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# An employment-based route into teaching 2003–06

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An overview of the inspection of the designated recommending bodies for the Graduate Teacher Programme

The Graduate Teacher Programme is a route into teaching whereby schools train teachers on the job. It has been successful in recruiting good candidates into teaching. Designated recommending bodies (DRBs) are responsible for recruiting candidates, organising training and assessing trainees. Since 2003, Ofsted has inspected all DRBs. This report provides an overview of the three years of inspection.

**Of particular interest to:**

Initial teacher training bodies; providers involved in teacher training; local authorities; prospective teachers.

**Age group**

All

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## Executive summary

The Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) is an employment-based route into teaching whereby schools train teachers on the job. Designated recommending bodies (DRBs) manage this provision, taking responsibility for recruiting candidates, identifying their training needs, organising training programmes to meet those needs and assessing the trainees against the standards laid out in *Qualifying to teach*.<sup>1</sup>

Ofsted inspected all DRBs during the three academic years 2003–06. The report on the first year of inspections was published in January 2005<sup>2</sup> and that on the second year in February 2006.<sup>3</sup> This report provides an overview of the quality of DRB provision, supplemented by evidence from 2005/06, the final year of inspection.

The GTP scheme is successful in recruiting good candidates into teaching, particularly in secondary shortage subjects. The scheme provides effective general professional training, and many providers offer successful central training programmes. Trainees gain considerably from on the job training. Their employment in a school enables them to benefit from the support of a range of experienced teachers and allows them to participate fully in all aspects of professional life. Most DRBs now take the necessary steps to ensure that trainees receive a worthwhile and complementary experience in a different school. This has improved substantially over the three years of inspection.

The trainees are determined professionals with well-developed classroom management skills. In all three years of inspection, training for the primary phase was better than that for the secondary. Primary trainees benefit especially from the flexible training that GTP schemes offer. Secondary trainees do not always fulfil their potential; they are generally less skilled than their peers on postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) courses in applying their subject knowledge to teaching and devising strategies to support and assess pupils' learning.

Providers increasingly plan for trainees to have greater access to subject experts such as advanced skills teachers or local authority consultants. This is beginning to have an impact on how trainees apply their subject knowledge to teaching, the range of strategies they use and their awareness of recent curriculum developments. Nevertheless, aspects of the provision made by some DRBs require significant improvement. While most DRBs have developed

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<sup>1</sup> *Qualifying to teach: professional standards for qualified teacher status and requirements for initial teacher training*, DfES, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> *An employment-based route into teaching: an overview of the first year of the inspection of designated recommending bodies for the Graduate Teacher Programme 2003/04* (HMI 2406), Ofsted.

<sup>3</sup> *An employment-based route into teaching: an overview of the second year of the inspection of designated recommending bodies for the Graduate Teacher Programme 2004/05* (HMI 2603), Ofsted.

suitable guidance, there are unacceptable variations in the quality of the needs analysis and individual training plans from school to school, especially for secondary trainees. Subject training is not good enough in the great majority of providers. Mentors' expectations of trainees are frequently too low and they do not do enough to develop the trainees' ability to plan for and assess subject-specific learning. Mentors often have limited time to work with trainees and this hampers the quality of the training.

The leadership and management of DRBs have improved significantly over the past three years, enabling the majority of them to establish effective partnerships. The success of DRBs is unrelated to their size or composition. Some school-led and local authority-led DRBs without previous initial teacher training (ITT) experience have done particularly well, but a significant minority of higher education institutions (HEIs) do not manage employment-based training as effectively as their other routes into teaching.

Most providers are achieving better and more consistent quality in their GTP provision. Nevertheless, monitoring visits by DRB tutors to judge the quality of school-based training are often dominated by the checking of procedures and not sufficiently focused on evaluating and improving the provision. In particular, there is insufficient moderation of judgements about trainees' subject teaching to ensure that they are consistent and accurate. Most providers expect trainees to maintain a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that they have met the Standards. However, the compilation of these portfolios is sometimes very burdensome and the content is not always fit for purpose.

The majority of GTP providers responded positively to feedback from their first visit and made tangible improvement during the year of their inspection, demonstrating good capacity to improve further. The Training and Development Agency for Schools' (TDA) development of regional and national support networks for employment-based ITT routes has played a vital role in improving management and quality assurance by GTP providers. Managers have begun to benchmark their provision against others, share good practice and establish their own improvement agenda. However, self-evaluation remains an area for further development, requiring closer involvement from the whole partnership and more use of external moderation.

## Key findings

- ❑ The GTPs recruit good candidates who are self motivated and highly committed to teaching. The overall quality of the trainees' teaching was better in 2005/06 than in the previous two years, but there is room for further improvement. In 2005/06, half of the observed lessons displayed strengths; however, in one sixth of lessons there were significant weaknesses.
- ❑ Trainees have a good understanding of their professional responsibilities and well developed classroom organisation skills, and can manage the pupils' behaviour. They are less skilled in applying their subject knowledge

to teaching, devising strategies for supporting and assessing the pupils, and evaluating the impact of their teaching on the pupils' learning.

