

Standards and Quality in

Initial Teacher Training

at

University of Wales, Bangor

July 2005

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



Aeolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales



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| Contents | Page |
|--|-------------|
| Context | 1 |
| The nature of the provider | 1 |
| The inspection | 1 |
| Table of grades awarded | 3 |
| Summary and recommendations | 4 |
| Summary | 4 |
| Recommendations | 7 |
| Standards | 8 |
| Key question 1: How well do learners achieve? | 8 |
| The quality of education and training | 11 |
| Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment? | 11 |
| Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community? | 12 |
| Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 14 |
| Leadership and management | 16 |
| Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management? | 16 |
| Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? | 17 |
| Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? | 18 |
| Provider's response to the report findings | 21 |
| Appendix | |
| 1 The Inspection Team | |

Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 The School of Education, University of Wales, Bangor and its partner schools provide four courses of initial teacher training.
- 2 The two undergraduate courses are:
 - BEd (Hons) Primary Education; and
 - BSc (Hons) Design and Technology leading to Qualified Teacher Status.
- 3 The two post-graduate courses are:
 - PGCE Primary; and
 - PGCE Secondary.
- 4 The undergraduate courses last for three years and the initial teacher training within the BSc is for intending secondary teachers. The postgraduate courses last for one year, and lead to the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). The medium of instruction is English or Welsh, depending very largely on the preference of the trainees. There is provision for trainees who wish to learn Welsh and to teach Welsh as a second language in primary schools.
- 5 Initial teacher training at Bangor was last inspected in 1998/1999. Since then, the four year BEd (Hons) Primary has been phased out. The School of Education is a relatively large provider of initial teacher training courses within Wales. The four courses above enrol about 130, 20, 65 and 200 trainees respectively each year. The partnership includes 360 primary schools, 55 secondary schools, two colleges and 14 outdoor education centres across North Wales.
- 6 The School of Education's mission statement includes a commitment to provide high quality teaching and to maintain and develop bilingual provision in teacher training.

The inspection

- 7 The school-based and university-based elements of the courses were inspected during the academic year 2004/2005. Inspectors observed over 80 lessons taught by a representative sample of about 20% of trainees on their final school placements. The standard of trainees' teaching was evaluated against the standards set down for qualified teacher status in Welsh Office Circular 13/98. During the inspection of school-based provision, interviews were held with trainees, class teachers, mentors, senior mentors and headteachers. During the inspection of university-based work, inspectors observed training sessions, and interviews were held with trainees, tutors, and senior university staff. Samples of trainees' files and assignments were inspected, as well as a range of documents provided by the university.

- 8 A Common Inspection Framework has been in place for the inspection of initial teacher training since September 2002. This has operated across nearly all areas of Estyn's work from September 2004. The Common Inspection Framework describes the seven key questions used in the inspection process. Estyn gives grades for each key question.
- 9 The grades for the five-point scale are defined as follows:
- Grade 1** good with outstanding features
 - Grade 2** good features and no important shortcomings
 - Grade 3** good features outweigh shortcomings
 - Grade 4** some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
 - Grade 5** many important shortcomings

Table of grades awarded

| Key Question | Grade |
|---|--------------|
| 1. How well do learners achieve? | |
| Overall, in initial teacher training | 2 |
| In the four courses: | |
| BEd (Hons) Primary Education (three years); | 2 |
| BSc (Hons) Design and Technology leading to QTS; | 2 |
| PGCE Primary; | 2 |
| PGCE Secondary. | 2 |
| 2. How effective are teaching, training and assessment? | 1 |
| 3. How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community? | 2 |
| 4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |
| 5. How effective are leadership and strategic management? | 2 |
| 6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? | 2 |
| 7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? | 2 |

