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# Quality and standards in secondary initial teacher training

HMI 546

Quality and standards
in secondary
initial teacher training

Inspected 1999/2002

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**Document reference number: HMI 546**

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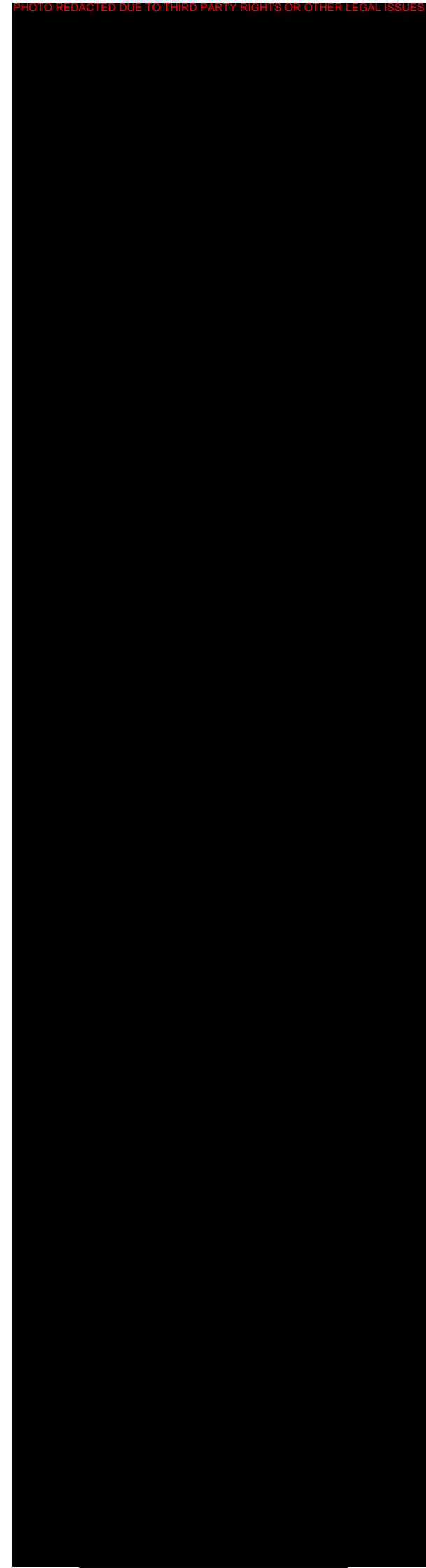
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## Contents

## Introduction

**1.** In the period 1999/2002, Ofsted inspected every provider of secondary initial teacher training (ITT) in England. Each subject course which the provider offered was inspected and reported on separately. These individual inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk). In total, 600 courses were inspected across 16 subjects:

| Subject | Number of courses inspected |
|---|---|
| Art | 32 |
| Business Education | 22 |
| Classics | 4 |
| Design and Technology | 40 |
| Drama | 10 |
| English | 68 |
| Geography | 42 |
| History | 39 |
| Information and Communication Technology | 31 |
| Mathematics | 65 |
| Modern Foreign Languages | 67 |
| Music | 30 |
| Physical Education | 32 |
| Religious Education | 39 |
| Science | 73 |
| Social Science | 6 |

**2.** The majority of these courses (487) were provided by training partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) and schools, while the remainder (113) were provided by school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnerships. The majority of the courses inspected (570) were one-year postgraduate programmes, generally leading to the award of the postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE). Where the provider offered significant undergraduate training, this was inspected rather than the postgraduate course. Thirty undergraduate courses were inspected over the three years, mostly in physical education and design and technology.

**3.** Employment-based programmes of ITT were not included in these inspections. Ofsted published a report on the Graduate Teacher Programme in 2002.[1]

**4.** Inspections were based on the joint Ofsted/Teacher Training Agency (TTA) *Framework for the Assessment of Quality and Standards in Initial Teacher Training* (July 1998). This Framework was derived from the Secretary of State's requirements for courses of ITT, set out in *Circular 4/98*. Inspectors made judgements against five areas, or 'cells', of the *Framework*:

- the trainees' subject knowledge and understanding (ST1)

- the trainees' planning, teaching and class management (ST2)

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[1] *The Graduate Teacher Programme,* HMI 346, Ofsted, 2002.

- the trainees' monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability (ST3)

- the quality of the training (T1)

- the accuracy and consistency of the assessment of trainees against the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) (T2)

**5.** The judgements for each cell were made on a four-point scale:

Grade 1: Very good – consistently of very good quality, with several outstanding features

Grade 2: Good – consistently of good quality, with no significant weaknesses

Grade 3: Adequate – complies with the Secretary of State's criteria, but requires significant improvement to be good

Grade 4: Poor quality – does not comply with the Secretary of State's criteria

**6.** Each inspection consisted of a number of visits to the provider, spread across the academic year. Inspectors based their judgements on the following main sources of evidence: scrutiny of course documentation; interviews with trainers and trainees; observation of central and school-based training; scrutiny of trainees' assignments; and observation of a sample of trainees on their final teaching placement to assess their teaching standards.

**7.** The outcomes of the inspections were used by the TTA as the basis of decisions about the continued accreditation of providers and the allocation of trainee numbers to particular courses. Where any aspect of a course was found to be 'non-compliant' (that is, awarded a grade 4), the course was reinspected in the following academic year to check that the necessary improvements had been made. Courses which were no better than adequate (grade 3) in all cells were judged to be 'borderline' and were also subject to a further inspection in the following year. Of 17 reinspections carried out, only two courses failed to demonstrate improvement to good quality in at least one cell. A small number of providers chose to withdraw borderline or non-compliant provision rather than face reinspection.

**8.** This programme of secondary subject inspections immediately followed the previous cycle (1996/99). An overview report on the findings of these earlier inspections was published in 1999.[2] Since the two programmes of inspection used the same *Framework* cells and grading scale, it is possible to draw direct comparisons and judge whether there has been improvement in secondary ITT. In the same way, it is possible to examine changes in the quality of provision for training in different subjects (see annex). In spite of changes to the pool of ITT providers over the six years, a total of 514 of the 600 courses were inspected in both cycles.

[2] *Secondary Initial Teacher Training: Secondary Subject Inspections 1996–98 – Overview Report*, Ofsted, 1999.

**9.** Following their previous inspection, providers were asked by the TTA to draw up an action plan showing how they planned to develop the course and tackle any weaknesses that had been identified. In producing their action plans, providers generally paid close attention to the points for consideration and action set out in the inspection reports. In most cases, inspectors judged that this process had resulted in constructive responses and significant improvements in areas of previous weakness.

**10.** *Circular 4/98* introduced higher expectations for secondary ITT courses than previously existed. It set out in detail the knowledge, understanding and skills that new teachers needed to acquire, and these demanding requirements undoubtedly contributed to the more effective training and higher standards achieved by trainees that are noted in this report.
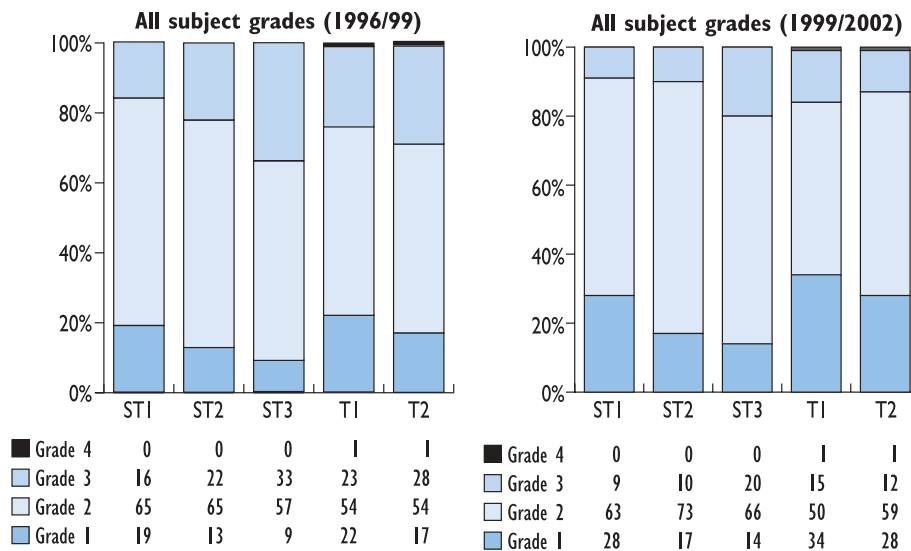
## Main findings

- The quality of secondary ITT is good and there is much that is very good. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection cycle and today's newly qualified teachers are the best trained that we have ever had. Training, the assessment of trainees and trainees' standards were all judged at least good on four fifths of courses.

- In spite of improvements, school-centred providers continued to perform less well than HEI-based partnerships, with very few courses where training or trainees' standards were very good and markedly more with significant weaknesses. SCITTs, however, train only a small fraction of the total number of secondary trainees. The identification and retention of good specialist trainers and the provision of sufficient time for the subject leader role alongside other school priorities was often problematic.

