

# The Cambridge Partnership

## 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 partnership was established in 2001 as a collaborative venture between the Cambridge University Faculty of Education and three local authorities: Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk. The partnership is now managed independently of the founding partners. In 2008 a new management structure was created with new premises and a new director. The partnership is based at Sawtry Community College and uses satellite venues for training, to reduce travelling for participants. Schools are largely drawn from the original geographical area, but now also extend into Essex, Bedfordshire, Lincolnshire, Outer London Dulwich, Rugby, Suffolk, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire.
4. The course offers routes to qualified status through employment-based initial teacher education. The provider attracts a large number of applicants. This year 95 secondary trainees in both shortage and non-shortage subjects were accepted onto the course. Around half of trainees are fully funded through a

training and salary grant. The remainder are employed by partnership schools, with, in the case of 8 trainees, a grant towards their training costs and with no financial support for the rest. The provider refers to trainees not in receipt of a salary grant as being on the '80:20' programme. This indicates that the trainee is available to the school for four days each week. The Friday of each week is set aside for provider-organised training activities.

## Employment-based routes to qualified teacher status

### Key strengths

5. The key strengths are:
  - the high regard in which the trainees and training are held which helps to ensure trainees' subsequent high levels of employment, meeting the needs of local schools
  - the high level of individual support, and adaption of the programme in response to individual needs, which ensure that trainees' progression through the course is at least good
  - trainees' access to high quality central training, including elements identified as national priority areas, which is delivered by expert practitioners
  - strong support for subject knowledge and pedagogy resulting in trainees who are well qualified to take on their teaching responsibilities
  - the high level of reflection among trainees found especially in their electronic Standards logs.

### Recommendations

6. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
  - sharpen improvement planning through the use of incisive analysis of trainee outcomes
  - further increase the opportunities to share best practice in the quality of mentoring across the partnership.

### Overall effectiveness

**Grade:2**

7. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Trainees' attainment is good. The provider judged the attainment of most trainees to be good and that of around one third of the cohort as outstanding. Inspectors agreed the provider's grades at the time of the inspection. The rigour and accuracy of regular assessments has greatly increased since the previous inspection. Careful attention has been given to the moderation of final grades. Common characteristics of trainees are good behaviour and classroom management, strong subject knowledge and good relationships with pupils and other staff.
8. The quality of training is well regarded in the local area. As a result trainees are sought after both for training placements and for employment. Employment rates for trainees completing the course are very high. The latest Teaching Agency survey of newly qualified teachers shows that, in the year covered by the last inspection, overall satisfaction with the provision was a little lower than average. The provider's own surveys and inspection evidence indicate that trainees'

evaluation of the programmes has increased significantly. Former and current trainees spoke passionately about the high quality of the combination of school- and centre-based training.

9. The high quality recruitment procedures make a very positive contribution to the attainment of trainees. Selection arrangements clearly support the consistently good and sometimes outstanding progress made by trainees. Trainees need to secure school-based employment before beginning the course. Many have substantial experience of working in schools and those with a 'training grant only' place are already working as instructors without qualified teacher status. The requirement to spend time in school prior to interview provides effective opportunities to test out potential trainees' ability to reflect on educational issues at interview.
10. The range of subjects offered is wide and is responsive to the needs of local schools. A recent advance is the recruitment of subject specialist tutors to support and supervise the training even when the number of trainees is very low, such as for the single trainee in media studies. The provider adopts an inclusive approach and effective use is made of a range of enhancement and top-up courses brokered by the provider especially in mathematics and science. As a result trainees feel secure in their subject knowledge adding confidence to their teaching. All recruitment targets are met. The provider is recruiting more strongly from women than from men.
11. The quality of training across the partnership is good. At its heart is the central role of the subject tutor in knowing their trainees' needs and progress really well. There is rigorous and coherent review and monitoring of trainees' performance that tracks their progress against the qualified teacher standards. School-based training is usually of good quality with consistent mentoring across the partnership. For example improvements in trainees' performance in terms of classroom presence and classroom management show the positive impact of the target setting, monitoring and review process. Inspectors spoke directly to around one third of current trainees and all were highly positive about the training.
12. Central training has a very strong emphasis on national priorities of behaviour management, pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, and basic literacy including early reading approaches. The impact was seen by inspectors in schools although sometimes there are insufficient opportunities to apply the training in school. The on-line standards log provides an effective way of ensuring that trainee, school-based trainers, subject tutors and course managers all share an understanding of the progress of each individual. Trainees value the various people with different roles involved in their training and assessment. They work together effectively through frequent communication, visits and joint observations to ensure consistency in assessment.
13. Trainers know their trainees exceptionally well and respond quickly and flexibly to their individual needs. Training, particularly in school, is usually highly personalised and enables trainees to develop their skills in behaviour management and a range of teaching approaches well. Occasionally, especially

on the '80:20' programme and in schools new to the partnership, the needs of the school are at odds with the needs of the trainee to make as much progress as possible. For example, there is an isolated incident where circumstances resulted in the headteacher taking on the role of both professional tutor and mentor. Training sometimes misses opportunities to move trainees from good to outstanding early enough in the course.