Summary and recommendations

Summary

- 10 The quality of trainees' teaching is good overall in each of the four courses. The teaching of about 70% of trainees is good or very good. This proportion is well above the average of 55% for trainees observed during the last cycle of inspections of initial teacher training in Wales. The achievement of the trainees at Bangor has also improved considerably since the last inspection in 1998/1999. There is still some variation between the standards achieved by trainees in different subjects within the secondary subjects.
- 11 Trainees generally have a good understanding of the primary or secondary curriculum and good knowledge of their subject. Their class control and management are nearly always good, though a few do not cope effectively with minor disruption which affects the pace of pupils' learning. In a minority of cases, the primary trainees' knowledge and understanding about assessment and its uses are not secure. The extent to which secondary trainees have learnt about effective teaching in the sixth form is variable, though adequate overall. Nearly all of the primary and secondary trainees have a good attitude towards their work. They are able to accept and act upon the advice and guidance provided by tutors and mentors.
- 12 Overall, the quality of teaching, training and assessment is very good across the university-based courses and good in the school-based training. In the best university-based sessions, the tutors are very effective role models for the trainees. In these cases, tutors show very well developed skills in conveying insight and enthusiasm and in providing challenging discussion. Occasionally, tutors do not give sufficient attention to how trainees will apply what they have learned to their own teaching.
- 13 Most school mentors give trainees good feedback on their teaching. In the best examples, they engage trainees particularly well in challenging discussion. This enables trainees to analyse their experiences very effectively and come to judgements about their progress. Occasionally, mentors do not fully explore shortcomings in the trainees' teaching and the level of the positive feedback they give does not match the trainee's performance.
- 14 Overall, the primary and secondary courses meet the needs of trainees. The courses meet the requirements of the Welsh Office Circular 13/98. Welsh-medium provision is extensive. In general, the courses are well structured and relevant information about course structures is set out clearly in the course handbooks. Very occasionally, attention to the early years phase is insufficient. The partnership is already working to improve this aspect through a project on the new Foundation Phase.
- 15 In 2004, the School of Education produced very useful supplementary guidance on the experiences that might be provided for trainees within sixth form teaching. Trainees' experiences have improved as a result. However, implementation of the guidance in schools is uneven, though reasonable overall. The systems for

recording trainees' performance against the requirements of the circular are generally appropriate. However, the systems for recording the trainees' performance as they move from year to year on the BSc course have some limitations regarding challenging and recording the performance of the best trainees.

- 16 Overall, the university and partnership schools provide a good level of care and support for trainees. Nearly all tutors and mentors take suitable action when trainees bring a problem to their notice. Initial selection procedures are appropriate. However, a minority of secondary trainees are interviewed by only one tutor. The number of trainees on the primary courses meets the targets set by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. The secondary recruitment targets are not met in many subjects despite considerable efforts by staff to recruit more trainees. The trainees are provided with useful guidance documents on academic and personal matters. They have good access to specialist support services. They learn about the operation of child protection policies in schools. The tutors' own knowledge about child protection has been enhanced recently. Following interim inspection feedback, the School of Education has produced its own comprehensive child protection policy and most tutors have been trained in its implementation.
- 17 The quality of leadership and management is good. The Head of Education, the Primary Director, the Secondary PGCE Director and the BSc Director work well together. They undertake their responsibilities with vigour and determination. Staff have been appointed to the first three of these posts fairly recently through internal promotions. They are able to build on the previously established aims of the School of Education and their own past experience. Very good contributions to the direction and nature of the courses are already being made.
- 18 The Head of Education, Course Directors and tutors work hard to sustain and develop courses of high quality and to maintain and develop effective partnerships with schools. Development plans are generally useful and implemented effectively. The plans include success criteria, but often these criteria are not detailed enough.
- 19 On the whole, there are good procedures in place to evaluate the quality of provision and standards on both the university-based and school-based parts of the courses. There has been very considerable success in improving standards and quality since the 1998/1999 Estyn inspection. Joint observations of trainees' teaching by university tutors and school mentors contribute to ensuring consistency in the assessment of the trainees' teaching and the sharing of good practice. However, there is some inconsistency between primary and secondary courses regarding the expectations of what mentors and senior mentors should do.
- 20 Self evaluation reports on the four training courses were produced prior to the inspection. The views of partnership schools were noted in their production. The reports have a suitable and common structure. However, the evaluations do not include enough detail or provide clear reference to supporting evidence.
- 21 Overall, the quality of the physical and human resources provided by the university and its partner schools is good. The facilities for Outdoor Education are very good. Physical education facilities for initial teacher training are adequate. The partnership uses its resources effectively to achieve good standards of trainee attainment. The

partnership provides good value for money. The School of Education has responded well to financial targets set by the university and has met the financial targets for 2004/2005. Local courses across North Wales have helped primary mentors to attend training, but there is still too much variation in the extent to which mentors attend or access training. The university-based resources for the BSc Design and Technology course have been improved very significantly since the last inspection.

- 22 A particular strength of the School of Education is that most tutors are able to work through the medium of Welsh and English.