- There was significant variation between subjects in the quality and outcomes of training, although less than previously. Particularly significant improvements had been made in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and, to some extent, in physical education.

- More than half the trainees observed taught lessons that were good or very good. Only one in ten taught a lesson that was less than satisfactory in some respects and very few poor lessons were seen.

- Nine out of ten trainees showed good knowledge and understanding of their specialist subject, and they were generally able to convey enthusiasm for the subject in their teaching. In part, this good subject knowledge reflected the increased importance given to this aspect in the training.

- Training in how to plan and teach lessons had improved significantly. Four out of five trainees planned their teaching well, some exceptionally so. They were generally much clearer than previous trainees about the need to identify what they intended pupils to learn. However, many trainees still had difficulty in planning for the needs of low attaining or very able pupils in their classes.

- The majority of trainees used a variety of teaching approaches, managed classes well and maintained an orderly learning environment. However, the disruptive behaviour of pupils in a minority of schools severely limited the opportunities for some trainees to develop their subject teaching skills. Training in behaviour management was often weak and trainees were not always offered a sufficient range of strategies for dealing with disruptive pupils.

- Providers have made good progress in developing their training in the use of ICT in subject teaching and have adapted well to the increasing levels of ICT competence that trainees bring with them. However, the lack of good ICT provision in many subject departments in partnership schools significantly limited the opportunities for trainees to build on the skills developed in their central training.

❑ Trainees' standards in the assessment and recording of pupils' progress improved since the previous inspection cycle, but this remained the weakest area of their teaching. The varied quality of assessment practice in partnership schools was an important contributory factor and there were particular weaknesses on many school-centred courses.

❑ There was a decline in trainees' ability to teach and assess post-16 classes. One in five had weaknesses in their understanding of post-16 examination requirements and of the 14–19 curriculum framework, particularly the place of their own specialism in vocational subjects and in the development of key skills. These weaknesses arose, to a large extent, from the increasing difficulty of providing trainees with sufficient direct experience of teaching and assessing in this age range.

❑ Trainees often showed insufficient understanding of the Key Stage 2 curriculum in their specialist subject and of how to build effectively on pupils' prior experience when they transfer to Key Stage 3.

❑ One third of trainees were able to reflect analytically and productively on their own teaching in ways that led to clear improvements; around one in five trainees found this difficult. These weaker trainees focused too much on the coverage of lesson content and classroom management, and too little on the quality of pupils' learning.

❑ Providers found it increasingly difficult to maintain a sufficient pool of high-quality partnership schools. This was a particular problem in London and other large urban areas. The difficulties were often exacerbated by a high turnover of subject mentors and staffing shortages in the schools. Nevertheless, the majority of schools visited by inspectors were judged to provide suitable placements.

❑ Subject mentors in schools were generally making a fuller and more effective contribution to the training than previously, providing both specific training activities and detailed and constructive feedback on trainees' teaching. However, mentoring remained an area of weakness in around one in six courses.

❑ Most providers had good procedures in place to monitor trainees' progress, provide clear feedback, and set targets for improvement. The best had excellent systems for the collection and recording of appropriate evidence of progress and achievement against the QTS standards.

❑ The accuracy and consistency of the assessment of trainees has improved significantly since the previous inspection cycle. Decisions about whether or not trainees should be recommended for QTS were now generally secure. However, significant weaknesses in assessment were still found in around one in ten courses.

## Overall inspection outcomes

**11.** Figure 1 shows the overall distribution of grades awarded in each inspection cell for the two inspection cycles, 1996/99 and 1999/2002.

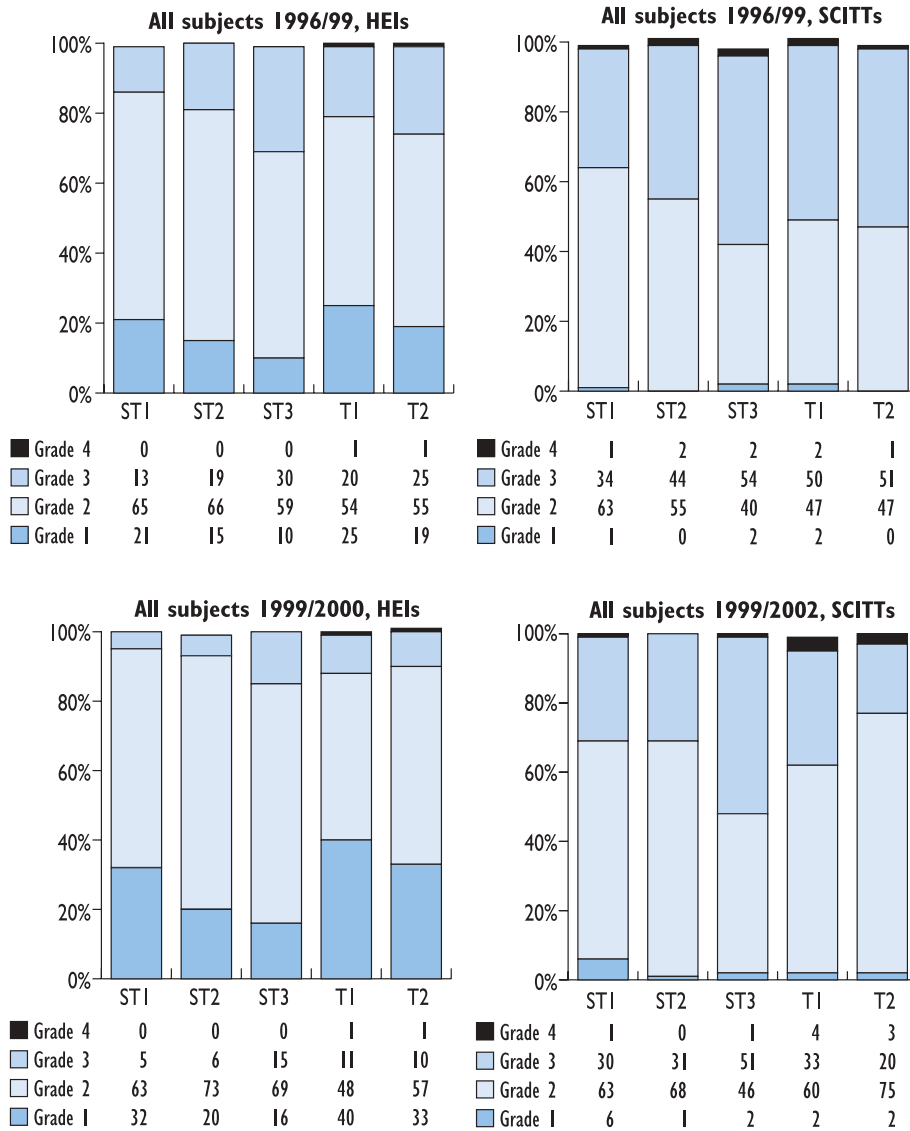Figure 1. Overall grades for inspections 1996/99 and 1999/2002



| All subject grades (1996/99) | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| ☐ Grade 3 | 16 | 22 | 33 | 23 | 28 |
| ☐ Grade 2 | 65 | 65 | 57 | 54 | 54 |
| ☐ Grade 1 | 19 | 13 | 9 | 22 | 17 |

| All subject grades (1999/2002) | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| ☐ Grade 3 | 9 | 10 | 20 | 15 | 12 |
| ☐ Grade 2 | 63 | 73 | 66 | 50 | 59 |
| ☐ Grade 1 | 28 | 17 | 14 | 34 | 28 |

**12.** It is clear that there was significant improvement in all five of the areas assessed, compared with the earlier inspections. The greatest improvement was in the assessment of trainees against the standards for QTS (T2). Previously this was an area of relative weakness, but assessment of trainees was now very good on a quarter of courses and good on a further two thirds. Improvements in the quality of training (T1) were most marked in the proportion of courses providing very good training, up from one in five to more than one in three.

**13.** The teaching standards achieved by trainees at the end of their training had also improved. The most significant improvements were in planning, teaching and class management (ST2); in this area, and in subject knowledge and understanding (ST1), the standards of trainees were judged to be good or very good on nine out of ten courses. This compares with around eight out of ten previously. Standards of monitoring, assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' progress and attainment (ST3) were identified as requiring significant improvement in one third of courses in the previous cycle. While this figure had fallen to one in five courses, assessment remained the weakest area of trainees' standards.

**14.** Figure 2 compares the inspection outcomes for HEI-based and school-centred (SCITT) providers in the two cycles. SCITTs have performed less well across both programmes of inspection, with very few courses where training or trainees' standards were very good and markedly more that were judged to have significant weaknesses. Nevertheless, there had been a general improvement in school-centred courses, particularly in the accuracy and consistency of the assessment of trainees (T2). As more generally, the most persistent area of weakness in SCITT provision remained the trainees' standards in the assessment of pupils (ST3), with significant weaknesses in around half the courses.