- ❑ The management of DRBs has improved significantly over the past three years. Communications have improved and the majority of DRBs have established effective partnerships. Managers are increasingly confident and effective in managing school placements and provision. There are appropriate systems for assessing trainees against the Standards, although for a minority of DRBs these are not as rigorous as they should be.
- ❑ A large majority of DRBs have broadly suitable quality assurance systems but external moderators are not used well to evaluate provision. There are unacceptable variations in the quality of GTPs from school to school. DRBs too often focus on checking procedures and not on evaluating and improving the quality of the training provided.
- ❑ During the year in which they were inspected, most DRBs made tangible improvements, demonstrating their capacity to improve further. The development of regional and national networks has helped providers to benchmark the quality of their provision and given them support to improve it. However, DRBs rely too heavily on scrutiny by inspectors and the TDA to identify their strengths and weaknesses and have paid insufficient attention to developing the effectiveness of their own self-evaluation.
- ❑ A third of local authority-led DRBs without previous ITT experience have done particularly well. However, a significant minority of HEIs have not managed their employment-based training as effectively as they manage their other provision for ITT.
- ❑ Selection procedures have improved substantially over the last three years. However, the individual training needs of the majority of GTP trainees are not identified rigorously, and the subject knowledge of those training for the secondary phase is not audited thoroughly enough.
- ❑ While the general training provided is good, the lack of systematic and structured subject training is a major weakness in the secondary GTPs. Providers recognise this and have increased the role of subject experts. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of the training. However, school-based trainers frequently have insufficient time to fulfil the demanding subject training responsibilities they are expected to shoulder. Trainees often take steps to remedy the gaps in their training and this contributes positively to the standards they achieve.
- ❑ Mentors are conscientious and supportive but do not always have high enough expectations of GTP trainees. Many trainers are not tracking the trainees' progress well enough or using portfolio evidence effectively. In a small minority of schools, the assessment of trainees is insufficiently robust, and the moderation of the subject judgements is too weak to ensure that assessments are consistent and accurate.

## Recommendations

Employment-based partnerships should:

- improve secondary trainees' subject teaching by:
  - raising mentors' expectations of the quality the trainees will achieve
  - assessing trainees' needs thoroughly to establish detailed individual training plans
  - providing every secondary trainee with structured training to improve their subject knowledge and its application
  - ensuring that mentors understand what they should be contributing to subject training, and have the time necessary to meet their responsibilities
- pay more attention to developing trainees' skills in planning, assessment and evaluation
- track trainees' progress carefully and review the use of portfolios to make sure they are fit for purpose
- moderate judgements effectively to ensure that schools make reliable and accurate assessments
- sharpen their monitoring of schools' capacity, at the department and classroom level, to support trainees and to provide training of consistently good quality
- involve the whole partnership in self-evaluation and improvement planning.

The TDA and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) should:

- seek ways to ensure that school-based trainers can meet fully their subject training responsibilities.

The TDA should:

- intervene to secure improvements in those providers where the management and quality assurance of employment-based training does not match the quality of their other provision for ITT
- improve the effectiveness of internal and external moderation of employment-based programmes.

## Evaluation

### Recruitment and selection

1. An important success of the GTP is its contribution to the recruitment of good candidates into teaching, particularly in secondary shortage subjects. DRBs' selection procedures are generally administered well and applied consistently to recruit high quality trainees. The rigour of selection has improved significantly since the first year of inspection. The use of selection days in schools and two-stage interviews has extended the opportunities for school-based staff to be actively involved in the recruitment of trainees. Following the recommendation from previous reports, providers have set out clearly for candidates and schools the training expectations and employment arrangements for the programme. Providers are also becoming more effective in identifying applicants with weak subject knowledge, and in requiring such applicants to take 'booster' courses before starting training.
2. Occasionally the trainees selected are not well suited to the GTP route. Their subject knowledge had not been explored in sufficient depth by a subject specialist at interview.
3. Over the last three years, DRBs have taken a more active role in ascertaining the appropriateness of placements and matching trainees to schools and departments. Nevertheless, in seven of the 17 DRBs inspected in 2005/06 there were instances where the DRB had not matched a trainee carefully enough to a suitable placement for training. For these providers, checks were not undertaken thoroughly enough to ensure, for example, that trainees could be provided with effective subject support. Matching trainees to schools was more effective where the DRB made good use of detailed information from a local authority or from other ITT placements or where the DRB partnership was a close-knit group of schools well known to each other.
4. A minority of DRBs have particularly effective systems to encourage local recruitment from under-represented groups. For example, one is working closely and successfully with a local authority that is keen to extend the diversity of its teaching force and to promote recruitment from minority ethnic groups.
5. A high proportion of primary trainees and those in certain secondary subjects, such as information and communication technology (ICT), have been employed previously in a support role, sometimes in the same schools. Such trainees sometimes find it difficult to make the transition from giving individual support to pupils to managing a whole class. Astute DRB managers recognise this and provide the necessary support to enable trainees to change their roles.

## Training and assessment

### Identification of training needs

6. This is an aspect of provision requiring significant improvement. By 2005/06, the DRBs had set out largely clear procedures to analyse trainees' initial needs from the interview onwards. However, in 14 of the 17 providers inspected this was not carried out rigorously enough. The insufficient detail in the recording of prior experiences and the specific training needs of each trainee did not provide a secure starting point for training. The recommendation by the TDA that needs assessment should take place over an extended period in the early weeks of the programme has not been widely adopted by DRBs. Nevertheless, there are examples of effective needs assessment.