Recommendations

- 23 The university, in co-operation with its partner schools, should:
- R1 improve primary trainees' skills in assessing pupils, and the primary trainees' use of assessment information to plan new teaching and learning;
 - R2 fully implement existing guidance to improve trainees' knowledge and understanding about teaching in the sixth form and implement lessons learned from the School of Education's current pilot on teaching in the Foundation Phase;
 - R3 share across the courses existing outstanding features of the university-based training to further raise standards;
 - R4 refine the year-on-year system for recording the performance of trainees on the BSc courses against the criteria set out in Circular 13/98;
 - R5 continue to develop initiatives to recruit secondary trainees;
 - R6 develop the self-evaluation process and the quality of reports and action plans and ensure that the reports and plans are detailed enough to lead to improvements;
 - R7 increase the consistency in the work of mentors and senior mentors, including their skills in assessing the performance of trainees; and
 - R8 broaden the range of training strategies to help mentors attend or access training.

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 24 The quality of trainees' teaching is good overall in each of the four courses. The teaching of about 70% of trainees is good or very good. This proportion is well above the average of 55% for trainees observed during the last cycle of inspections of initial teacher training in Wales. The achievement of the trainees at Bangor has also improved considerably since the last inspection in 1998/1999.
- 25 There is still some variation between the standards achieved by trainees in different secondary subjects. Standards are very good in science and outdoor activities. Standards are adequate in modern foreign languages and religious education. They are good in the other subjects.
- 26 Most trainees make good progress and attain their goal of obtaining qualified teacher status. Nearly all PGCE trainees gain that status. Most withdrawals from the degree courses are in the first year and many of them are for personal reasons. Trainees take responsibility for their own study and are able to discuss their work effectively. Most trainees have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their work. They are well motivated and keen to succeed. Nearly all attend regularly and arrive punctually. Relationships between the trainees and their tutors and mentors are good. Trainees are generally suitably prepared to be effective teachers in their first posts and able to build on their initial training. A few trainees already display outstandingly good features in their teaching. These trainees are very effective in stimulating pupils' curiosity, responding to pupils' contributions, and maintaining a very purposeful working atmosphere. A very few trainees have difficulties in meeting the requirements for qualified teacher status.
- 27 Most trainees who follow the Welsh-medium course achieve very good standards of bilingualism. They are fluent speakers, readers and writers of both Welsh and English. Most have a good bilingual knowledge of the terminology of subjects and, in many cases, can switch between languages with confidence.
- 28 Trainees generally have a good understanding of the primary or secondary curriculum and good knowledge of their subject. Most know enough about key skills and the Cwricwlwm Cymreig. They are able to cope well with the questions that pupils raise during their teaching. Most trainees have good ICT skills and they often use computers to produce useful teaching materials. The primary trainees' knowledge and understanding about assessment and its uses are variable but generally reasonable. A few do not know enough about the Desirable Outcomes for children's learning or know how to apply these effectively in classes. The extent to which secondary trainees learn about effective teaching in the sixth form is variable though adequate overall.

- 29 Most trainees plan and prepare lessons thoroughly. Their lesson plans follow formats developed by the School of Education or adapted from the school's own planning documents. The plans reflect advice provided by tutors and mentors. Lessons usually have a three-part structure with a clear beginning, middle and end. The detail in the plans is generally appropriate and includes learning objectives for pupils, the subject content, and arrangements for particular groups of pupils within the class based on their prior achievements. The plans usually reflect clearly how pupils will be taught. There is often reference to informally assessing how well pupils achieve the learning objectives. However, these references are rarely detailed enough. This is occasionally compounded by learning objectives which focus too much on what pupils will do, rather than on what they will learn.
- 30 In most lessons, trainees manage and organise their classes effectively. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and establish conditions that allow pupils to concentrate on their work. A few trainees are not effective in controlling pupils who are occasionally inattentive or who distract other pupils from continuing their work.
- 31 Trainees' teaching usually progresses pupils' learning at an appropriate pace. In most lessons, trainees provide clear explanations and make sure that pupils know what is expected of them. They use a range of appropriate teaching methods that sustain the momentum of pupils' work. Most trainees deal effectively with pupils' questions and ensure that pupils acquire and consolidate new knowledge, skills and understanding. Trainees generally use visual aids well to engage pupils' interest. Occasionally they make use of computers in the classroom, including a little use of electronic whiteboards. When pupils have difficulties, trainees occasionally do not explore the difficulty fully enough. They rely too much on repeating instructions. Most trainees end their lessons with a review of what has been achieved by the pupils. However, a few do not spend enough time on this activity. In a small number of lessons, trainees do not display enough enthusiasm about the topic under consideration to ensure that pupils engage well in their work.
- 32 During lessons, many trainees monitor pupils' progress well as they work. These trainees have good observation skills and use questioning skilfully to assess pupils' understanding. Their marking of pupils' work is often constructive and encouraging. Many trainees make good use of their knowledge of pupils' achievements to inform lesson planning. Many trainees develop a good understanding of a wide range of assessment methods and issues.
- 33 Most trainees make good progress in developing the wider professional attributes of a teacher. Their work files are generally well organised and up-to-date. Trainees' self-evaluation of their lessons is often detailed and enables them to set their own targets for improvement. In the best cases, this process draws considerably on what pupils have learned. Most trainees are able to accept and act upon advice provided by mentors and tutors. They often become fully involved in the life of their placement school. Many carry out a wide range of school duties including taking part in extra-curricular activities.

