Estyn

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring
Level of follow-up: re-inspection

North and Mid Wales Centre for Teacher Education and Training

School Of Education	**School of Education and**
Bangor University	**Lifelong Learning**
Normal Site	**Aberystwyth University**
Bangor	**Penglais Campus**
Gwynedd	**Aberystwyth**
LL57 2PZ	**Ceredigion**
	SY23 3UX

Date of visit: June 2017

by

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

The monitoring team

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Outcome of monitoring

The North and Mid Wales Centre of Teacher Education is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the centre from any further follow-up activity.

Estyn will visit the centre in the next academic year as part of the usual monitoring programme of initial teacher training.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Communicate a clear vision and strategic aims for the centre

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection, the centre has developed a clear and suitable vision for the provision of teacher training. The aims in its mission statement align well with national and local priorities, and set suitable expectations for trainees, tutors and mentors. The centre has also defined key performance indicators that are relevant to its work. They are appropriately ambitious and measurable, and the centre is making suitable progress towards meeting most of these.

Centre leaders consulted widely with a range of stakeholders including staff, mentors and trainees during the development of its vision. This process contributed well to developing a common identity, purpose and consistency across the provision for initial teacher training in both university partners. The centre has communicated its vision successfully with its tutors, mentors and students.

The centre's mission statement has increased expectations for tutors, mentors and trainees. It informs much of the centre's work, and is having a positive impact on trainees' standards.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen leadership so that leaders at all levels are held accountable for the outcomes of trainees

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The quality of leadership across the centre, especially at middle leader level, has improved substantially since the core inspection.

During the academic year 2015-2016, the centre director improved communication across the centre, and designated specific leadership responsibilities to staff. Expectations around the quality and direction of middle leaders' work increased and their roles were clarified. These changes have had a significant impact on the quality of programme leaders' work. In February 2017, a new centre director was appointed and has been supported suitably during the handover of responsibilities. However, centre leaders have not assured the quality of the whole-centre and programme self-evaluation reports rigorously enough.

Since the time of the core inspection, programme leaders have developed a strong sense of purpose. Most have made significant improvements to their practice, especially in supporting trainees to improve their lesson planning and evaluation skills. These leaders have developed an objective approach to their work. They identify common difficulties that trainees have and respond well to these. As a result, there have been considerable improvements to trainees' planning, critical thinking and wellbeing.

The 'Performance Review Board' and the 'Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Group', have increased accountability across the centre. Membership of these groups includes a wide range of stakeholders such as senior leaders from both universities, headteachers, mentors, tutors and representatives from local authorities and regional consortia. Both of these groups meet regularly to monitor the centre's work and they offer appropriate challenge to leaders at all levels. These meetings generate suitable action points and follow up well on previous actions.

The centre has strengthened its performance management arrangements. Staff objectives are suitable and lead to relevant professional development opportunities. The centre has a well-thought out programme of professional learning activities that supports staff development well.

Recommendation 3: Improve the use of data and first-hand evidence to inform self-evaluation and planning for improvement

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the centre has aligned its procedures for gathering and evaluating data and first-hand evidence to inform self-evaluation and planning for improvement appropriately.

The centre now has a clear calendar of monitoring activities and dates for data capture that support self-evaluation procedures suitably. This includes key assessment points during the year as well as at the end of the academic year. The centre has refined the range of data that it collects to focus more appropriately on the most important aspects of the standards and progress of its trainees. These processes are now common across both university partners. Leaders analyse trends in performance at individual, cohort and programme levels, and they measure these usefully against common key performance indicators. This means that senior staff are able to identify more precisely the centre's specific strengths and areas for development in trainee standards, and plan suitable actions for improvement.

Individual programme self-evaluation reports contain a thorough analysis of a wide range of data relating to standards. They are generally consistent in quality and format in their evaluation of trainees' progress. The reports suitably identify strengths and weaknesses in standards and plan well for improvements. This has had a positive impact on trainees' standards in lesson planning and evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching.

There have been sound developments in internal procedures to gather information on the quality of university-based teaching and school-based mentoring since the

core inspection. These include regularly seeking the views of trainees, tutors and mentors, and creating useful opportunities for tutors to observe each other teaching. Tutors and mentors have also worked beneficially alongside staff from external education providers and organisations through paired observations. However, the centre does not make effective enough use of first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and mentoring to inform planning for improvement.

Leaders present useful annual reports on the findings from observations of university- based teaching sessions to the Centre's Quality Assurance Board. However, leaders at all levels do not make comprehensive enough use of the findings from monitoring activities fully to evaluate the quality of provision, and to identify specific areas for improvement in teaching and mentoring.   In addition, there is an over-reliance on the views of trainees to form the centre's evaluation on the quality of teaching.