#### **Case study: good needs analysis for primary trainees**

Trainees met for a day in the summer term for self-review. They talked over their previous experience and qualifications and recorded evidence against the Standards. Trainees discussed their specific training needs individually with the DRB manager. Several weeks at the start of their programme were spent undertaking audits in the core and foundation subjects and discussing training needs based on their mentor's early observations of their work in classrooms. This provided a strong start to identifying needs and planning for them.

7. The auditing of secondary trainees' subject knowledge continues to be a major weakness. Self-evaluation by trainees remains the main means of auditing but they often misjudge the quality of their own subject knowledge, especially those with significant gaps in their subject background. Where auditing involves careful analysis by experienced and well informed subject or phase specialist trainers, strengths and needs are identified carefully. However, where mentors and trainees rely on auditing against the topics taught in their schools, they invariably fail to consider the breadth and depth of knowledge required by the Standards. During the visits in 2005/06, inspectors identified a number of shortcomings. These included ICT subject audits which focused only on trainees' software skills and an English trainee without formal training in English language who did not have this identified as a training need.

### Training plans

8. There have been improvements in the quality of individual training plans over the three years of the inspection. In 2005/06, most DRBs provided schools with guidance to help them plan training progressively and to support them in providing the range of experiences needed for meeting the Standards. Trainers are also becoming more effective in planning specific objectives for the second placement. In the best practice, training plans are reviewed and updated regularly, with clear targets against which school-based trainers monitor progress. The most effective plans allow

trainees to build up their experience of working with pupils of different abilities across the designated key stages, and include training opportunities beyond the main placement school.

### **Case study: effective individual training plans in a primary DRB**

The programme manager compiled an individual training plan for each trainee, which covered all centrally based training and specified the school's contribution. It included the second placement, and occasionally a placement at a third school to ensure the full range of experience. The draft plans were discussed with the trainee and the mentor, and appropriate changes were negotiated; for example, a trainee had amendments made to reflect her strong ICT knowledge and skills. The individual plans remained flexible and were adapted throughout the year. They were monitored regularly.

9. Despite the best efforts of most DRBs, schools often vary considerably in the way they implement guidance. This leads to training plans of inconsistent quality. Where trainees do not have a well designed, individualised training plan, the quality of training is often fragmented, repetitive or lacks coherence between central and school-based provision. As a result of poor planning, a few trainees lack substantial teaching experience in one of the key stages for which they are being trained. Occasionally, good plans drawn up by the DRB tutor are not well understood or implemented fully by the school, with serious consequences for the progress made by the trainee. Weaker plans set out activities without making it clear what trainees need to achieve.
10. During the most recent inspections, one mentor had carefully created a staged programme for a modern foreign languages trainee. The trainee was helped to consider how to present vocabulary before learning about how to teach reading and writing skills. However, this was not common. The lack of systematic planning to develop the breadth and depth of subject knowledge and application was a key shortcoming in 12 of the 16 secondary providers inspected in 2005/06. Often, where there was no discernible subject programme, aspects were covered almost by chance. Trainees' progress in developing good subject teaching was restricted as a result.

### **Training**

11. In most DRBs, different primary schools and secondary subject departments are involved with GTP training each year. This fluidity contributes to the wide variations in the quality of training in schools. In all three years of inspection, training for primary teaching was found to be better than that for teaching in the secondary phase. In four out of 10 of the schools visited in 2005/06 training was good or better, but it was unsatisfactory in one out of seven schools.

12. The three years of inspection have identified many positive features of the general professional training provided by GTP schemes. An important strength of on the job training is that trainees gain a breadth of experience from being immersed in school life. Additional training opportunities often enrich the training, for example, involvement in whole-school professional development or sessions with external agencies. The best school trainers help trainees develop a wide perspective on teaching by, for instance, discussing how to use research findings or good practice reports, and arranging for them to work with managers as well as technical and support staff. They also ensure that observations of classroom experiences are carefully focused and discussed. For example, one school visited in 2005/06 timetabled a trainee to observe several lessons taught by very good practitioners so she could see and discuss the effective behaviour management strategies they used. She was also recommended to use self-study materials on assertive discipline.

**Case study: effective professional training**

The GTP training was imaginative and well delivered. It had a positive impact on trainees' practice. Trainers modelled varied approaches to teaching. They paid particular attention to planning, use of assessment, and strategies to promote thinking and self-evaluation. A common lesson planning form was used across the DRB. This guided trainees to plan for both immediate and medium-term objectives, and to think through how differentiation and assessment could be incorporated. Training encouraged collaboration and reflection: for instance, small groups of trainees visited each other's schools to plan, deliver, observe and review teaching strategies.

13. Centrally taught programmes provided by DRBs are often led by expert practitioners and pay attention to current issues facing schools.

**Case study: good secondary central training**

In one consortium providing training for secondary teachers there was a comprehensive, centrally run professional studies programme which covered a number of contemporary educational issues. Training was responsive to trainees' ideas and suggestions, for example introducing one-day conferences. Sessions drew effectively upon expertise within the partnership as well as outside speakers. For example, the principal of a further education college explained alternative accreditation for post-16 students; and an advanced skills teacher (AST) discussed gifted and talented provision. Trainees were encouraged to reflect on these training sessions during discussions in school and to consider the implications for their own practice. This was a strength of the provision.