- 34 At the university, trainees are generally well motivated and enjoy their learning. They collaborate and co-operate well with each other when working in pairs or groups. They gain in knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to their chosen course. Most contribute confidently to discussions and often draw well on past training sessions and their experience in schools. Many express themselves clearly and thoughtfully and provide mature and extended spoken contributions. However, a few, especially in Welsh medium groups, are reluctant to provide extended answers in training sessions.
- 35 Trainees generally keep detailed lecture notes and make good use of past work to help them in their studies. Their written assignments are mostly of a good standard and draw on a wide range of evidence. Many make good use of information and communications technology in researching topics and in constructing well presented assignments. A very few have difficulty in writing English or Welsh correctly.

The quality of education and training

Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 36 Overall, the quality of teaching, training and assessment is very good in the university-based training. It was good or very good in 81% of the training sessions observed.
- 37 In the best university-based sessions, the tutors are very effective role models for the trainees. In these cases, tutors show very well developed skills in conveying insight and enthusiasm and in providing challenging discussion. They draw very well on trainees' experiences in schools. They often make very effective use of information and communications technology to stimulate interest and to convey knowledge and skills. There are examples of this kind of outstanding training across the four courses. The very best of these includes training in both primary and secondary science.
- 38 There is some variation between PGCE secondary subjects in the quality of teaching, training and assessment. It is very good in science, outdoor activities, Welsh and music. It is adequate in modern foreign languages, and information technology. It is good in the other subjects. In a few cases, there are differences between the quality in schools and at the School of Education.
- 39 Most university tutors have very good knowledge of their specialist phase and subject area and are often effective role models for trainees. The session contents are usually stimulating, up-to-date, and refer often to the school classroom. Usually subject sessions are well planned and delivered. Most tutors have consistently high expectations of trainees and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Tutors include a good range of teaching strategies in their sessions. They promote a wide range of learning styles. They draw trainees' attention to how they can use similar strategies in the school classroom. In a very few sessions, the training is undemanding, and occasionally, tutors do not give enough attention to how trainees will apply what they have learned to their own teaching.
- 40 Assignments are relevant to the standards for qualified teacher status and provide opportunities for trainees to demonstrate appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding. Tutors generally make trainees aware of the assessment criteria, though detail about this is sometimes lacking. Assessment of trainees' written work is generally good. Tutors provide detailed, perceptive and constructive feedback. In a few cases, the feedback does not provide clear targets for improvement.
- 41 Overall, the quality of teaching, training and assessment is good in the school-based training. School mentors give trainees good oral feedback on their teaching. In the best examples, they engage trainees particularly well in challenging discussion. This helps trainees to analyse their experiences very effectively and come to judgements about their progress. Occasionally, mentors do not explore shortcomings in the trainees' teaching enough and the level of the positive feedback given does not

match the trainee's performance. The written feedback provided for trainees is generally very helpful. It identifies trainees' strengths and targets for improvement. In a minority of secondary cases, there is limited direct reference to the standards for qualified teacher status, though it is usually implicit. In a minority of primary cases, the written comment does not match the grade awarded closely enough.

- 42 Trainees find that seminars organised by the senior mentor are informative and worthwhile. In both primary and secondary phases, most trainees learn from carefully observing good teachers.
- 43 Joint observation of a trainee by the tutor and mentor is common. This is very good practice which contributes to developing the effectiveness of the school-based training and to ensuring that assessment of the trainee is fair and reliable. There is some joint observation by mentors and senior mentors, but this is less common in secondary schools.

Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

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| Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings |
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- 44 Overall, the primary and secondary courses meet the needs of trainees. The courses meet the requirements of the Welsh Office Circular 13/98.
- 45 In general, the courses are well structured and relevant information about course structures is set out clearly in the course handbooks. The trainees can opt to specialise in age ranges 3-8, 7-11, 11-16 and 11-18. A few secondary trainees are appropriately guided into the 11-16 training phase. This usually relates to their limited subject background. The university-based training and school-based training complement each other well to give trainees a wide and useful experience. Overall, trainees develop a good understanding of their phase and subject. Good attention is paid on all courses to issues relating to the transition from primary to secondary schools.
- 46 Three of the four courses have been re-validated in recent years. Plans are well advanced to re-validate the BEd course during 2005-2006. This will adjust the balance between elements of the course. In the meantime, adjustments have been made to the taught course to increase reference to the Foundation Phase.
- 47 Welsh-medium provision is a particular strength of the courses. The School of Education effectively supports the development of trainees' bilingual skills and the development of their understanding of the culture of Wales. There are language improvement courses for all trainees, including those who wish to teach Welsh as a first or second language.
- 48 The outdoor activities component within the PGCE secondary course is unique within Wales and is of very good quality.

- 49 Overall, tutors on both the primary and secondary courses allocate trainees to schools very carefully. In most cases, they ensure that trainees have a good range of teaching experiences. The university provides a helpful list of professional and subject topics to be covered in school by the senior mentor and colleagues. These sessions generally help trainees to understand better how schools devise and operate whole-school policies. The range of activities offered outside the classroom to trainees is good overall. Many trainees are involved in activities, such as staff meetings, school-based training for teachers, parents' meetings and extra curricular activities. In a few cases, trainees are not invited to participate enough.
- 50 In recent years, the School of Education has recognised some limitations in the trainees' experience in the sixth form provided for trainees on the PGCE course. In 2004, it distributed to schools a very useful document that provides supplementary guidance on the experiences that might be provided for such trainees. The document drew on many contributions from mentors and has been incorporated into the latest course handbook. Implementation of the guidance has been discussed during training sessions for mentors. Trainees' experiences have improved as a result. For example, schools have responded positively to comments from visiting tutors about limited attention to sixth form work. However, implementation of the guidance in schools is uneven, though reasonable overall. A very few trainees have a very limited experience of working with pupils in the 16-18 age group.
- 51 Very occasionally, attention to the early years phase in the university-based part of the course is insufficient. For example, primary school themes may be illustrated with a preponderance of examples relating to the key stage 1 or key stage 2 curriculum. In the case of a very few trainees this is also true of their school-based training. The partnership is already working to strengthen references to the new Foundation Phase in the course documentation and in the trainees' experience through a project which is nearing completion. The trainees generally co-operate well with classroom assistants. However, there is little direct training on how they might work best with the assistants.
- 52 The primary trainees' subject knowledge is well audited and followed-up in mathematics, Welsh, science and information and communications technology. In English, an on-line system of auditing is being trialed. The follow-up support by tutors is less thorough than in other subjects. The systems for recording trainees' performance against the requirements of the circular are generally effective. Forms are available for recording trainees' progress. Unstructured forms are used in few cases. The more structured forms are used often and are more useful in securing a comprehensive experience for trainees. There are systems for recording the trainees' progress as they move from year to year on the BSc course. These do not allow for the full recording of the performance of the best trainees and do not challenge them enough.

Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

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| Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings |
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- 53 Initial selection procedures are appropriate. Prospective trainees and accompanying parents are given an overview of their intended course. In some cases, there is highly effective use of information and communications technology to vividly present the strengths and demands of the course. Most candidates have individual interviews by two tutors. The interviews often include a mentor or headteacher from partner schools. This practice contributes to making sure that the selection process is reliable. However, about half the secondary PGCE candidates are interviewed by only one tutor. Although the tutor is guided by specific criteria, this process is less secure than interviews by two people. As a matter of policy, detailed feedback is not given to unsuccessful candidates. While requests for feedback are very rare, the policy is unhelpful to candidates. The possibility that a trainee has a criminal record is checked in all cases through the proper authorities.
- 54 Recruitment targets for primary courses are met. The extent to which recruitment targets for secondary subjects are met is variable across subjects and recruitment years. Typically, the targets are not met, despite considerable and varied recruiting efforts by the School of Education. In a few cases, the targets are missed by a considerable margin. Recruitment is particularly difficult in the case of Welsh, music and religious education. The School of Education is successful in recruiting a substantial proportion of trainees who wish to be trained through the medium of Welsh. The proportion is about 50% on the primary PGCE course, 30% on the BEd course, and 25% on secondary courses. There is little progress on improving recruitment of trainees from under-represented groups such as people from minority ethnic cultures, men for primary courses, and people with disabilities. However, about half the trainees who select the 7-11 option on the Primary PGCE course are men.
- 55 The induction of trainees in the university is good. The university provides most trainees with a comprehensive range of useful written guidance on academic and personal matters. These are supplemented with further guidance at later stages. The induction prepares trainees well for the demands of the course.
- 56 The university provides a good level of care and support for trainees. They have good access to specialist support services and every trainee has a personal tutor. Most tutors take suitable prompt action when trainees bring a problem to their notice. Trainees learn about the operation of child protection policies in schools. The tutors' own knowledge about child protection has been enhanced recently. Following interim inspection feedback, the School of Education has produced its own comprehensive child protection policy and most tutors have been trained in its implementation. Appropriate complaints procedures are in place.