Figure 2. Comparison of grades for HEI and SCITT courses (all subjects) 1996/99 and 1999/2002

**All subjects 1996/99, HEIs**

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 3 | 13 | 19 | 30 | 20 | 25 |
| Grade 2 | 65 | 66 | 59 | 54 | 55 |
| Grade 1 | 21 | 15 | 10 | 25 | 19 |

**All subjects 1996/99, SCITTs**

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Grade 3 | 34 | 44 | 54 | 50 | 51 |
| Grade 2 | 63 | 55 | 40 | 47 | 47 |
| Grade 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 |

**All subjects 1999/2000, HEIs**

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 3 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 11 | 10 |
| Grade 2 | 63 | 73 | 69 | 48 | 57 |
| Grade 1 | 32 | 20 | 16 | 40 | 33 |

**All subjects 1999/2002, SCITTs**

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| Grade 3 | 30 | 31 | 51 | 33 | 20 |
| Grade 2 | 63 | 68 | 46 | 60 | 75 |
| Grade 1 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

**15.** Within the broad pattern of strengths and weaknesses noted above, there were significant variations between subjects with respect to both the quality of training and the standards achieved by trainees. Charts showing the distribution of grades for each subject inspected can be found in the annex, with data for both the 1996/99 and 1999/2002 cycles. (Subjects with very few courses are not included.) Variations between subjects were less marked in the more recent inspections than previously, with particular improvements in ICT, and design and technology, and also in physical education, although the improvements here were less consistent across the inspection cells.

## Standards achieved by trainees

### Trainees' subject knowledge and understanding (ST1)

**16.** Nine out of ten trainees who were observed teaching, demonstrated secure understanding of their subjects. Standards of trainees' subject knowledge were very good in more than a quarter of courses, and the proportion approached two fifths in several subjects. Trainees on these courses taught with a high level of confidence, which was reflected in the way they selected and prepared appropriate teaching materials, planned informative lessons, answered pupils' questions and identified misconceptions and errors in their answers. The best trainees knew how more common misconceptions and errors might be remedied, or even anticipated, in their teaching.

**17.** The general improvement in standards of subject knowledge reflected the greater importance placed on subject understanding at recruitment, and better strategies adopted by providers to improve any subject knowledge deficiencies during training. Trainees from the school-centred courses did not achieve such high standards in subject knowledge, although the small size of these courses (often fewer than five trainees) makes comparisons with larger courses problematic. On a few school-centred courses, trainees' subject knowledge was very good but several recruited local trainees who were often less qualified in their teaching subjects, and this was an important factor in the modest standards achieved.

**18.** Most trainees used their subject expertise effectively to inform their teaching, particularly at examination level. Subject mentors in schools reported favourably on trainees' commitment to researching up-to-date and topical content for lessons, especially in subjects such as geography and business education. Some of the best trainees drew well on knowledge from previous employment; for example, an ICT trainee with extensive industrial experience used this effectively to teach principles of database security. In the minority of courses where subject weaknesses were significant, these were usually most evident at Key Stage 4 and post-16, where trainees underestimated the subject knowledge demands. However, in mathematics, the better identification of needs and the designation of some courses for the 11–16 age-range led to fewer trainees struggling to meet the demands of post-16 teaching than was evident in the previous inspection cycle.

**19.** In the previous cycle, particular concerns were raised about the standards of subject knowledge of trainees in design and technology, ICT and physical education. These had now improved and standards in design and technology and ICT were broadly on a par with other secondary subjects. Trainees' subject knowledge was previously good on less than two fifths of physical education courses but this figure rose to nearly three quarters in this latest cycle of inspections. Nevertheless, a minority of trainees on postgraduate physical education courses still did not use their degree knowledge effectively in teaching the subject, for example to identify principles underlying the lessons they had planned. Both undergraduate and postgraduate trainees often had trouble in explaining issues of cause and effect in the execution of pupils' movement.

**20.** In English and mathematics, standards of subject knowledge were generally strong, with standards on more than a third of the courses judged very good. There were fewer courses in science where trainees achieved very high standards, although trainees' subject knowledge was at least good on almost nine in ten courses. Trainees with a wide range of science and science-related degrees were admitted onto science courses and ensuring they all gained the required breadth of subject knowledge presented considerable challenges.

**21.** While most trainees had a detailed knowledge of the National Curriculum in their subject, many were less aware of the ways their subject could contribute to learning across the curriculum. Most were familiar with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA's) Key Stage 3 schemes of work in their subject and there were significant improvements in trainees' understanding of how to develop pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum, although less so their numeracy. A weak area for almost a third of the trainees observed by inspectors was their understanding of the Key Stage 2 programmes of study and progression to Key Stage 3. Few trainees knew how to build effectively on pupils' prior experience in the primary phase, particularly in geography, ICT and physical education. This was somewhat less of a weakness in the core subjects and history.

**22.** One fifth of the trainees observed had some weaknesses in their understanding of the 14–19 curriculum framework, particularly the place of their subject in vocational courses, and post-16 examination syllabuses. Few trainees fully came to grips with the contribution that their specialist subject could make to the development of key skills in this phase.

**23.** Trainees generally understood very well the range of factors that influenced pupils' learning and were sensitive to pupils' backgrounds, especially when teaching in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. An increasing number were aware of research evidence on learning styles and were applying this knowledge to addressing pupils' needs in the classes they taught, for example the use of accelerated learning techniques. In almost all cases, trainees were well-informed about recent curriculum developments; for example, geography trainees were usually well-versed in the literature on teaching thinking skills and, as a result, were more likely to draw explicitly on these ideas in their teaching. However, a minority had done little reading of either relevant professional journals or recent inspection evidence and had an insufficient grasp of current issues, such as the factors likely to contribute to the low attainment of boys.

**24.** Trainees' knowledge and understanding of the areas specified in the *ITT National Curriculum for the use of ICT in subject teaching* increased greatly over the three years of the inspection cycle. Most trainees began courses with better ICT skills than in the past, and by the end of their training had good personal ICT skills, especially in the use of word-processing, e-mail and the Internet. The majority had also developed the ability to use a wide range of ICT applications during their course and saw ICT as an integral part of their future professional lives.

### Trainees' planning, teaching and class management (ST2)

25.  Trainees' planning of their teaching has developed significantly since the previous inspection cycle and most trainees realised the importance of good organisation for effective teaching. Four fifths of the trainees observed by inspectors planned their teaching well in both the short and medium term, some exceptionally so. Most trainees related daily lessons and units of work to examination or National Curriculum requirements, although the ways in which subjects could contribute to learning across the National Curriculum, such as promoting cultural awareness or work-related learning, received less emphasis.

26.  The majority of trainees were better than previous trainees at objective-led planning and identifying precisely what they intended to teach in lessons. A minority still found it difficult to identify precise teaching objectives and learning targets for every lesson, but around four fifths of trainees did this effectively, with even higher proportions in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. Lesson planning templates were commonly used to set out clearly the knowledge, skills or understanding to be learned, and to help plan how the lesson would be structured and organised to achieve these. Where trainees phrased learning outcomes in language that the pupils could understand, it helped them to check easily if these had been met. However, examples of weak planning remained in all subjects. There was, for example, room for improvement in physical education, where many trainees continued to emphasise what the teacher and pupils would do, rather than what pupils would learn.

27.  The best trainees paid careful attention to how their learning intentions influenced the organisation of their classes. A feature of their teaching was the ability to set challenging and engaging tasks for a range of pupil groupings, and homework that moved pupils from developing knowledge and understanding to applying and evaluating it. Good trainees also recognised the need to plan for flexibility in lessons, so they could cope with contingencies or take account of pupils' needs and interests. Nevertheless, the planning of one in five of the trainees observed lacked clarity, did not take sufficient account of the range of needs within a class, or was insufficiently detailed to support good teaching. Weaker trainees did not always understand how to plan for progress in learning across a sequence of lessons or saw progress largely in terms of knowledge, taking insufficient account of conceptual understanding, skills and attitudes.

28.  Compared with the previous inspection cycle, most trainees were considerably more adept at planning which enabled all pupils to make progress. For instance, they included more group and paired work to cater for differences in attainment and ability, planned the effective use of in-class support, prepared differentiated worksheets and writing frames, and created tasks and questions directed at individual learning needs. Nevertheless, the needs of low-attaining or very able pupils were still poorly targeted. While most trainees gathered some prior assessment information on pupils, for example, from key stage test results, reading ages or individual education plans, the extent to which they made effective use of such information was extremely variable. One in five trainees made good, focused use of assessment information to support well-matched

teaching, but almost a third did not use it adequately, with higher proportions in ICT, geography and physical education.