14. In primary training, the GTP commonly allows flexibility in provision that is more difficult for providers with larger numbers to achieve. For example,

one DRB inspected in 2005/06 exempted trainees who had previously been nursery nurses or special needs teaching assistants from specific training sessions and provided them instead with a programme more tailored to their needs. Primary schools generally use local contacts well to provide complementary training, for example, experience in neighbouring early years' settings. Occasionally however, trainees spend inadequate time gaining experience in one of the key stages for which they are training or do not work with older pupils in Key Stage 2. When primary trainees are taught alongside secondary trainees in central sessions, they often feel that secondary matters dominate the programme.

15. It is common for secondary schools to arrange productive visits to other institutions to fill gaps in provision, such as a lack of post-16 experience, or to provide the opportunity to work with young people from different cultures and those who are at an early stage of learning English. However, visits to primary schools by secondary trainees often lack focus and provide trainees with insufficient understanding of the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.
16. The quality of experience in second placements was significantly better in 2005/06 than in the previous two years. A higher proportion of DRBs arranged for a substantial experience lasting four to six weeks and clearer targets were set for trainees to achieve. Training was generally well matched to the trainees' needs. For example, a trainee in a boys' grammar school spent time in a mixed comprehensive school and gained experience of teaching pupils with special educational needs and for whom English was an additional language. However, there is generally room to develop further the liaison between first and second school trainers.

#### **Case study: a well planned second experience**

The DRB selected the second placement carefully to dovetail with the main school experience. For example, a trainee had valuable opportunities to work with high achieving pupils in her second school. The subject mentor met with the second school mentor and planned the placement. The plan set out detailed targets and specific activities, including observations and support activities. The school received full documentation about the trainee in advance. At the end of the placement, the second mentor provided a detailed written review of the trainees' attainments in relation to the specific targets that had been set.

17. Providers have begun to adopt the recommendations in the 2005 report<sup>4</sup> and strengthen their subject training. However, in 2005/06, schools'

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<sup>4</sup> *An employment-based route into teaching: an overview of the second year of the inspection of designated recommending bodies for the Graduate Teacher Programme 2004/05* (HMI 2603), Ofsted.

responsibility for subject training was still not established securely enough in the large majority of DRBs.

18. There are some resourceful and effective approaches to subject training, such as imaginative tasks and workshop sessions led by advanced skills teachers. Where DRBs have expert subject tutors or subject leaders, their contribution is often exceptionally good. Local authority consultants are often involved constructively, for example, in providing training about Key Stage 3 subject assessment. More schools visited in 2005/06 encouraged trainees to attend local cluster groups or to follow courses. For example, a design and technology trainee attended certificated health and safety training. These positive features contrast significantly with previous years and were beginning to have a positive impact on trainees' subject teaching. Nevertheless, the use made by the school of external support is still too haphazard or poorly coordinated to be as effective as it should be.

#### **Case study: good drama training**

The trainee was placed in a strong drama department with very successful GCSE results and with a thriving extra-curricular programme of plays and other drama events. The drama training included three days from a specialist tutor at the beginning of the programme and a further day each term, visits to a highly successful drama department in London and regular meetings with the in-school drama expert. All training was targeted at, and responded flexibly to, the trainees' subject and pedagogic needs and these were clearly identified in detailed progress reviews. The quality of the mentor's written subject judgements was high. She had a firm grasp of the Standards and the drama tutor moderated her judgements.

19. Secondary subject mentors invariably take their training responsibilities seriously and are conscientious and enthusiastic. However, training in subject methodology is the weakest aspect of their provision. Mentors frequently underestimate the amount of training that trainees need and omit important aspects; for example, training in how children learn a subject or how to plan for and assess pupils' subject understanding. In schools visited in 2005/06, for example, GTP training for science trainees did not address current concerns about physics teaching in schools. Too often mentors focus narrowly on preparing trainees to teach the school's schemes of work and do not provide a broader or more systematic programme of subject application or suggest reading that the trainees might do to extend their understanding.
20. Training to strengthen subject knowledge is better in the primary phase. Subject managers provide effective training and modelling of good subject-focused teaching. Many DRBs also provide good induction to foundation subjects through centrally provided sessions or focused observation.

**Case study: well planned primary subject training**

The mentor planned a structured programme and coordinated the training well. At first, she focused on planning for literacy and numeracy and setting clear learning intentions. To support science, the trainee talked to the science coordinator, who gave him relevant books and topics to research. This was followed by a science unit in the central training. The mentor arranged for the trainee to observe experienced teachers and subject coordinators across the full primary curriculum and age range. He visited other schools to observe an expert literacy teacher and work with a design and technology coordinator and music specialist. In the summer term, the trainee was given responsibility for planning a religious education unit and managing displays in history and music.

21. Meetings between trainers and trainees are, for the most part, regular and well documented with the agenda largely set by the Standards. However, it is rare to find that trainees' lesson planning and their evaluations of learning are reviewed critically and developed purposefully during these meetings. Without direct training to redress shortcomings, trainees do not become sufficiently proficient, for example at structuring the pupils' learning.

**Case study: good ICT training**

The trainee was placed in a school that teaches both GCSE and GNVQ ICT in Key Stage 4. The head of department was previously the local authority strategy consultant and had a good understanding of the importance of developing subject pedagogy. During his training the trainee had had access to the ICT Key Stage 3 consultant and attended some relevant PGCE sessions at a local higher education institution. The subject mentor described his role as, 'The trainee learns how to do it and I teach him how to teach it'. His feedback and discussion in meetings with the trainee concentrated on teaching the subject. As a result, the trainee's planning was good and his exemplary self-evaluations focused sharply on how the lesson structure, content and delivery achieved the learning outcomes.

