnership. A good example of this is evident in the work around the teaching of phonics and early reading and writing. Course tutors have also responded positively to the outcomes of surveys of newly-qualified teachers, for example by improving training in areas such as welfare and safeguarding and knowledge of Early Years Foundation Stage. This has had a positive impact on how well-prepared and confident current trainees feel.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

25. Kingston University offers initial teacher education (ITE) leading to the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the award of a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in the following secondary subjects and age ranges: mathematics for the 11-16 range; modern foreign languages and science for the 11-18 range; and business studies for the 14-19 range. At the time of the inspection there were 69 trainees on the course.

26. The university is a member of the South-West London Teacher Education Consortium (SWELTEC) with three other local providers and approximately 250 schools. The consortium, which was set up in 1992, provides co-ordinated provision for school placements including common documentation, mentor training and certification.

Key Strengths

27. The key strengths are:

- recruitment and selection that leads to self-motivated and highly committed trainees
- the commitment and enthusiasm of all trainers that leads to very good individualised personal and professional support for trainees
- the clarity of the SWELTEC systems and documentation that aids strong coherence between all aspects of the course resulting in most trainees making good progress
- subject tutors' knowledge of schools and the resulting careful placement of trainees to ensure individual needs are met
- the good communication between subject tutors and school based trainers.

Recommendations

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

- consider ways to improve the consistency of the quality of feedback and target setting for all trainees
- improve all trainees' knowledge, understanding and implementation of current initiatives in education.

29. In order to improve the quality of training across the partnership the partnership should:

- consider how to develop all trainers' understanding of outstanding practice in their subject leading to greater challenge for trainees.

30. In order to improve the quality and impact of improvement planning the partnership should:

- consider ways to involve fully all partners in the evaluation of all aspects of provision and that action planning and evaluations focus on improving trainees' outcomes.

Overall effectiveness

Grade:2

31. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees is good.

32. Procedures for recruitment are rigorous and result in committed and enthusiastic trainees with the potential to be good teachers. All subjects follow common selection procedures and criteria. At the same time, interviews are highly personalised enabling both the interviewer and the applicant to make informed decisions about the suitability of the course and the applicant's suitability for teaching. Good pre-course work, frequently tailored to the needs of prospective trainees, enables them to make a strong start to the course. This contributes to both the high completion and employment rates.

33. The provider recruits well in all subjects and consistently meets its targets. There is good representation from a wide range of backgrounds, ages and ethnicities with many trainees bringing experience from a variety of prior professions. This diversity adds to the overall experience of trainees and all identifiable groups achieve equally well. The nature of the partnership's schools means that the majority of trainees are well prepared to teach in a culturally diverse society and trainees rate this aspect of their training more highly than found nationally. However, a minority of trainees have limited opportunities to develop this aspect of their training due to the features of their placement schools and the lack of any compensatory, planned experiences.

34. All elements of training combine very well to ensure that the majority of trainees make good progress and, by the end of the course, over three quarters of trainees attain at a good level. Key to this is the high level of commitment and enthusiasm of all trainers. They know their trainees well and respond quickly and flexibly to their individual needs. Training, particularly in school, is highly personalised and enables trainees to develop well their skills in lesson planning, behaviour management and a range of teaching approaches. Although there is a shared view of good teaching, not all trainers have a common understanding of

what makes outstanding teaching and learning in their subject. As a result, training does not always challenge trainees' thinking or practice. This is particularly evident for those trainees with the potential to become outstanding teachers.

35. Centre-based trainers are highly experienced and know their partnership schools very well. This results in effective placements to meet the needs of most trainees. Central training is well planned and includes a broad range of strategies to engage trainees' interest and enthusiasm. Trainees say they appreciate the ways in which tutors model good classroom practice. Good use is made of outside speakers.

36. A carefully planned, university general professional studies programme includes good coverage of key areas such as planning, assessment and behaviour management. This is followed up in subject sessions and training sessions in schools. Training on assessment is very good and the recently introduced Masters-level assignment is designed well to increase trainees' knowledge and understanding of a range of formative assessment skills as well as to develop their ability to analyse critically their own practice. Evidence from the inspection showed that trainees are applying this well in their placements. A small minority of trainees have limited opportunities either to focus on aspects of secondary teaching such as teaching children with learning difficulties and disabilities or to develop their thinking on current educational issues such as developments in the 14-19 curriculum.