**29.** More than half the trainees observed taught lessons that were good or better. Only one in ten taught a lesson that was less than satisfactory in some respects and very few taught poor lessons. Trainees were generally effective communicators who conveyed enthusiasm for their subject and had a strong commitment to teaching. Most had considerable classroom presence and established a good learning environment, trying hard to motivate even the most disaffected pupils. Trainees often used imaginative and stimulating teaching methods, for example, the use of storyboards in geography or designing a board game in religious education to help them understand and explain difficult concepts. However, some trainees could have done more to stimulate pupils' intellectual curiosity, especially at Key Stage 3.

**30.** Increasingly, trainees had adopted a three-part lesson structure, composed of an introduction, followed by the main teaching activity or activities, and then a final plenary session. The best trainees used this approach skilfully to consolidate understanding, and intervened with individuals or small groups to focus their learning. In most subjects, trainees made good use of whole-class interactive teaching, provided well-structured explanations and instructions, and used questioning extensively and effectively; this aspect of trainees' teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection cycle. The best trainees involved all pupils in discussions to draw out their ideas and develop key teaching points. Weaker trainees, however, relied too much on closed questions and had not mastered the use of supplementary questions to develop pupils' responses. Occasionally, trainees did not use teaching time as productively as they should, with over-long lesson introductions and rushed summaries at the end of lessons that failed to probe what pupils had learned.

**31.** Trainees were generally better at improving pupils' basic skills than was the case in the previous inspection cycle. They encouraged collaborative study skills and discussed relevant ethical or environmental issues. They improved literacy skills, for example, by using different forms of writing tasks, and paid more attention to spelling and syntax when marking work at all levels. Opportunities for developing numeracy skills were not exploited to the same degree.

**32.** Trainees generally used a good range of teaching strategies, although not all had a clear understanding of how classroom management should support pupils' learning; weaker trainees focused too narrowly on managing unsatisfactory behaviour. Trainees generally achieved good standards of discipline, although they inevitably encountered difficulties with classes that caused problems for experienced teachers. In a minority of cases, trainees failed to cope with the challenging behaviour of the pupils. Many trainees successfully followed the 'positive discipline' policies of their schools to create effective learning environments.

**33.** Practical work was usually well-prepared and managed, particularly in science and design and technology, and many trainees demonstrated the ability to co-ordinate several complex activities simultaneously, especially in art. Strong features of most physical education lessons were the trainees'

organisation, control of resources and their high expectations of pupils' behaviour; these were, in part, driven by the safety-consciousness of most trainees. In subjects such as geography, science, and design and technology, trainees almost invariably demonstrated good practice in risk assessment and considered carefully the health and safety requirements for planning work outside of the classroom.

**34.** One aspect of trainees' work that clearly enhanced their teaching was the quality and range of resources they developed and used with pupils. The majority of trainees employed an increasingly wide variety of resources and were often significantly more adept than previously in integrating appropriate ICT applications into their teaching. By the end of their training, many were keen and competent users of ICT applications, such as spreadsheets, assessment and recording software, digital cameras, presentation software and interactive whiteboards. This was in spite of the limited opportunities in many partnership schools for trainees to practise the use of a range of ICT resources in their classroom teaching. They also used ICT to create resources, often to a high standard.

**35.** An aspect that trainees continued to find difficult was the capacity to reflect analytically and productively, in writing, on their own teaching. There has been progress since the previous cycle of inspections, and a third of trainees observed did this very well, writing astute and honest comments that indicated what they needed to do to improve the quality of their teaching. However, this task continued to challenge about one in five trainees who did not use reviews of their teaching as effectively as they should. Their evaluations were brief and focused too closely on coverage of lesson content and classroom management issues, rather than considering pupils' learning and the impact of their teaching on this.

### Trainees' monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability (ST3)

**36.** Trainees' ability to assess and record the progress of pupils has improved since the previous inspection cycle, and standards on four fifths of courses were good. There have been particular improvements in design and technology courses, where half had significant weaknesses in this area at the time of the previous inspection; this has been reduced to just over one in ten. However, trainees' skills in assessment were generally not as good as other aspects of their teaching, particularly in physical education and ICT, and this reflected comparable weaknesses among experienced teachers in schools. Around half the school-centred courses in all subjects have significant weaknesses in the trainees' standards in assessment.

**37.** Most trainees have a good understanding of the principles and purposes of assessment although, in practice, only the best use a wide range of strategies or consider their fitness for purpose. There has been some improvement in trainees' ability to assess how well their learning objectives were achieved since the previous inspection cycle, but for a quarter of those trainees observed there were still significant weaknesses. Good trainees shared their teaching and learning objectives with pupils at the start of each lesson, for example by writing them on the board and drawing attention to them, and used them as the basis for reviewing pupils' progress and providing feedback.

**38.** Most trainees were very conscientious in their day-to-day marking and adhered closely to departmental policies in their placement schools. They marked pupils' work regularly and diligently and much of this marking was detailed and constructive. It was more likely to be diagnostic than at the time of the last inspection cycle. In weaker courses, however, trainees' marking was cursory and focused largely on pupils' completion of tasks, without enough attention to the quality of their responses. An area where there was still room for improvement was the setting of targets for pupils to help them to learn.

**39.** Trainees kept records of pupils' achievements but were less sure how to record pupils' progress. This weakness often stemmed from uncertainties in the approaches used in the schools in which they were placed.

**40.** Most trainees gained experience of using National Curriculum level descriptions to assess pupils and, for the most part, could recognise the level at which a pupil was achieving. This was often done well by trainees in English, history and modern foreign languages but achievement was more varied in other subjects. Assessment at GCSE level was a strength for the majority of trainees. Most were involved in moderation procedures and demonstrated that they could achieve levels of consistency and accuracy that broadly matched those of experienced teachers. However, a minority of trainees were not offered the chance to benefit from this valuable experience.

**41.** The situation was less positive with regard to post-16 assessment and this was one of the few areas where there had been an overall decline in the standards achieved compared with the previous inspection cycle. A minority of trainees lacked experience of a good range of post-16 teaching and assessment and, as a result, their knowledge of assessment at this level remained theoretical rather than practical.

**42.** Where trainees had accompanied experienced teachers to parents' evenings and had contributed to formal written reports on pupils, they generally understood well the statutory assessment and reporting requirements. A minority of trainees, however, lacked a sufficient understanding of how to report appropriately to parents on the progress that pupils were making. Over the period of the inspections, trainees became more aware of the nature and range of data used to benchmark pupils and schools, but only a minority fully understood how to use these to support their teaching.

## Contributory factors

### Recruitment and retention

**43.** Over the period of these inspections, there was a growing demand from schools for trained teachers. However, as many as two thirds of the secondary courses had a shortfall in the number of trainees against their allocated recruitment targets. This was a particular problem in subjects such as mathematics and science which have been regarded as 'shortage subjects' for some years, but even some English and history courses, which had traditionally recruited well, had begun to experience unfilled places. Also, in religious education, the difficulty of recruiting and retaining sufficient high-quality trainees became increasingly significant over the inspection period.

**44.** Improved marketing of courses by providers, national recruitment initiatives, not least financial incentives such as training bursaries, golden hellos and the repayment of student loans for trainees in shortage subjects, led to a significant improvement in recruitment to secondary PGCE courses towards the end of the inspection cycle. Undergraduate courses continued to recruit fewer applicants than postgraduate programmes, especially in design and technology. School-centred courses usually sought to recruit locally to provide new teachers for schools in the area. Some were successful at filling all the training places, but others fell well short of target numbers.

**45.** A further difficulty facing ITT was the retention of trainees once they had begun the course. For example, around one in six trainees who began training courses inspected in 2001/02 had left before the end of the course. The most common reasons for leaving courses were trainees being counselled to withdraw because they were not suited to teaching, or personal circumstances such as family commitments. An increasing and worrying trend during the three years was that courses lost not only weaker trainees but also some potentially excellent teachers, often for personal reasons. There was no evidence that weaknesses in the training led to significant drop-out from courses.

**46.** The sufficiency of suitably qualified recruits varied considerably between subjects. It was common for providers to select trainees on the basis that at least half of the content of their degree was in the curriculum subject for which they were to be trained. In their quest to meet challenging recruitment targets, some providers were more flexible in this regard in their selection policy. To bring such trainees up to acceptable levels of subject knowledge by the end of a 36-week course, they had to undertake very careful monitoring and support. Several providers were highly successful at doing this and demonstrated that with suitable provision, non-standard entrants can make very competent teachers. Some providers, especially in mathematics, science and design and technology, successfully used a two-year PGCE course to address shortfalls in the subject knowledge of those trainees needing more substantial training in their specialist subject.

**47.** Some courses attracted relatively few trainees with high academic qualifications but compensated by recruiting those able to bring greater

maturity and experience of work in other fields. It became increasingly common for trainees to have had other employment before training to teach and this experience was often used well to enrich the experience of all those on the course. Recruits in subjects such as business education and art often came from a range of commercial backgrounds and brought diverse and rich subject expertise to their teaching. Modern foreign languages courses often included up to two thirds of native speakers who were very confident in oral expression.