22. Commonly, mentors give regular feedback and their observation notes and meeting records are referenced tightly to the Standards. Occasionally written feedback attempts to link everything to one or more Standards and fails to pinpoint exactly what a trainee needs to do to improve. In a minority of schools, feedback and targets are not effective training tools because they do not focus on the key issues that trainees should address and the steps they should take. Weaker targets tend to list tasks rather than specify objectives for trainees to achieve. In particular, the targets set by both school trainers and DRB tutors for developing trainees' subject knowledge and pedagogy frequently lack focus. In 2005/06, detailed

subject comments in mentors' observations of lessons were rare and they did not always challenge higher achieving trainees.

## Assessment

23. This is also an area where improvement is needed. While most DRBs have developed appropriate assessment systems, they are not implemented consistently and reliably across all schools. In four out of 10 schools visited as part of the 2005/06 inspection, the assessment of trainees was good. However, it was unsatisfactory in one out of seven schools. Inspectors identified significant weaknesses in the rigour and accuracy of the assessment of trainees against the Standards in five of the DRBs inspected. This is a similar pattern to previous years.
24. Most GTP trainees are assessed through regular progress reviews and lesson observations by a range of trainers, most of whom have a good grasp of the Standards. However, where mentors are unclear about assessment arrangements or their expectations are too low, their judgements are not sufficiently robust and they do not track progress well enough. This is particularly so in the assessment of trainees' subject understanding, planning and self-evaluation.
25. Where assessment systems are secure, school trainers and the DRB share a common understanding of the progress made by each trainee towards the Standards. In the best practice, mentors, GTP coordinators and DRB trainers regularly meet together with the trainee every term to discuss and review progress.

### **Case study: good assessment practice in an HEI-led DRB**

GTP coordinators, mentors and personal tutors had a good understanding of the assessment processes. Managers checked that all formal observations were related to the Standards, and trainers carefully scrutinised trainees' files. Specialist tutors completed periodic reviews of trainees' progress. Trainees had very well organised portfolios, which provided clear evidence of their achievements. Where trainees were not making satisfactory progress, the DRB stepped in quickly to remedy the situation. Managers were not afraid to make tough decisions about trainees' progress and, on occasion, to counsel trainees to leave the programme or to fail them.

26. DRB providers have taken steps to improve their assessment practice. Increasingly, they make available useful guidance that illustrates the characteristics of different levels of achievement. This helps to improve consistency of assessment across partnerships. Paired lesson observations are more widely used than three years ago, and are helping to sharpen assessment practice. Reports on trainees from second placements are more common. Some DRBs include the use of video-recording of teaching to help standardise judgements.

27. A central plank of the assessment of standards in the GTP is the evidence portfolio that trainees compile. This was established for external assessors to use when making final judgements for qualified teacher status (QTS). In 2005/06, inspectors found that the gathering, photocopying and filing of evidence in a summative document was creating an unnecessary burden for a majority of trainees. Moreover, the undue emphasis given to the final portfolio meant that the key functions of assessing progress over time and identifying gaps were often overlooked. In a minority of DRBs, there is confusion amongst trainees and mentors about the purpose and scope of evidence gathering. Sometimes trainers are unclear about their role and consequently are not checking trainees' portfolios. Trainees often present very full files, which contain surprisingly little reliable evidence to demonstrate their achievements, particularly their subject understanding. When providers become accredited bodies for ITT, it will be necessary for them to review their use of portfolios.
28. Arrangements for moderation have improved through the inspection cycle, although there were still shortcomings reported in 11 out of the 17 providers inspected in 2005/06. In particular, the assessment of secondary trainees did not involve specialists in the moderation of schools' subject judgements, and external moderation arrangements were insufficiently rigorous. Without effective internal and external moderation, reliable and consistent assessments cannot be assured. Most DRBs use impartial specialists for the final assessment, but this is too late to take remedial action to help the trainee if a school's judgements are inaccurate.

### **Trainees' progress in achieving the standards**

29. The overall pattern of strengths and weaknesses in the standards achieved by GTP trainees inspected in 2005/06 was similar to that reported for the previous two years. In comparison with PGCE trainees, GTP trainees demonstrate more strengths in their understanding of professional responsibilities, their classroom organisation skills and their management of pupils' behaviour. They are generally less skilled than their PGCE peers in applying their subject knowledge to teaching and devising strategies to support pupils' learning.
30. During the 2005/06 inspection, half of the lessons taught by GTP trainees that were seen were at least good, with better teaching by primary than by secondary trainees. The overall picture is better than in previous years. One in six lessons was judged very good, compared to one in 10 the previous year. The proportion of lessons with unsatisfactory features had fallen to one in six lessons from one in five lessons in the previous two years.

### **Professional values and practice**

31. GTP trainees have a particularly high level of professionalism and self-motivation. They have a strong commitment to teaching and a good

understanding of their responsibilities. They provide positive role models for pupils. Through their determination to succeed, trainees often take the initiative to seek out experiences and to compensate for weaknesses in GTP provision. This contributes noticeably to the standards they achieve by the end of the training.