Centre and programme improvement plans generally include actions to address areas for development. However, too often, these actions are not sharp and specific enough to allow leaders to monitor their progress. In addition, details of timescales, monitoring activities and milestones to measure progress are unclear.

Recommendation 4: Improve tutors' and mentors' accuracy in judging trainees' standards and their ability to set targets that help trainees to make good progress

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The centre has produced detailed guidelines to help improve accuracy and reliability in assessing trainees' achievement and progress on school experience. Since the core inspection, tutors and mentors have contributed valuably to developing this guidance and to devising a common grading system for all programmes. The centre has provided appropriate opportunities for mentors and tutors to work together to refine these guidelines over time. The grading system provides clear criteria for judging trainees' progress.

Since September 2016, the centre has provided a series of effective training sessions for mentors and tutors. These sessions focus well on developing a common understanding of the criteria and grades for evaluating trainees' lessons and their progress teaching over time. As a result, tutors and mentors apply these criteria more confidently and consistently. The evaluation of trainees' teaching is now more accurate.

The targets for improvement that trainees, mentors and tutors set and agree in school experience files often link suitably to the QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) standards. In a majority of cases, these targets provide trainees with a helpful way forward. Trainees usually respond appropriately to these targets and mentors often identify improvements in these areas in subsequent lesson observations. However, in a few cases, mentors and trainees do not use the information provided by the centre well enough to set targets that are specific enough to help trainees improve and meet the relevant QTS standards.

The centre has implemented suitable procedures for monitoring the quality of school-based training. Tutors' skills and confidence to have professional dialogue about trainees' progress and achievement with mentors have increased. This means that they are more able to evaluate and challenge the work of mentors, and to work with them purposefully to agree suitable grades for trainees. Feedback from mentors and tutors on trainees' planning matches the grades awarded more closely. Annotations in trainees' files and evaluative comments following lesson observations are now more helpful to trainees to improve their planning and evaluations. Across all programmes, senior leaders collaborate well to scrutinise trainees' school experience files and to monitor the quality of tutors' and mentors' feedback and evaluation. The use of these systems has helped to bring about more consistency in the evaluation of trainees' achievement and progress.

Since the core inspection, the centre has improved the guidance and support that is available to tutors when marking and assessing trainees' university-based assignments. Useful professional learning sessions have provided tutors with good opportunities to analyse and consider the effectiveness of their marking and feedback to trainees, and to share good practice with one another. Tutors' formative comments on assignments are often useful and now focus more closely on evaluating and encouraging trainees' critical skills. However, trainees do not always respond rigorously enough to these suggestions. Generally, grades awarded are now more accurate.

Recommendation 5: Improve trainees' planning skills to focus more clearly on outcomes for pupils, so that trainees use assessment information to set clear learning goals, and identify effective teaching and learning strategies

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the centre has made considerable progress in improving the quality of trainees' planning.

The centre now has robust expectations for trainees' lesson planning. This includes clear planning guidance, which provides tutors, mentors and trainees with appropriate examples of planning, evaluation and target-setting. In addition, across all programmes, a common lesson planning form includes helpful prompts for trainees to develop learning outcomes, success criteria, assessment opportunities and activities that are tailored for pupils' needs. The form also prompts trainees appropriately to consider how their lesson will develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, Welsh and ICT skills.

Trainees, mentors and tutors make purposeful use of the new grading guidelines to identify the shortcomings in trainees' planning and evaluations. Tutors and mentors provide timely and specific feedback for trainees on the quality of their planning. This has a positive impact on developing trainees' planning skills.

Across all programmes, trainees' planning skills are significantly better than at the time of the core inspection. Generally, trainees consider their pupils' prior achievements and knowledge effectively. They use evidence from their own previous lesson evaluations and reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching each

week. As a result, many plan appropriately for learning over a series of lessons.
Overall, most trainees set clear, suitable lesson objectives and identify specific and
relevant success criteria. Many trainees provide pupils with appropriate opportunities
to set their own success criteria. However, a few trainees set success criteria that
are too generic and lack sufficient challenge to develop pupils' knowledge and skills.
Most trainees identify suitable teaching and learning strategies in their lesson plans
and include relevant assessment opportunities. However, a few trainees do not
consider well enough the selection and impact of assessment strategies.

The new lesson planning pro-forma includes the requirement for trainees to reflect
critically on their planning. This encourages trainees to analyse their teaching and
the progress of their pupils. Many trainees' evaluations are now more reflective, and
in the best examples use appropriate evidence to help them judge the effectiveness
of their lesson. These trainees focus more appropriately on the outcomes for pupils.
This helps trainees to plan subsequent lessons and build on pupils' previous learning
well. However, evaluations by a very few trainees remain too descriptive, and do not
focus well enough on pupils' progress in their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. As a
result, these trainees do not always develop robust targets for learners to improve
their skills.

**Recommendation 6: Improve trainees' abilities to develop pupils' skills in
literacy, numeracy, ICT and Welsh**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The centre assesses trainees' personal literacy and numeracy skills appropriately on
entry. Most tutors use these outcomes effectively to develop trainees' skills further.
Tutors and trainees agree challenging targets and monitor progress closely. Most
tutors and mentors provide worthwhile support to develop trainees' literacy,
numeracy and ICT skills and provide useful feedback that helps trainees to identify
and address their own development needs. In school experience files, tutors and
mentors provide useful feedback on the quality of trainees' written language. Most
trainees use this feedback effectively to modify their writing. In assignments, a
minority of tutors do not consistently identify shortcomings in the quality of
expression, or errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. As a result, trainees do
not always make as much progress in this area of their work.

Most trainees make appropriate use of the centre's virtual learning skills site, which
holds valuable resources to develop pupils' cross-curricular skills. The centre
provides useful handbooks that help trainees, mentors and tutors to have a clear and
consistent understanding of assessing, developing and tracking trainees' personal
skills. These handbooks provide comprehensive guidance for trainees to develop
pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. In the best examples,
trainees plan relevant activities that are closely linked to the requirements of the
literacy and numeracy framework. Since September 2016, there has been an
increased focus on improving trainees' abilities to develop pupils' skills in ICT. For
example, trainees are aware of the need to consider and prepare for the
implementation of the digital competence framework. Activities are well structured
and build progressively on prior learning in all programmes. However, in a few cases
of trainees' planning, success criteria linked to developing specific aspects of literacy,
numeracy or ICT are not precise enough, nor are they identified with sufficient clarity.

The development of the Welsh language skills of trainees who are studying through the medium of English has a high profile across the centre. Most trainees have a positive attitude towards developing their own Welsh language skills, but the provision for developing these skills does not always meet the needs of individuals effectively enough.

Programmes now have a suitable emphasis on developing trainees' abilities and confidence to develop pupils' Welsh language skills. For example, on primary programmes, most tutors model these strategies successfully and provide useful online resources for trainees. Many primary trainees plan suitable activities that develop pupils' Welsh language skills progressively. Secondary trainees now plan regular activities to support the development of pupils' Welsh language skills. However, there is too much emphasis on introducing subject-specific vocabulary, rather than on developing pupils' skills to use every day Welsh correctly and appropriately. As a result, they do not make good enough progress in developing their own Welsh language skills and those of their pupils.

Recommendation 7: Improve trainees' skills of critical thinking in their university studies and in their evaluations of pupils' learning

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the inspection, the centre has placed a much greater emphasis on developing trainees' skills of critical thinking. This work has had a particularly positive impact on the centre's approach to programme delivery, and the professional learning of its staff. This has provided a clear direction to strengthen the skills and understanding of trainees. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in trainees' ability to evaluate their teaching.

Leaders have gathered valuable evidence to inform their understanding of the quality and frequency of teaching in university to develop critical skills. Using this information, the centre has provided useful training and guidance for tutors and mentors across all programmes to support their practice in this area. In addition, all programmes have been re-structured to provide more time for trainees to practise and develop their critical skills. These actions have helped to raise tutors' and trainees' awareness of the importance of critical thinking, and have provided tutors with a sound structure for developing trainees' skills.

The centre collects data to monitor the standards of trainees' critical skills during their programmes. This helps tutors to consider how they assess these skills, and provides useful baseline information from which to measure improvement. This close scrutiny of trainees' development helps the centre to focus on the specific areas with which trainees have difficulty, and also to identify those trainees who require support from their personal tutor.

The centre analyses trainees' lesson planning files regularly to gather evidence to judge how well trainees develop their critical skills through their school experience. Centre leaders have identified accurately the specific shortcomings in trainees' ability to evaluate their teaching, and have used this information to make improvements to training in school and in university.

Clear guidance, focused training sessions and a greater consistency of approach across all programmes have had a positive impact on trainees' standards. Trainees' evaluations of their lessons are now more focused on using pupil progress as a measure of the effectiveness of their teaching. Trainees use their reflections more pertinently to improve their teaching skills, and to plan with a greater understanding of sequence and progression in learning.

University assignments provide trainees with valuable opportunities to develop their critical skills, and to consider the links between theory and practice. Many tutors pay good attention to the identification of trainees' critical skills in the marking of university assignments. In a majority of cases, tutors provide useful comments that encourage trainees to develop their critical responses to research literature and their own teaching experiences. Tutors provide valuable assistance to trainees that helps them to redraft and improve their assignments. However, a few tutors do not provide good enough support for post-graduate trainees to develop their understanding of research methods. Furthermore, the criteria for marking assignments at masters' level do not specify clearly enough the skills, knowledge and understanding required for the 'open study' research task. This means that, in a few instances, trainees' understanding and use of critical analysis in practice-based research are hindered.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the centre should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.