14. The outcomes of weekly meetings between mentors and trainees are carefully recorded. The feedback from observations is summarised and recorded effectively. Targets set are highly focused and support the progress of trainees giving them a clear direction for improvement. Mentors are accurate in their identification of strengths and areas for development but there is some inconsistency in the skill of mentors in setting challenging targets that help trainees to reach their full potential.
15. School-based trainers, mentors, and headteachers consistently say that in the rare instances when there is any concern, the channels of communication with central tutors are very effective, resulting in a swift response and a rapidly arranged visit to the school.
16. Staff resources at the centre are very well deployed to support trainees. The provider's pastoral support is outstanding. The Cambridge Partnership's documentation is rigorous and clear. The expectations and requirements are well understood by schools and entitlements are enforced by central trainers. There have been examples of even '80:20' trainees moving schools to meet their training needs.
17. There exists a generally strong and cohesive partnership with a clear commitment to achieving the best outcomes for trainees. School-based professional tutors and centre-based subject tutors take on a quality assurance role and have helped to secure the accuracy of the evaluation of trainees' performance. School-based trainers, mentors and subject tutors meet frequently to discuss trainees' progress, share good practice and review the provision. Contact through meetings and with centre-based tutors is highly valued across the partnership. However, some schools used for placements do not fully engage in the partnership arrangements.
18. Trainee profiles give information that is valuable in ensuring smooth transfers between first and second placement schools so that targets are shared and built upon. Carefully chosen and meaningful placements complement each other very well, especially for salary grant trainees. For '80:20' trainees the second placement may need to deliver elements of training such as post-16 or vocational courses and offer less diversity of pupils. For salary grant trainees the length and position in the programme of the second school placement makes it particularly effective.
19. Usually, trainees are very well prepared by the partnership for teaching in a culturally diverse society and have a well developed understanding of issues. For example, a history trainee skilfully helped pupils see connections between reactions to minority groups following the Great Fire of London and more

contemporary terrorist incidents. There is excellent training for supporting pupils with special educational needs and for supporting pupils with English as an additional language. Many aspects of provision for equalities and diversity are very strong. There is some inconsistency in the opportunities for trainees to implement training in the classroom.

## **The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality**

**Grade:2**

20. The provider has a lot of evidence of internal and external quality assurance all confirming significant improvement since the last inspection. Self-evaluation is open and honest. The partnership has detailed knowledge of the progress and attainment of each individual trainee but is only now beginning to synthesise and analyse the data to inform improvement planning sufficiently. Subject tutors are continuously improving the quality of provision for trainees. In some schools there is detailed analysis of the impact of teacher training.
21. Newly appointed mentors who have not yet attended meetings are supported effectively by the provider who visits them individually. The provider is very quick to respond to individuals in difficulty and urgently-arranged school visits make an important difference to the trainees.
22. Where inspection evidence has identified the occasional problem with placements, the situation has been known to provider tutors and managers. Systems have been sufficiently robust to ensure that the issue is either quickly resolved or the training is adapted to meet emerging needs. In one instance this has resulted in a trainee switching from a salary grant programme to an '80:20' programme. The provider recognises that schools sometimes provide less support for experienced trainees not in receipt of a salary grant and has responded by raising the standard allocation of central subject tutor visits to 12.
23. Most professional mentors from schools attend conferences where they help refine policies and responses to changing policies such as changes to professional standards. The national priorities of behaviour, subject knowledge, disabilities and special educational needs, and literacy are given a very high profile in the training. Evidence of the impact of this training is seen in school placements.
24. There has been good development in all of the areas identified in the last inspection as requiring improvement. The judgement for overall effectiveness has improved from satisfactory to good, demonstrating the provider's capacity for further improvement. For example, following the requirement to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of managers at all levels in quality assurance, this aspect of the provider's work is now a strength. Systems for monitoring the work of mentors have improved significantly resulting in a high level of accuracy in identifying trainees' strengths and weaknesses. While mentoring is now consistently good, there remains some inconsistency in mentors' understanding

of how to be outstanding in the role. Trainees' audits of subject knowledge are revisited throughout the course and subject training is now strong.

25. Documentation has been reviewed and is clear. There is a lot of good information and guidance on the website, but it is not always obvious where to find it and better signposting is needed. The quality of central training has improved significantly and involves experts, resulting in improved awareness by trainees of current educational initiatives. The provider ensures that new initiatives are systematically built into the training programme. The introduction of the electronic portfolios of evidence that trainees gather to show they have met the Standards, has proved highly effective in enabling everyone concerned with the trainee to monitor progress and to record one another's comments with trainee reflections. The ability of the partnership to manage change is good.
26. Following the previous inspection, the partnership rightly focused its improvement activities on improving completion rates and increasing the proportion of trainees whose final assessment was good or better. The outcome is that over the last three years the proportion of trainees achieving the outstanding grade has remained quite static but more trainees are judged to be good. The provider aspires to become outstanding and recognises that the next step in its improvement is to increase the proportion of trainees graded as outstanding. Occasionally, for '80:20' trainees the employing school is content for the training process to deliver qualified teacher status and is not necessarily prepared to devote the resources needed to enable the trainee to reach their full potential. A more widespread barrier for experienced trainees is that while weekly targets are good and promote progress, the initial needs assessment may provide insufficient challenge to enable the trainee to make accelerated progress from the outset.
27. School representatives, former and current trainees all reported that the provider's administration was efficient and highly responsive. Inspectors concur. The inspection was highly organised with school visits all running very efficiently. Administration staff are not only highly efficient, but very approachable. They make a significant contribution to the effective pastoral support for trainees.

## Summary of inspection grades<sup>1</sup>

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Employment-based routes
<b>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?</b>		<b>2</b>
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		2

<sup>1</sup> The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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