37. The development of trainees' subject-specific knowledge is started immediately after an applicant is accepted with focused work on aspects in which they are less confident. This development is built on well in centre-based sessions and trainees are encouraged throughout training to take this aspect seriously. However, once in school, for some trainees the subject knowledge focus is predominantly on the specific aspects that they are teaching. In particular, some mathematics trainees are focusing on post-16 subject knowledge at the expense of some pre-16 areas. For a few business studies trainees, a high proportion of their timetable is spent teaching information and communications technology. This detracts from their business studies' subject knowledge development.

38. The quality of training in schools is good enabling trainees to develop into competent and confident teachers. Schools are very well supported by the SWELTEC systems and documentation and generally know these well. In addition, there are very effective lines of communication between subject tutors and school based trainers. Trainees have regular, focused mentor sessions and at least one lesson a week is formally observed resulting in detailed feedback. The majority of schools use a good range of training strategies to support trainees' development such as focused observations of a range of teachers, team teaching and coaching. However, in some cases, targets and actions are not consistently specific enough to ensure all trainees meet their maximum potential.

39. There are clear systems in place to monitor trainees' progress. In particular the end of placement profile is designed to ensure continuity of progress between placements. These are mostly used very well and are detailed with clear and specific targets being set. However, for some trainees these targets do not give enough direction to the second placement school to enable a sharp and focused continuation

of training. In a small minority of cases, there is evidence that some of the recommendations are not followed up.

40. Resources are deployed flexibly to achieve good outcomes for trainees. Training takes place in well-equipped, specialist training rooms. The partnership uses the opportunities to enhance training which are presented by training schools and some external organisations such as the Royal Institution mathematics master classes. Significant extra support from subject tutors is readily deployed to help trainees and schools when a trainee is identified as being at risk of failure. Through the SWELTEC partnership, mentors have access to training, including high quality on-line modules. However, whilst the majority of school-based trainers are trained in generic mentoring skills, not all undertake subject-specific mentor training which at times limits the progress that trainees make.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 2

41. The provider has good capacity to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to take the actions required to secure improvements where necessary. The subject leaders are a committed and cohesive team which has maintained good quality training over a period of time.

42. There are a range of formal and informal strategies in place to analyse and evaluate the course. Information is collected from a variety of sources including trainees, subject mentors and external reports. In addition, the subject leaders exploit the relatively small size of the provision and know their trainees, schools and departments very well. There are frequent opportunities for discussions with trainees, former trainees and mentors to gather opinions on the quality of provision. This has led to a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Subject leaders are very responsive and make changes, both at subject and whole provision level, to bring about further improvement. For example, the development of the Masters-level assignment on assessment was a direct result of trainees' and mentors' evaluations. Although there is much informal discussion between subject tutors, there are no formal systems in place to identify and share best practice across the subjects.

43. Subject tutors and senior management collect annual data about applications to the courses, recruitment, retention and trainees' final outcomes and use this by comparing it with benchmarking data to make judgements about the quality of the provision. There is some good analysis being undertaken to try to identify common characteristics of those trainees that just meet the Standards.

44. A strength of management is the SWELTEC partnership which ensures consistency in expectations, assessment and mentor training. There are a variety of opportunities for mentors to receive training both in school and through SWELTEC meetings. Professional mentors take seriously their responsibility for ensuring that mentors have had some training and a growing number of mentors have formal

certification. SWELTEC employs two part-time quality standards advisors who support a range of partnership schools. They also carry out quality assurance checks on a sample of schools and visit schools identified by trainees in evaluations as not fulfilling all partnership arrangements. The work of the quality standards advisors is highly appreciated by schools and approximately one-third of partnership schools have been visited this year.

45. The responsibility for quality assuring school-based training is identified in the partnership agreement as belonging to the school-based professional co-ordinating mentor. Inspection evidence confirmed the SWELTEC management group's assessment that there is some inconsistency in understanding of responsibilities in quality assuring training in their own school. A recent review of partnership arrangements has resulted in actions to improve this.

46. Collaboration with the three other main partners in the SWELTEC consortium enables a shared approach to improving aspects of current provision. The SWELTEC management arrangements include school-based partners and this aids evaluation and future planning for common aspects of provision. There are no formal procedures for involving a wide range of partners in the overall course review or future planning at Kingston University; however, informal procedures work well. Long-term action planning identifies the correct priorities for maintaining the high quality provision and good outcomes for trainees. Actions to be taken are clear and relevant but success criteria are based on actions completed and not on improving outcomes for trainees. The plans respond to key education changes, such as 14-19 developments, although the pace of implementation is such that not all trainees are critically reflecting on the implications for their own practice.

Summary of inspection grades¹

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

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

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

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

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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