32. However, trainees' evaluation of their own teaching is less effective. They are suitably self-critical, but their ability to analyse their teaching and the impact on pupils' learning is less secure. In the 2005/06 inspection, four trainees in 10 were not able to reflect on how to put right the weaknesses they identified; this indicated shortcomings in their training.

### **Knowledge and understanding**

33. Trainees' broad professional knowledge is good, including in relation to special needs and behaviour management. However, sometimes the school's circumstances and priorities mean that trainees lack the understanding needed to teach culturally diverse classes or pupils for whom English is an additional language.
34. Primary trainees are well versed in the early learning goals and the National Strategies. Nevertheless, those training to teach Key Stages 1 and 2 sometimes have gaps in their understanding of teaching the full primary age range. Shortcomings in subject knowledge for trainees visited in 2005/06 related mainly to mathematics and science in the core subjects, and to music and physical education in the foundation subjects.
35. Secondary trainees are usually recruited with good subject knowledge, underpinned by an appropriate degree qualification. In practical subjects such as music, trainees occasionally underestimate the importance of being a confident practitioner and thereby providing a role model for pupils. Where there are subject shortages, such as in mathematics and science, trainees' subject knowledge is often weaker. In the lessons observed in 2005/06, there were instances where trainees made basic errors in mathematics or science.
36. Half the secondary trainees visited as part of the 2005/06 inspection displayed shortcomings in applying their subject knowledge to teaching. This reflected their training, which placed insufficient emphasis on how children learn their subject and how to remedy misconceptions and mistakes. As in previous years, a minority of trainees did not have a clear enough understanding of key aspects of current national developments in the subject they were training to teach. For example, some modern languages trainees lacked an understanding of the secondary strategy for languages and had only considered teaching grammar in the way it was taught in their school. In some cases, ICT trainees lacked good understanding of the requirements of both vocational and academic courses at Key Stage 4.

## Teaching

37. The strengths and weaknesses of GTP trainees' teaching have remained similar in all three years of the inspection. Generally, trainees have good general teaching skills. They communicate well with pupils, organise classes effectively and are confident in their use of new technologies, such as interactive whiteboards. Trainees increasingly use teaching methods promoted by the National Strategies to engage and motivate pupils. Nevertheless, their repertoire of teaching strategies is narrow and often remains an area for development. For example, practical or collaborative group work is not sufficiently evident in mathematics teaching.
38. Trainees' lesson plans generally include clear learning objectives and activities, which are selected to reflect pupils' interests. However, the majority of trainees are insufficiently adept at planning for assessment and differentiation. Trainees demonstrate a strong commitment to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and from a range of backgrounds. However, secondary trainees' weaknesses in application of their subject knowledge mean they are not always skilled in devising strategies to challenge all pupils. They tend not to have a secure grasp of how to sequence the development of pupils' knowledge and skills in the subject and often have low expectations of high-ability pupils.
39. Trainees understand summative assessment and are able to assess pupils' work against National Curriculum or GCSE levels. They also understand the need to incorporate formative assessment within their teaching, but only a minority are able to do this well. It is rare to find trainees using pupils' wrong answers as positive teaching points in helping to develop pupils' understanding.

## Management of the ITT partnership

40. The management of DRBs is the area where most improvements have been seen over the past three years. Most rapid progress has been made in establishing robust procedures and secure partnerships. In 2003/04 there tended to be no contractual agreements between the DRB and schools. In addition, leadership was insecure and there was a lack of active involvement by school trainers. These weaknesses were no longer evident in almost all the DRBs inspected in 2005/06.
41. In 2005/06 inspectors reported favourably on the drive and commitment of DRB managers; the effective and responsive management systems; the trainers' understanding of roles and responsibilities at all levels; and the effective working relationships established across the partnerships. This is a significant improvement on earlier years. Most DRBs have a strategic planning group with representatives from partner schools to initiate developments so that headteachers and senior managers in schools feel a true sense of ownership of the scheme. In a very few instances, partnerships that were only in their second year of operation in 2005/06

were led strongly by the lead school or HEI but without sufficient consultation with other partners.

42. The wide variety of size and type of DRBs results in significant differences in their arrangements for management and staff deployment. Over three years the inspections have found that many different approaches can be successful. A third of local authority-led DRBs with limited previous experience as ITT providers have done particularly well. Most school-centred ITT providers have adapted their schemes successfully to accommodate employment-based routes alongside their other ITT training. Half of HEIs managed GTP training well. However, a significant minority of HEIs did not manage the GTP as effectively as other ITT routes, and in one in five the management was poor. At times, HEIs paid insufficient attention to the distinctive nature of employment-based training.

#### **Case study: good HEI management of employment-based training**

In this large university ITT provider, the DRB management procedures built on experience from other routes. The primary and secondary PGCE coordinators were part of the GTP core management group. A partnership steering group included teacher and trainee representatives and focus groups were brought together with specific remits to enable wider school participation. A core group of secondary schools from within the ITT partnership had increased funding for greater responsibilities within the GTP scheme. GTP mentors were trained alongside PGCE mentors, with additional GTP-specific briefings. Each secondary trainee had a specialist subject tutor from the PGCE who held tutorials to support their subject development. To ensure that the standards of GTP trainees were comparable with others, there was internal and external moderation across all routes.