### Training programmes

**48.** There was generally a direct link between the standards achieved by trainees and the quality of their training, including the arrangements for their assessment. Where there were discrepancies, for example, between very good training but only good standards, the explanation could generally be found in the quality of the trainees recruited.

**49.** *Circular 4/98* set out a training curriculum that providers were required to follow in the core subjects and for the use of ICT in the teaching of all subjects. Courses were reviewed and modified, where necessary, to bring them in line with the requirements of these national curricula for ITT and nearly all courses had improved as a result.

**50.** Most courses were structured carefully to ensure that trainees had a range of relevant experiences and made appropriate progress towards the QTS standards. In the most successful partnerships, training in how to teach was well co-ordinated so that trainees developed teaching skills and understanding through a combination of central training sessions and classroom experience. An important feature of the latter was the observation, evaluation and review of the trainees' teaching. Compared with the findings in the previous inspection cycle, there was greater coherence to the training programmes, particularly in the early stages of courses. This was achieved through good communication between trainers, clearer documentation and well-designed assignments. Effective use of school-based tasks provided closer links between centre-based and school-based training. Very good courses also paid close attention to the specific needs of individual trainees and were flexible enough to meet their different requirements. For example, in what is inevitably an intensive training year, they found ways to reduce the workload without compromising on quality when trainees were under particular pressure.

**51.** A common feature of school-centred providers was the small numbers of trainees recruited to individual subject courses. For reasons of economy, such providers often decided to concentrate resources on general training for the whole cohort rather than on subject-specific training. This sometimes resulted in an imbalance between general and subject training; at times, the amount of subject-specific training was pared down too far and did not provide the breadth and depth that trainees needed to meet the QTS standards.

**52.** Time during the first term was generally used well in all courses to observe good teachers and to follow a structured introduction to teaching. Trainees made most progress, and were more confident, when they had experienced some teaching early on in their course, and were then given

time to reflect upon and evaluate what they had observed and learned before undertaking a further teaching placement. In the best training, placement schools were chosen carefully to provide contrasting experiences. Courses that were designed with only short periods of teaching on the final assessed practice, or reduced timetables to enable the completion of tasks and assignments, were generally less effective in helping trainees to achieve the highest standards.

53. On most courses, trainees spent a short time in primary schools. This was most productive when trainees had a clear agenda for this placement, spent some time with a primary specialist in their subject area, and built on the experience in their subsequent training. Too often, time on primary visits was wasted through a lack of focus and because the host primary schools were not sufficiently aware that the main purpose of the placement was to understand work in the later years of primary education. Also, these visits were sometimes too early in the course, before trainees were sufficiently aware of the issues facing Year 7 pupils on transfer to secondary school.

54. Providers have become significantly more rigorous and systematic in auditing and developing trainees' subject knowledge since the previous inspection cycle. This aspect of training was most effective when the process started at recruitment, with subject understanding probed thoroughly at interview, and where prospective trainees were set reading or other tasks to complete prior to starting the course. In some shortage subjects, bridging programmes operated with extra time and resources outside the main course, and these were very successful for some trainees. In many cases, it would have been better if providers had made more specific requirements of trainees to address gaps in their subject knowledge before they began their course.

55. Most providers audited subject knowledge closely against the content of the relevant National Curriculum programmes of study and examination syllabuses. Alongside this, in the first weeks of the course, there was usually an ICT audit. At times, providers placed too much reliance on self-audit, which could mask trainees' misconceptions or superficial understanding. In the best courses, audits were thorough, checked by the tutors, and re-visited regularly; trainees were set clear targets that were reviewed through tutorials, or even subject tests. In courses which achieved high standards of subject knowledge, subject tutors often identified the most common topics with which trainees were unfamiliar and focused on these; peer teaching and directed personal reading tasks were often used sensibly to extend and develop trainees' subject knowledge; and school mentors were more involved than previously in the development of subject knowledge and set higher expectations of trainees. However, where training was weaker, the mentor's role was underdeveloped. Mentors sometimes assumed wrongly that trainees were 'experts' because they were recent graduates and were not sufficiently aware of the possible mismatch between the trainee's degree study and the subject content taught in school.

56. Although carrying out analysis of needs for both subject knowledge and ICT, providers rarely considered extending this more broadly to identify other skills and understanding that trainees brought to the course,

for example, those gained from previous teaching experience or other work with young people, so that account could be taken of these during the training.

**57.** A few providers still did not have adequate strategies for subject knowledge enhancement although this was a weakness highlighted in the previous inspection cycle. They needed to ensure earlier intervention to remedy serious gaps in knowledge, give more structured support to trainees who required it, and regularly monitor and update the subject knowledge targets set. Some courses had not taken sufficient account of the subject knowledge needs of the trainees they had recruited; for example, science courses that failed to cater for a majority of biology specialists. More than a third of ICT courses had shortcomings in their procedures to improve trainees' subject knowledge because many subject mentors in schools had not had formal training in the subject themselves.

**58.** In comparison with previous inspections, courses paid closer attention to knowledge about good practice in subject teaching, learning and assessment. Trainees were commonly expected to read key texts and subject journals and refer to relevant sources on the Internet. As a result, they developed a deeper understanding of key issues in teaching and had a wider range of effective strategies to draw on. Work in general professional studies and subject studies sessions generally complemented and reinforced each other more effectively than previously, particularly in areas such as special educational needs and classroom management. Nevertheless, many PGCE trainees felt that some taught sessions on general professional topics provided only theoretical frameworks and legislative background, and did not engage sufficiently with practical school and classroom issues.

**59.** Training in how to teach and plan lessons had improved significantly since the previous inspection cycle. Providers were good at showing trainees how to use a range of teaching strategies and resources, and how to teach the necessary subject knowledge, skills and understanding. However, training often paid insufficient attention to some of the more difficult areas that new teachers face, such as planning to ensure that pupils make progress in their learning, and accommodating the needs of different pupils within a class. In some subjects and schools, trainees had too few opportunities to try out different teaching approaches. For example, although mathematics trainees were introduced in subject courses to a range of teaching styles, including investigation and discussion, some were unable to try these in the classroom because of the rigidity of schemes of work in their placement departments.

**60.** Tutors in higher education institutions almost invariably provided models of good or excellent pedagogical practice and employed a wide range of approaches in their teaching for trainees to emulate. Sessions were sharply focused on achieving learning objectives and trainers selected strategies not just to demonstrate diversity of approach, but also to illustrate fitness for purpose. In the best practice, tutors discussed and evaluated with trainees the teaching methods they had used. Similarly, trainees' own experiences in schools were used well as a learning resource. In school-centred courses, the central training sometimes achieved the same quality, but overall the picture was more varied. The

very small numbers of trainees on most of these courses often reduced the variety of training strategies that could be used.

**61.** One of the weakest areas in the previous inspection cycle had been training in the assessment of pupils. Commonly, trainees had been expected to follow the approaches adopted in their placement schools with little systematic central training. The varied quality of assessment practice in schools meant that this had rarely led to high-quality training. Few placements had presented trainees with models of effective assessment or good recording strategies. Many trainees had little exposure to diagnostic testing, the analysis of attainment data against targets or the use of assessment information for planning. Providers did not always identify or deal adequately with these different experiences of trainees. The negative impact of these weaknesses had been seen most clearly on school-centred courses.

**62.** This pattern of training continued in the weaker training courses seen in these more recent inspections, but most providers had recognised that central training in assessment must establish secure foundations on which the trainees could build. This led to a gradual improvement in training in how to assess which tended to be introduced earlier in courses than previously and was usually revisited on several occasions throughout the year. Central training sessions on assessment seen by inspectors were invariably of good quality and, in a minority of cases, provided excellent training. However, most courses still failed to give enough attention to the links between planning and assessment, strategies for diagnostic and formative assessment, and effective means of recording pupils' progress. Summative assessment was usually taught well and, towards the end of the inspection cycle, greater attention was given to the interpretation and use of assessment data.

**63.** Providers made rapid progress in developing their ICT training and adapted well to changing technologies and the increasing levels of ICT competence that trainees brought with them. Most subject tutors recognised the potential strengths and challenges that ICT brought to teaching their subject, and paid due regard in their training sessions to issues of managing ICT to support pupils' learning. In physical education, for example, trainees were taught the value of using visual feedback on performance to develop pupils' learning.

**64.** Most providers had better computer hardware and software resources than previously, and they used these effectively to address the varied learning needs of trainees, particularly making use of improved communications networks. Some offered discrete ICT training programmes within their courses. These were often supplemented by specific subject training in the use of ICT, for example, training for design and technology trainees in the use of control technology and CAD/CAM, that matched initiatives in schools. Another common strategy was to direct trainees to specific training to meet their individual needs; for example, self-study support, workshops led by higher education ICT services or school-based training sessions.