- 57 Most schools provide a good induction for trainees on school placement. Trainees are provided with enough information about the school and its expectations. In a minority of cases, schools additionally provide a written policy on the school placement. Generally, school-based senior mentors and mentors provide trainees with good support when trainees are on teaching placements. Many schools provide trainee teachers with useful additional guidance materials. Trainees occasionally gain a false sense of competence when the school-based support does not provide the trainee with enough challenge. When trainees have more serious difficulties, mentors generally use the good communication links with the university tutors to help resolve the situation. In response, additional visits are made by tutors in some cases.
- 58 The nature of the accommodation provided does not pose problems for trainees with physical disabilities. Ramps and lifts provide access to nearly all rooms.
- 59 Trainees are informed of job opportunities and are prepared for job applications. Many are successful in finding teaching jobs by January after finishing their course. For trainees finishing their course in 2004, the overall figure was about 85%. Of these trainees, about 70% of those taking up primary school posts were in full-time employment. The comparable figure for secondary trainees was about 93%. The Career Entry Profile provides a useful record of their strengths and targets for improvement which they can take forward into their first teaching post.

Leadership and management

Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 60 The School of Education is a valued part of the university. It co-operates with the wider university in strategic planning, including financial planning, within quality assurance systems and within the pastoral support system. Three of the staff have been awarded the university's Teaching Fellowship which recognises outstandingly good teaching.
- 61 The quality of leadership and management is good. The Head of Education, the Primary Director, the Secondary PGCE Director and the BSc Director work well together. They undertake their responsibilities with vigour and determination. Staff have been appointed to the first three of these posts fairly recently through internal procedures. They are able to build on the previously established aims of the School of Education and their own past experience. Very good contributions to the direction and nature of the courses are already being made.
- 62 The School of Education has an appropriate mission statement and much good quality documentation that provides direction and guidance for tutors, mentors and trainees. They all benefit from a supportive and professional culture. The Head of Education, Course Directors, and tutors work hard and successfully to sustain and develop high quality training and to maintain and develop effective partnerships with schools in line with development plans. Senior mentors and subject mentors in schools make a significant contribution to the development of the partnership, including university-based training, through participation in evaluations, training sessions and panels. The School of Education ensures that courses meet the requirements for qualified teacher status. In addition, the School makes sure that course documentation is suitably updated in response to internal and external evaluations. Since the last inspection in 1998/1999 the School of Education has phased out a four-year BEd Primary degree course, and the current courses have been re-validated.
- 63 Staff respond well to national developments in schools and evolving priorities within initial teacher training. These responses include advanced planning for the new foundation stage in primary schools and efforts to collaborate on developments with other institutions which provide initial teacher training. Many staff are involved in national and local projects or courses. The School of Education also has international links. This helps to promote trainees' knowledge and understanding of global citizenship well.
- 64 The whole school strategic plan includes an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and is prepared by a working group chaired by the Head of Education. Staff outside the working group have an opportunity to comment on drafts. The plan is approved by the University Quality Assurance Task Group and presented to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales for approval. The plan draws on course level plans. These in turn draw on plans developed by individual or

groups of tutors. The plans for the courses are generally appropriate, but the plan for the BEd course is weaker. It does not draw adequately on the tutors' contributions to form a complete overview. The plans produced by tutors are generally well structured and sometimes reflect priorities identified at a higher level. They include success criteria, but often these criteria are not detailed enough.

Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 65 Overall, there are good procedures in place to evaluate the quality of provision and standards on both the university-based and school-based parts of the courses. There has been very considerable success in improving trainees' achievement and the quality of the training since the 1998/1999 Estyn inspection. The Head of Education and Course Directors are generally well aware of what needs to be improved, both within the university and in schools. Staff at all levels respond well to steps to secure improvement and make their individual contribution to the process. The School of Education is responsive to the views of partner schools. Relationships between the university and its partner schools are very good overall and there are good channels of communication.
- 66 There are effective procedures in place to evaluate and improve trainees' school experience and arrangements with partner schools. The School of Education actively seeks the views of trainees and mentors both formally and informally. They use questionnaires and mentor meetings to do this. University tutors gain a view of the quality of the mentoring through visits to schools. External examiners contribute to evaluations. The information gathered is reviewed, shared with schools, and contributes to the planning of mentor training and trainees' professional development. The training conveys priorities for improvement and development. Very occasionally there is a concern about the quality of mentoring. In such cases the School of Education responds more directly. In a very few cases, the placement of trainees at a partner primary school or secondary school department is discontinued. An initiative aimed at improving trainees' experiences in the sixth form has led to improvements. However, evaluations of progress have not included enough information on trainee numbers to help with forward planning.
- 67 Joint observations of trainees' teaching by university tutors and school mentors contribute to consistency in the assessment of the trainees' teaching and to the sharing of good practice. Senior mentors provide mentors with informal feedback on their performance. Mentors discuss aspects of their work with senior mentors and tutors. They are not usually required to formally evaluate their own performance. Senior mentors observe trainees' teaching. However, there are a few inconsistencies between primary and secondary courses regarding the expectations of mentors and senior mentors. This detracts from mentors' effectiveness in, for example, monitoring the performance of the mentor and the trainee.
- 68 The quality assurance systems for university-based provision are effective. A quality assurance audit by the university includes inspection of documentation, meetings with staff and trainee representatives. The School of Education's evaluations are

monitored through the university's quality assurance system and feedback is provided. The School of Education's procedures follow established university processes. Development plans are shared with schools. The School of Education pays good attention to trainees' views on their training, as expressed through questionnaires and discussions with trainee representatives and individual trainees. Effective procedures are in place to ensure consistency of marking of trainees' assignments through double marking of a selection of assignments. These procedures, and reviews by tutors, involve all staff in a process of evaluation and follow-up. Staff are successfully encouraged to share good practice. Shortcomings are usually addressed effectively. Very occasionally, the follow-up is not sufficiently focussed or quick enough.

- 69 In addition to the School of Education's usual evaluation processes, self-evaluation reports on the four training courses were produced prior to the inspection. The views of partnership schools were noted in their production. The reports address the seven key questions in Estyn's Common Inspection Framework. They have a suitable and common structure. They include many judgements, but do not provide grades or overall judgements for each question. They identify areas that need improving, and indicate action that is being taken. However, overall, the evaluations do not include enough detail or provide clear reference to supporting evidence.

Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 70 Overall, the quality of the physical and human resources provided by the university and its partner schools is good. A particular strength of the School of Education is that nearly all the tutors are able to work through the medium of Welsh and English. The School of Education is seen as an important component of the university and one that makes a particular contribution to Wales through Welsh-medium courses. The partnership uses its resources effectively to achieve good standards of trainee attainment. It provides good value for money.
- 71 The School of Education has responded well to financial targets set by the university and has met the financial targets for 2004/2005. The process has involved some short-term reductions in the funds available to courses, but achieving a more secure financial position was an appropriate step. Most of the university funds received by the School of Education are allocated to staffing and school placement costs. The new Head of Education has had useful support from senior university staff in carefully planning and monitoring expenditure. There is now a growing focus on effectively delegating more routine financial management to staff below the Head of Education. Education staff contribute to strategic management and planning for improving the physical and human resources of the university as a whole.
- 72 A minority of the School of Education staff have contributed to income generation in a variety of ways. These include inspection of schools, consultancies and courses for teachers. The courses are at different levels and include leadership training for intending headteachers, a Master's degree module on mentoring trainees in schools, and extensive training for Design and Technology teachers. As well as providing

income, these courses provide valuable experiences for tutors which enrich the experiences for trainees on the initial teacher training courses.