43. In 2005/06, only one provider did not meet the management requirements in *Qualifying to teach*. All DRBs that were reinspected made significant improvements in their management.
44. Providers increasingly make effective use of email and Intranet communications for administration and to share training practice and resources. One DRB visited in 2005/06 had invested in a virtual learning environment. DRB managers and school representatives regularly meet with other providers through the regional and national networks set up by the TDA. Such meetings have had a crucial influence on managers' understanding of how to achieve effective GTP practice.

#### **Schools' capacity to train**

45. DRB managers show significantly greater understanding than previously of the importance of using high quality school placements. In 2005/06 DRB

managers were acutely aware that successful training depended on ensuring that schools have the capacity to train well. They were confident in their management of schools' provision and most had formal and informal procedures to assess schools' capacity. Moreover, DRB management committees have established policies for de-selection of schools and act firmly in situations where trainees are used to cover teacher vacancies to the detriment of their training. The management of appropriate second placements has improved significantly since the first year of inspection.

46. However, despite managers' good intentions, there were still a few cases in 2005/06 where lapses occurred and trainees were placed in contexts which were not entirely appropriate. For example, a few trainees found themselves in secondary departments where curriculum and assessment practice was poor or their mentor was not an experienced specialist. In primary schools, replacement mentors were occasionally not monitored carefully enough. Such problems usually happened because managers had checked out the school, but had not explored the placement thoroughly enough at the department or class level. Most DRB managers accepted overall responsibility when concerns were identified and intervened quickly to identify suitable additional or alternative training.
47. A key limitation in schools' capacity to train is the limited time available for mentors to work with the trainees. For example, in most secondary placements a subject teacher has an hour set aside for mentoring. This is similar to the allocation for a PGCE trainee, but a GTP trainer shoulders more training responsibility, especially where there is no central provision by the DRB. Mentors and trainees are often resourceful in using a wide range of opportunities for training, but the limited protected time for intensive instruction and discussion makes it difficult for mentors to fulfil all that is expected of them. Similarly, where a secondary GTP coordinator has insufficient time to carry out their responsibilities this adversely affects the quality of the training.
48. In primary schools, it is more common for the whole staff to share the training responsibilities, with contributions from senior managers, class teachers and subject leaders, as well as the mentor. This provides greater breadth to the training than is often found in secondary schools.

**Case study: using subject capacity effectively in a school-led DRB**

This school saw subject training as a shared responsibility within departments. The head of department met the trainees weekly for a subject training session, following an agreed programme to meet their needs. The subject mentor also met trainees separately each week to review progress and help them with planning and assessment for their classes. The head of department and the subject mentor observed the trainees teach. Close cooperation

between both trainers ensured that the training was coherent. Additional breadth was introduced through visits to other schools and attendance at professional conferences and courses. Local DRBs collaborated for subject training and joint sessions were held where the specific expertise of trainers in the area was shared.

### Preparation of school-based trainers

49. In line with the recommendations made in 2004 and 2005, DRBs have improved their preparation of school-based trainers. Meetings usually combine briefing and training. Subject mentors find it useful to meet and share practice with colleagues in the same role, particularly the opportunity to discuss ways of providing subject training. Increasingly, DRBs differentiate training, depending on mentors' prior experience. GTP coordinators take greater responsibility for the induction of new mentors. In 2005/06 DRB managers were seen to take a firmer line to ensure that appropriate mentors attended training sessions and that they monitored and followed up non-attendance.

### Quality assurance

50. In response to recommendations in previous reports, providers' expectations have risen and most DRBs have clear systems overseen by a quality assurance committee. The overwhelming majority of DRBs inspected in 2005/06 recognised the challenges they faced in establishing training of high quality across the partnership and showed a keen desire to improve. Visits by tutors and managers to schools to establish a consistent approach in training and assessment have had a positive effect on raising quality. Nevertheless, unacceptable variability remains in the quality of provision between schools in most partnerships. Yet the success of each trainee depends on good quality training from the school in which they are employed. Five of the 17 providers inspected in 2005/06 needed to implement quality assurance more rigorously to meet fully the ITT Requirements in *Qualifying to teach*.

#### **Case study: quality assurance in a consortium-led DRB**

The DRB had explicit systems for quality assurance which were transparent and understood by all. Schools responded positively to the DRB's monitoring processes. The DRB manager had overarching responsibility but schools understood their responsibility for self-review. GTP coordinators, who are experienced trainers in a senior management position, played a crucial role in ensuring the quality of school-based training and assessment. The coordinators met as a cross-school group with the DRB manager to discuss quality issues. Rigorous checks were made by a part-time consultant who visited all schools and provided written feedback. Subject specialist tutors also visited each term. These visits often had a bracing effect on the trainer and trainee, reducing complacency and increasing challenge. The manager maintained a good overview of quality by monitoring

training plans, records of meetings, progress reports and evaluations, and met with trainees and trainers each half-term.

51. Monitoring visits to schools are less effective if they focus on whether procedures are being followed, rather than on evaluating quality and seeking to improve it. Tutors who concentrate on completing a compliance checklist often miss weaknesses in important aspects of training. Monitoring makes the greatest impact where written recommendations on how training needs to be adjusted are shared with the school. Increasingly, DRBs have recognised the importance of the role of the GTP coordinators in monitoring and improving provision in their own schools. Where these coordinators are part of a DRB group responsible for the overall quality assurance of the programme, they have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and carry out their monitoring role more effectively.