**65.** However, in-school training in the practical use of ICT in subject teaching still had significant weaknesses in many partnerships because schools did not provide sufficient opportunities for trainees to use ICT

regularly in their teaching. Provision for ICT, even in otherwise good subject departments, was often limited and there were limited opportunities for trainees to use computers with classes. As a result, schools were frequently unable to exploit or develop sufficiently the ICT skills that trainees had acquired during their central training. Some providers responded positively to this challenge and arranged at least one placement in an ICT-rich department to ensure that trainees gained sufficient experience. Others lent laptop computers to trainees to take into schools or brought pupils into the training centre to make intensive use of computers for a specific subject task.

## Partnership arrangements

**66.** The best training took place in partnerships, both HEI-based and school-centred, where the partners worked very closely together to ensure that trainees understood how pupils' learning developed, and how to plan, teach and assess effectively using a range of appropriate techniques. Such partnerships were committed to training high-quality teachers and made suitably rigorous professional demands of them. They encouraged trainees to have high expectations of pupils and to evaluate their teaching critically.

**67.** The most effective partnerships involved a good mix of schools, all of which had good teachers and effective departments. They had a low turnover of schools and mentors, and this continuity of personnel helped subject course leaders to develop a good knowledge of the strengths of subject departments in different schools. While nearly all partnerships had good documentation on the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the training, school mentors within the best partnerships were given detailed guidance and high-quality support and were often involved in planning or teaching centrally provided training. Meetings were held regularly and were well-attended as mentors recognised that they provided good opportunities for professional development. Not all partnerships achieved such high standards but there were significant improvements throughout the inspection cycle, and the majority of providers were seeking to make further improvements.

**68.** Partnership communications became increasingly effective through regular meetings, tutor visits, newsletters and via electronic means. A number of providers had established web-based communications with their partnership schools and this made links easier between tutors, trainees and subject mentors. In one interesting example, a provider established an electronic conference where trainees and subject mentors could raise problems and share experiences with each other and with the subject tutor. Increasingly, subject mentors from across the partnership were responding to problems and issues raised by trainees with whom they were not directly working and contributing to a wide-ranging and fruitful dialogue.

**69.** School-centred schemes were often relatively new providers of ITT and the best of these training partnerships developed where previous links existed between the schools. Weaknesses were commonly found when the training partners had few face-to-face meetings and where there were inadequate opportunities to develop clear training expectations, agree

common procedures or share good training practice. Some consortia focused on developing partnership at management level but ignored the importance of communications between subject trainers.

**70.** A core element of all high-quality training was the placement of trainees in suitable schools and departments. In some parts of the country, especially in London and other large urban areas, these were sometimes difficult to find. Reasons for a shortage of suitable partnership schools included: significant numbers of weak schools in the area; high teacher turnover, leading to loss of experienced mentors; staffing shortages in subjects such as mathematics and science, so that experienced teachers could not be released to act as mentors; and competition for placements between neighbouring providers. Additionally, departments were sometimes reluctant to become involved in ITT because of concerns about the effects on pupils' achievement and examination results. As a result, some providers found it hard to maintain a full complement of good schools for trainee placements. Where good school placements were scarce, providers sometimes chose to use a geographically dispersed group of schools, which brought logistical problems for trainees and trainers and additional challenges to quality and consistency.

**71.** Most providers had enough good schools to establish some selection and de-selection of school departments. Occasionally, schools were deemed unsuitable for ITT because of the lack of suitable mentoring arrangements or because they presented too many class management challenges for trainees. Weaker providers failed to put in place the rigorous monitoring necessary to ensure that only appropriate schools participated in the training. Despite the difficulties faced by many providers, the majority of schools visited by inspectors were judged to provide suitable placements.

**72.** In some subjects, such as music and religious education, single-teacher departments, or the use of non-specialist teachers, provided trainees with limited opportunities to observe good subject specialists at work. This sometimes led to the danger of trainees adopting a narrow perspective on teaching their specialist subject.

**73.** Schools that participated in ITT partnerships almost invariably recognised the valuable professional development that accrued for teachers and departments when they were involved in training new teachers. Most departments provided trainees with good opportunities to teach pupils of all abilities at Key Stages 3 and 4. A minority, however, were reluctant to allow trainees to gain sufficient experience of planning, teaching and assessing pupils in examination groups in Year 11 or when they were approaching national tests in Year 9. This had a detrimental impact on trainees' development.

**74.** It was clearly important for trainees on 11–18 courses to develop their confidence and competence through working with post-16 pupils. However, courses found it increasingly difficult to provide trainees with sufficient direct experience of teaching and assessment in this age-range. The introduction of the new AS examination and changes to A-level were undoubtedly a major factor contributing to this. Although there was understandable reluctance to let trainees teach post-16 classes for large

blocks of time, the best providers arranged some experience of teaching sixth form classes and involved trainees in co-teaching, small-group teaching or individual coaching. Some had established very effective links with post-16 institutions, allowing groups of trainees to gain some intensive experience of teaching at this level.

**75.** In some schools, the disruptive behaviour of pupils created difficulties for trainees. In a few cases, inspectors noted that behaviour problems severely affected trainees' lessons in a way they had not been seen previously. As a result, some trainees found that their scope to develop subject teaching skills was seriously hindered. Training partnerships did not always provide focused training in behaviour management or consider sufficiently well the strategies to follow when trainees were confronted with disruptive pupils.

**76.** Many of the subject departments in partner schools were making increased use of highly structured teaching units or schemes of work. Detailed planning frameworks benefited trainees, although they could also restrict their exploration of new and innovative approaches in the classroom. When trainees were expected to follow closely others' planning, this could inhibit the development of their competence in sequential planning and understanding of issues relating to pupils' progress. Good courses avoided this by negotiating with schools' specific opportunities for trainees to teach lesson sequences they had planned themselves. An increasing minority of partnership schools demonstrated their confidence in trainees by encouraging them to participate in curriculum development activities and by incorporating the resulting materials into their schemes of work.

**77.** In some subjects, notably physical education, design and technology, and science, trainees need to be prepared to teach across a number of distinct areas of subject knowledge that may not have been part of their degree studies. In science, for example, all trainees are expected to be able to teach the biology, chemistry and physics components of the National Curriculum, at least in Key Stage 3, regardless of their main science specialism. The better providers paid close attention to the balance of trainees' teaching programmes to achieve this. A particular problem sometimes occurred in physical education when trainees were required to teach only short units of work, as few as three lessons in some instances. This did not provide sufficient opportunity for trainees to consider continuity and progress in pupils' learning or to develop skills in assessment and recording.

## Subject tutors

**78.** In most courses, central training was led by specialist staff with broad experience and high levels of expertise in their subject. Most training by subject tutors was of high-quality and provided particularly good models of teaching. The co-ordination role of these tutors was pivotal in all high quality courses; they ensured training coherence, led the subject partnership and took responsibility for monitoring the progress of all trainees in the subject.

**79.** However, this cycle of inspections revealed substantial differences between providers in their deployment of subject tutors. There were wide variations in student to staff ratios in the time allocated to training, in tutors' contractual arrangements and in the frequency of their visits to partner schools. Some arrangements were clearly more effective than others. For instance, the quality of training and the standards achieved by trainees were generally better in providers with full-time subject tutors who visited each trainee several times over the year and had close contact with partner schools than where there were part-time tutors who were able to make only a few visits to schools. Such decisions about staffing were often pragmatic or economic. There was increasing pressure on subject tutors to devote time to research and other work which limited the time available to support school-based activities. The salary differences between schools and higher education had created a situation where providers found it increasingly difficult to attract appropriately qualified and experienced staff to become subject tutors. Also, financial constraints had led a number of providers to replace full-time posts with part-time appointments when subject tutors left.

**80.** In the best school-centred schemes, the subject training was usually led by a very experienced teacher. Such schemes benefited from very favourable trainee to tutor ratios that enabled the training to be carefully planned to meet any individual needs. However, the identification and retention of a good specialist trainer and the provision of sufficient time for the subject leader role alongside other school priorities often proved problematic. A lack of adequate dedicated time meant that there was often too great a reliance on the goodwill of the subject leader to plan and manage the training.

## Subject mentoring

**81.** Since trainees spent a minimum of two thirds of their time in schools, the role of the school-based subject mentor was a key factor in trainees achieving high teaching standards as, during this time, the mentor had the main training role. The majority of mentors were excellent classroom practitioners. Many were also skilled trainers and were supported by experienced senior managers acting as professional mentors. Good mentors explained to the trainees how to ensure that pupils achieve high standards and how pupils develop and make progress through secondary school. They gave trainees an appropriate degree of responsibility, trusting them, but monitoring their work carefully. They involved trainees in the life of the subject department and of the school more widely, seeing them as having much to offer as well as to learn. Above all, effective mentors provided good role models in their own teaching and showed trainees that good teaching was something they could aspire to. In stable training partnerships, the quality of mentoring improved year by year as subject mentors took a more active role and became more effective in integrating the training and assessment of the trainees.