- 73 The funds provided by the university to schools are used in several ways, including the purchase of extra resources. There are differences between schools in, for example, allocating non-teaching time to mentors. Generally, there is no close accounting by schools of how effectively the funds are used. Even so, trainees have good access to school documents, school resources and the support of staff. In the best examples, mentors have protected time to meet trainees during the school day. Schools recognise that they benefit from the partnership in ways other than financial. For example, staff often find mentoring to be a professionally valuable experience. A few schools point out that payments for mentoring have remained static for many years.
- 74 Schools nearly always provide trainees with appropriate teaching commitments and generally good quality teaching resources. Appropriate guidance is given to trainees on using these resources to support teaching and to promote learning. In a few schools, trainees are not encouraged enough to make good use of the school's information and communications technology facilities to enhance pupils' learning.
- 75 The School of Education provides training for mentors at different levels according to their experience and responsibility. Nearly all schools value the training highly but, particularly in the case of primary mentors, not every school is represented in these sessions. Local courses across North Wales have helped primary mentors to attend training, but there is still too much variation in the extent to which mentors attend or access training.
- 76 There are enough suitably qualified and experienced teaching and support staff available in the School of Education to deliver the initial teacher training courses effectively. Teachers from schools and guest speakers usually contribute well to university-based teaching sessions. Managers and teaching staff have a good understanding of their duties and undertake their pastoral and teaching roles well. Overall, staff development is well planned. Training needs are identified effectively through course reviews, performance management interviews, and other discussions with individuals. The vast majority of staff requests for external training or attendance at educational events are met. Tutors write reports about such training and events, but their impact is not systematically evaluated. Considerable informal discussion between staff, and internal staff seminars also contribute substantially to staff development. A system of peer observation allows tutors to observe one another teaching trainees, to share their teaching expertise, and to make judgments. This helps staff to develop their expertise.
- 77 Provision of resources, including classroom teaching materials, and their use is good overall. Trainees and staff have appropriate access to information technology facilities. There are examples of outstanding use of such technology by tutors. The university-based resources for the BSc Design and Technology course have been improved very significantly since the last inspection. There is some variation in the availability of resources between subject areas and variation in the effective use of available funds to update the main library stock of books. Trainees access a wide range of recent reference, teaching and learning material on-line through use of the

university's, school's or their own computers. This material includes documents placed by tutors and trainees on a university facility. The trainees and tutors also use this facility for communication. More use of the facility is made by secondary trainees, but the use by primary trainees is increasing. The facility is also open to mentors but, as yet, has been relatively little used by them.

- 78 Subject areas generally have suitable accommodation. Most of the rooms provide a suitable setting for teaching, learning and support for trainees. A few rooms are too small for the number of trainees that use them. Purposeful, attractive displays and artefacts are used effectively in many of the rooms to reinforce the learning. The facilities for Outdoor Education are very good. The physical education facilities, available to trainees, are adequate. The trainees do not have access to good games and athletic facilities on site. However, use is made of generally suitable off-site facilities. Water damage to a gym floor has hampered physical education sessions this year. The floor has been repaired recently.

Provider's response to the report findings

As Head of the School of Education, I am delighted to have this opportunity, on behalf of all the staff and our Partnership schools to thank Estyn for their perceptive and supportive report on our important role as providers of ITET courses. The report clearly confirms our own conviction that our full range of teacher training courses offer trainees an introduction to the teaching profession which is consistently good and certainly represents a benchmark of best practice within Wales.

Such a high standard of provision does not come easily, especially in a bilingual context, a strength identified several times in the report. We are pleased that our particular contribution to Wales through Welsh medium courses has been recognized and acknowledged. It is a tribute to the adaptability, expertise, hard work and dedication of all the teaching staff that standards have improved considerably since the last inspection in 1998/1999 and can continue to improve in the future. The report clearly acknowledges this, as well as the significant contribution that mentors play in maintaining and developing the Partnership including the university based training.

The recommendations made in the report confirm our own judgement of areas needing attention and indeed identify issues which we are already tackling in order to further raise the standard of our provision. These issues already form the basis of the School's 2005/2006 Development Plan, in accordance with the university's procedures. This plan includes specific ways of disseminating, across all courses, the outstanding practice identified amongst tutors and includes a continued emphasis on developing the skills and practices of mentors. In addition, plans are well advanced to broaden the range of strategies to allow Primary mentors to attend the Partnership training programme.

We have been pleased to work in cooperation with Estyn over the last twelve months in monitoring and evaluating our courses; we are grateful for Estyn's considered advice on many matters concerning ITET. Conversely, we hope that our open discussions with the Inspection team will have contributed to the future development of the inspection process in Wales.

Appendix 1

The inspection team

| Team member | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| David Williams HMI | Reporting Inspector |
| Meilyr Rowlands HMI | Team inspector |
| Penny Lewis HMI | Team inspector |
| Andy Hawkins HMI | Team inspector |
| Garth Higginbotham HMI | Team inspector |
| Eleanor Davies HMI | Team inspector |
| Paul Morgan HMI | Team inspector |
| Ann Jones HMI | Team inspector |
| Bob Swain HMI | Team inspector |
| Graham Griffiths HMI | Team inspector |
| Ray Owen HMI | Team inspector |
| Pru Davies – James HMI | Team inspector |
| Jeff Jones HMI | Team inspector |
| Arwyn Thomas HMI | Team inspector |
| Lesley James | Additional Inspector |
| Edward Graham | Additional Inspector |
| Alan Walters | Additional Inspector |
| Eirios Hall | Peer assessor |
| Vaughan Salisbury | Peer assessor |
| Tony Elliott | Nominee |