### **Improvement planning**

52. The DRBs inspected in 2005/06 were making better progress in self-evaluation and improvement planning than in previous years and a large majority demonstrated good capacity to improve further. Most were undertaking a programme review at the end of their second year. This usually followed discussions with their TDA consultant, was informed by assessors' reports, trainees' and trainers' questionnaires and included statistical data to identify patterns of recruitment, completions and ethnic monitoring.
53. DRB managers listen to and act on evaluations. Trainees feel confident to raise concerns about training. Managers most often seek views from GTP coordinators during discussions, although mentors invariably have fewer opportunities to make formal evaluations. DRBs increasingly make effective use of other external perspectives, such as from assessors and consultants, although external moderators are frequently underused in an evaluative capacity. In 2005/06 new ITT providers were slow to put in place external arrangements for verifying standards and quality, but one DRB had made very effective use of 'critical friends' to provide specific targeted evaluations. Few DRBs, however, have established ways to involve schools closely in formal partnership self-evaluations.
54. Most DRBs make good use of qualitative evidence from Ofsted and advice from the TDA. They use regional and national provider meetings facilitated by the TDA to examine effective provision in other DRBs to inform their improvement planning. They have drawn up action plans to respond to the areas for development identified at the first inspection visits. Most providers have begun to benchmark their performance against similar DRBs.

### Case study: effective benchmarking

In a small DRB, data for the first cohort of trainees had been collected and a start made to benchmark against the providers' school-centred ITT course. Questionnaires were sent to trainees and newly qualified teachers, and pen portraits and assignment marks were collected and compared with recruitment information. This is a rigorous approach to assess the 'added value' that has resulted from the training.

55. In almost all of the DRBs inspected in 2005/06 there were tangible improvements during the year. Improvement planning was having a positive effect, although many DRBs still needed to prioritise the key issues for development and incorporate clear success criteria to demonstrate progress. DRB managers usually recognised where developments were needed, particularly in secondary subject training. However, not all trainers understand well enough the significance of improving subject training to raise the quality of provision. DRB managers have yet to establish effective ways to tackle this comprehensively and to ensure that all trainees receive their entitlement to good subject training.

## Notes

56. DRBs were first established in 2002. Partnerships range in size from 15 to more than 200 trainees, and are led by different bodies, such as a local authority, a higher education institution or a consortium of schools.
57. The three-year inspection programme of DRBs started in September 2003. Over the three years, 107 DRBs have been inspected; 46 providers were inspected in 2003/04, 47 in 2004/05 and 14 in 2005/06. The designation of recommending bodies is an interim stage on the way to their full accreditation as providers of ITT. One of the purposes of the inspection programme was to provide information on each DRB to assist the TDA with its decisions about accreditation. Thirty-four of the 107 DRBs met the ITT requirements in *Qualifying to teach* and were recommended for accreditation. A further 56 were recommended subject to specific conditions being met. Grounds for refusing accreditation were identified in 17 providers that did not meet one or more of the requirements. Seven providers requested reinspection and five were subsequently recommended for accreditation.
58. Each DRB received two inspection visits during the year. Lead inspectors visited for up to a week during the autumn or spring terms. They scrutinised documentation, met key staff to discuss the systems in place to manage and quality assure the training, and visited two or three schools to meet trainees and school-based trainers. In the early part of the summer term, phase and subject specialist inspectors visited a sample of trainees in schools to observe them teaching and judge how well the trainees were meeting the standards; the inspectors also evaluated the

training, assessment, management and quality assurance arrangements in the schools.

59. Over the three year period of inspection more than 680 schools have been visited and over 480 lessons have been observed to judge how well trainees were meeting the Standards in the final stages of their training.
60. Seven providers requested reinspection, three for 2005/06. Reinspections were completed within a week, focused on the areas that were judged inadequate, and included inspectors visiting trainees in schools to observe teaching.
61. The 2004/05 report recommended that DRB partnerships should:
  - expect higher quality teaching from GTP trainees
  - undertake rigorous assessment of trainees' subject teaching to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to provide specific targets for them to improve
  - improve the quality of subject-specific training
  - provide more opportunities for trainees to work with expert teachers and extend their experience beyond the models of teaching and learning followed in their base schools and subject departments
  - monitor and evaluate training wherever it takes place to ensure that it is of high quality
  - give more attention to evaluating the quality of provision themselves, rather than relying on external scrutiny.
62. They should also continue to follow the recommendations in the 2003/04 report, that:
  - all trainees receive appropriate training across the full range of the standards so that they fulfil their potential and become good teachers
  - trainees' individual needs are assessed thoroughly at the outset to provide a basis for subsequent training
  - training and assessment is carefully planned, in both the base and second school, and matched to the trainee's need to demonstrate the standards
  - secondary trainees have an appropriate programme to develop their subject knowledge and their understanding of subject pedagogy
  - school-based trainers are thoroughly prepared for their roles and responsibilities in the GTP
  - the capacity of each school to train GTP trainees is checked carefully at the start of the training, and the quality of provision is monitored and evaluated effectively
  - trainees in receipt of salary grants are given adequate time for training and are not filling a teaching vacancy
  - their self-evaluation and development planning are more rigorous and action is taken to secure improvements in quality.