**82.** School-based training improved considerably during the inspection cycle. Mentors became more likely to know about the core central training programme and to understand how their training complemented and developed work done elsewhere. Trainees often gained useful teaching points from informal discussions with their mentor. High standards of

teaching, however, were achieved only when mentoring provided regular, formal meetings and carefully structured training experiences. The best mentors planned a well-structured programme for each school placement that built upon central training but was flexible enough to meet the needs of individual trainees. They balanced time well between engaging trainees in specific training activities and reviewing trainees' teaching. Good meetings between mentors and trainees were challenging, had clear agendas and trainees were expected to prepare in advance so that discussions were well informed. A small but increasing number of mentors used video to help in the analysis of trainees' lessons.

**83.** Mentoring was less effective in around one in six of courses. These mentors were ill-informed about their role, did not understand the importance of the QTS standards and believed that informal support for trainees was sufficient. This occurred when providers did not brief subject mentors thoroughly and effective liaison between the course subject co-ordinator and mentors was absent. Mentors were rarely deliberately unhelpful to trainees but some failed to understand how best to analyse their own practice for trainees or how they could help trainees to improve their teaching. Some mentors were not sufficiently demanding of trainees and allowed them to coast once a basic level of competence had been achieved. For example, they did not analyse the lessons they observed critically enough and were not rigorous in monitoring trainees' planning and assessment.

## Targets and reviews

**84.** The use of the QTS standards to monitor trainees' progress, provide an agenda for feedback and set targets all improved significantly over the inspection cycle. Most providers had good procedures in place for regular reviews of trainees' progress during the year. The best had excellent systems for the collection and recording of trainees' evidence of progress and achievement against the standards. They used this information well at appropriate times to set challenging yet achievable targets against which progress was monitored carefully. Targets were focused more sharply on specific areas for improvement than during the previous cycle. Some of the best examples included the setting of development targets for trainees as they moved between school placements.

**85.** When subject tutors visited schools to observe trainees' lessons they usually provided high-quality written feedback that was both informative and evaluative and provided a good model for school subject mentors. Training for subject mentors increasingly focused on their monitoring and reviewing role. Nevertheless, there was a minority of mentors who did not use the providers' guidance and documentation effectively to review trainees' progress against the QTS standards or set realistic and achievable targets tailored to meet their individual needs. There was still a tendency for some mentors to provide lesson feedback or set targets related only to classroom management rather than to aspects of subject knowledge or the assessment of pupils. On occasion, mentors set too many targets and trainees found it difficult to know which to tackle first. In addition, good target setting could be undermined when mentors did not also advise trainees on strategies to bring about the required improvements or did not monitor trainees' action plans to ensure that targets were successfully

met. Some mentors also failed to identify when trainees were ready to move on to the development of higher-order teaching skills.

**86.** Most end-of-placement reports about trainees' work were of good quality, and often provided very clear statements of strengths and areas for development. Some partnerships achieved a good measure of consistency of expectation between different schools and mentors by the use of clear grading criteria at assessment review points. Better partnerships had clear procedures for the early identification of trainees with weaknesses in their teaching and for providing the necessary support. One element of these procedures was the keeping of careful records of how individual trainees had been assessed and targets set, and how they had been subsequently supported and monitored by particular individuals within the partnership.

## Assessment procedures

**87.** The accuracy and consistency of the assessment of trainees had improved significantly since the previous inspection cycle and in nearly a quarter of courses the practice was very good. While it remained only adequate in about one in ten courses, this compared favourably with more than a quarter in the previous inspections. It was common to find rigorous assessment procedures in place.

**88.** Some providers, in the desire to ensure that trainees were meeting the requirements in *Circular 4/98*, set in place over-complex and bureaucratic assessment procedures. Although the circular guided providers not to adopt a mechanistic tick-list approach, or to attempt to support each individual standard with its own evidence base, some ignored this advice. Better assessment systems were those that approached assessment holistically, while still paying attention to the need for trainees to demonstrate that they had met all the standards.

**89.** Successful partnerships used a wide range of evidence from teaching and assignments to contribute to a trainee's overall assessment. Most recorded evidence of achievement at regular assessment points and kept profiles of evidence mapped against the QTS standards. In the best practice, assessment systems were easily manageable, fully involved the subject tutor, school mentors and the trainees, and actively encouraged dialogue between all parties. However, a minority of providers needed to streamline procedures, avoid duplication of information gathering and ensure that trainees were clear about the nature of the evidence they needed to collect.

**90.** Good assignments contributed to trainees' ability to meet the standards and helped to forge links between central and school-based training. Assignments and tasks were increasingly linked directly to individual standards or to groups of standards. Where an assignment involved the production of a scheme of work or assessment tasks, the value of these was lessened when trainees were not able to use them in their teaching or evaluate their effectiveness with pupils. More theoretical assignments or small-scale research projects encouraged trainees to explore relevant aspects of teaching. These often resulted in high-quality studies of use both to the schools and to the trainees. Tutors generally marked trainees' assignments very thoroughly, providing models of good assessment practice;

in the best partnerships, school mentors were also often involved in assessing assignments. Occasionally, marking did not offer sufficient advice on subject-specific issues.

**91.** The final assessment of trainees was mostly careful and thorough. Monitoring of large groups of trainees could be challenging, but in most partnerships the subject leader visited all trainees to check that assessment procedures were carried out fairly and rigorously. The consistency of assessments improved over the period of the inspection cycle, often aided by the use of tools such as detailed grading criteria and 'pen portraits'. The increased use of joint observations of trainees by both tutor and mentor also improved standardisation. The cross-moderation of assessments of teaching competence, where school mentors visited other schools, was also successful in some partnerships. Most providers made good use of external examiners to moderate judgements and to provide a second opinion on trainees at the pass/fail border.

**92.** The quality of the Career Entry Profiles improved over the course of these inspections, with clearer and more precise subject-specific targets set for the induction year than had previously been the case. However, a minority of providers still failed to focus closely enough in the Career Entry Profile on trainees' development needs in subject knowledge and assessment skills.

## Impact of government initiatives

**93.** National initiatives, such as the implementation of Curriculum 2000 and the National Grid for Learning, had led providers to adapt provision accordingly. Resources provided for teachers, such as the exemplar QCA schemes of work for Key Stage 3, were also being widely used by training providers and helped to establish a common framework of expectations of good practice.

**94.** In English and mathematics, the extension of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy into Key Stage 3 helped to reinforce the notion that learning is a continuing process. Trainees in these subjects became increasingly familiar with the frameworks for the Key Stage 3 Strategy, which were addressed well at both school and provider level, and gained significantly from this. For example, in English there were improvements in trainees' knowledge of grammar.

**95.** The Key Stage 3 framework for teaching English had had an impact on the training in all subjects and, as a result, more trainees planned directly for the development of literacy skills in their lessons. Training focused more on the development of writing than reading skills, but in one provider a history session focused on strategies to help pupils read difficult and challenging texts, with particular reference to original source material. Cross-curricular numeracy skills, however, rarely received a similar emphasis.

## Commentary

**96.** This report shows a teacher training system that is, in most respects, performing effectively. Today's newly qualified secondary teachers are the best and most consistently trained that we have ever had. Teacher training providers have responded well to the more demanding requirements of *Circular 4/98*, with improvements in training feeding through into improvements in many aspects of the trainees' standards.

**97.** Coinciding with the end of this inspection cycle, the regulations governing ITT in *Circular 4/98* were replaced by those in *Qualifying to Teach*.[3] While largely removing the statutory training curriculum requirements, this document carries forward the requirements of the earlier circular. It restates the central importance of strong and effective partnership arrangements, places a new emphasis on professional values and practice, and makes more explicit the requirements in a number of areas. For example, behaviour management, curricular continuity from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, and issues of pupil inclusion, are all given greater prominence. It will, therefore, be important that providers approach all of these areas with renewed vigour.

**98.** Trainees on postgraduate programmes spend the majority of their time in schools. It is for this reason that partnership arrangements are such a key element in determining the quality of the training provided. Providers have generally sought to strengthen their training partnerships, involving schools and mentors more fully, and bringing greater coherence to the overall programme of central and school-based training. The success of these efforts has been reported above. However, it has also been noted that finding and retaining suitable partnership schools is proving increasingly difficult for many providers, especially those in London and other large urban areas. The current drive to expand the number of secondary training places is placing even greater pressures on the system. It is vital that more schools recognise both the basic professional duty to be involved in training the next generation of teachers and also the considerable professional benefits that can accrue from such involvement.

**99.** Most of the areas of training where improvements are particularly required are those where there are commonly weaknesses in schools. For example, good practice in formative assessment was found in only one third of the secondary schools inspected in 2001/02 and yet many providers still placed too much reliance on schools for training in this area.[4] The effect of a lack of opportunities in many schools to practise and develop skills in using ICT in teaching has already been noted. Weaknesses in curricular continuity between primary and secondary schools have been highlighted recently by Ofsted in *Changing schools – effectiveness of transfer arrangements at age 11: an evaluation*, Ofsted, 2001, and this serves to emphasise the importance of giving greater attention to this in training.

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[3] *Qualifying to Teach: Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training,* DfES/TTA, 2002.

[4] *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools: Standards and Quality in Education 2001/02,* Ofsted, 2003.

**100.** It is, therefore, essential that providers have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the schools and subject departments with which they work. In areas of common weakness, such as those mentioned above, clear and effective strategies need to be put in place to ensure that all trainees are well-trained.

**101.** The increasing reluctance of schools and colleges to allow trainees to have substantial and sustained experience of teaching and assessment of 16–18-year-old students poses real difficulties for providers wishing to offer training across the whole 11–18 age-range. It is hard to see how some providers will be able to ensure that all trainees have opportunities to meet the requirements in *Qualifying to Teach* with respect to the 16–18 phase. All providers of 11–18 courses will need to consider carefully whether and how they can provide the necessary teaching experience for trainees.

**102.** There has been a steady growth in the number of SCITT-based courses, from 67 at the time of the previous inspection cycle to 90 in 1999/2002. These figures mask the fact that, during this six-year period, a number of SCITT partnerships ceased to provide training while others were accredited by the TTA. The relative weakness of SCITTs compared with HEI-led partnerships is due, in part, to the relative newness of many of them. They undoubtedly play a useful role in local teacher supply in some areas of the country and in making teacher training available to some, particularly mature trainees, who would otherwise be unable to find a convenient local training provider. However, this report has highlighted some of the difficulties associated with the small-scale nature of most SCITT courses and which militate against them providing consistently high-quality training.

**103.** Finally, perhaps the biggest challenge facing ITT providers in the next few years is that of recruiting sufficient high-quality trainees to meet the continuing demands of schools for teachers. In spite of encouraging recent improvements, many courses, especially in shortage areas like mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, still fail to recruit to target, and future targets are likely to be even more challenging. The government's proposals for remodelling the school workforce should help to reduce the growing demand for teachers but supply pressures are unlikely to ease quickly. What is clear is that the training providers have the expertise to produce the required teachers as long as sufficient people come forward for training.

## Annex: distribution of subject grades for all courses inspected in 1999/2002 and 1996/99

Note: charts are provided for all subjects where 20 or more courses were inspected. For subjects with fewer courses (classics, drama and social science), tables of grades only are presented.

### Art 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 4 | 7 | 21 | 7 | 25 |
| Grade 2 | 68 | 68 | 57 | 64 | 61 |
| Grade 1 | 29 | 25 | 21 | 29 | 14 |

### Art 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Grade 3 | 6 | 6 | 16 | 9 | 9 |
| Grade 2 | 56 | 75 | 66 | 34 | 44 |
| Grade 1 | 38 | 19 | 19 | 53 | 44 |

### Business Education 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 24 | 24 |
| Grade 2 | 52 | 43 | 57 | 43 | 33 |
| Grade 1 | 33 | 43 | 29 | 33 | 43 |

### Business Education 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 18 | 14 |
| Grade 2 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 36 | 45 |
| Grade 1 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 45 | 41 |

### Design and Technology 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 24 | 21 | 50 | 32 | 26 |
| Grade 2 | 74 | 76 | 50 | 61 | 71 |
| Grade 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 3 |

### Design and Technology 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 21 | 13 |
| Grade 2 | 69 | 74 | 77 | 41 | 51 |
| Grade 1 | 21 | 15 | 10 | 38 | 36 |

## English 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| □ Grade 3 | 16 | 10 | 26 | 22 | 22 |
| □ Grade 2 | 62 | 76 | 65 | 56 | 57 |
| □ Grade 1 | 22 | 13 | 9 | 21 | 19 |

## English 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| □ Grade 3 | 6 | 6 | 16 | 9 | 7 |
| □ Grade 2 | 60 | 73 | 67 | 57 | 61 |
| □ Grade 1 | 34 | 21 | 16 | 34 | 31 |

## Geography 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| □ Grade 3 | 10 | 15 | 24 | 27 | 27 |
| □ Grade 2 | 63 | 66 | 54 | 46 | 51 |
| □ Grade 1 | 24 | 17 | 20 | 24 | 20 |

## Geography 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| □ Grade 3 | 7 | 10 | 21 | 17 | 10 |
| □ Grade 2 | 57 | 64 | 55 | 52 | 55 |
| □ Grade 1 | 36 | 26 | 24 | 31 | 36 |

## History 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| □ Grade 3 | 3 | 11 | 13 | 5 | 16 |
| □ Grade 2 | 63 | 74 | 74 | 53 | 66 |
| □ Grade 1 | 34 | 16 | 13 | 39 | 16 |

## History 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| □ Grade 3 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| □ Grade 2 | 59 | 72 | 79 | 54 | 69 |
| □ Grade 1 | 36 | 23 | 10 | 41 | 26 |

## ICT 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 33 | 38 | 52 | 43 | 57 |
| Grade 2 | 62 | 62 | 48 | 48 | 38 |
| Grade 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 5 |

## ICT 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Grade 3 | 13 | 13 | 40 | 32 | 19 |
| Grade 2 | 74 | 73 | 53 | 48 | 65 |
| Grade 1 | 13 | 13 | 7 | 16 | 13 |

## Mathematics 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Grade 3 | 6 | 26 | 20 | 21 | 17 |
| Grade 2 | 74 | 64 | 71 | 57 | 60 |
| Grade 1 | 19 | 10 | 7 | 20 | 20 |

## Mathematics 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 6 | 8 | 15 | 12 | 8 |
| Grade 2 | 57 | 77 | 69 | 48 | 65 |
| Grade 1 | 37 | 15 | 15 | 40 | 28 |

## Modern Foreign Languages 1996/99

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 10 | 19 | 36 | 27 | 24 |
| Grade 2 | 69 | 69 | 58 | 50 | 59 |
| Grade 1 | 21 | 12 | 6 | 23 | 17 |

## Modern Foreign Languages 1999/2002

| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 6 | 9 | 13 | 15 | 12 |
| Grade 2 | 76 | 84 | 79 | 54 | 67 |
| Grade 1 | 18 | 7 | 7 | 31 | 21 |

## Music 1996/99



| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| ☐ Grade 3 | 12 | 32 | 40 | 8 | 36 |
| ☐ Grade 2 | 68 | 40 | 52 | 56 | 48 |
| ☐ Grade 1 | 20 | 28 | 8 | 32 | 16 |

## Music 1999/2002



| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| ☐ Grade 3 | 3 | 20 | 23 | 30 | 23 |
| ☐ Grade 2 | 63 | 67 | 60 | 33 | 57 |
| ☐ Grade 1 | 33 | 13 | 17 | 33 | 20 |

## Physical Education 1996/99



| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ☐ Grade 3 | 63 | 40 | 77 | 30 | 57 |
| ☐ Grade 2 | 37 | 60 | 23 | 57 | 27 |
| ☐ Grade 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 17 |

## Physical Education 1999/2002



| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| ☐ Grade 3 | 28 | 16 | 63 | 25 | 25 |
| ☐ Grade 2 | 63 | 72 | 31 | 56 | 53 |
| ☐ Grade 1 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 13 | 16 |

## Religious Education 1996/99



| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ☐ Grade 3 | 15 | 27 | 34 | 22 | 29 |
| ☐ Grade 2 | 56 | 54 | 56 | 54 | 56 |
| ☐ Grade 1 | 29 | 20 | 10 | 24 | 15 |

## Religious Education 1999/2002



| | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| ☐ Grade 3 | 8 | 13 | 15 | 3 | 5 |
| ☐ Grade 2 | 53 | 60 | 60 | 53 | 53 |
| ☐ Grade 1 | 38 | 25 | 25 | 40 | 38 |

### Science 1996/99



|  | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 11 | 30 | 46 | 26 | 29 |
| Grade 2 | 79 | 66 | 50 | 59 | 59 |
| Grade 1 | 10 | 4 | 4 | 16 | 13 |

### Science 1999/2002



|  | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 3 | 11 | 11 | 25 | 13 | 14 |
| Grade 2 | 79 | 85 | 72 | 64 | 67 |
| Grade 1 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 24 | 19 |

## Classics 1996/99
*(numbers not percentages)*

|  | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Grade 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Classics 1999/2002
*(numbers not percentages)*

|  | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Grade 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Drama 1996/99
*(numbers not percentages)*

|  | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Grade 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Drama 1999/2002
*(numbers not percentages)*

|  | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Grade 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 6 |
| Grade 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Social Science 1996/99
*(numbers not percentages)*

|  | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 1 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Grade 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Grade 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Social Science 1999/2002
*(numbers not percentages)*

|  | ST1 | ST2 | ST3 | T1 | T2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Grade 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Grade 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |