

The initial training of further education teachers

This report presents an overview of the 2004–2008 inspection cycle of initial teacher training for further education, including national awarding body qualifications. Taking the 2003 survey *The initial training of further education teachers* as a starting point, the report sets out the changes and developments over the four-year cycle of inspection, including the recent major structural reforms which were significantly influenced by inspection findings. The report evaluates the extent to which providers visited in 2007/08 have modified their programmes and evaluated their provision so that trainees are equipped with the skills and competencies needed for high-quality teaching.

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Reference: 080243

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Executive summary

This report sets out the findings from the inspection of the initial teacher training for further education teachers on courses leading to national awarding body qualifications and those validated by higher education institutions. It offers an overview of the 2004–2008 inspection cycle, taking the 2003 Ofsted survey as a starting point.¹ The report sets out the changes and developments over the four-year cycle of inspection. It evaluates the extent to which providers visited in 2007/08 have programmes that equip the trainees with the skills and competencies needed for high quality teaching.

The evidence is derived from inspections carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors and Additional Inspectors during the academic years 2004–2008. Over the inspection cycle inspectors evaluated 54 university partnerships and a sample of their partner colleges. In 2007/08, the provision in 17 higher education institutions and 22 further education colleges was inspected, including national awarding body courses.²

Trainees are often employed as full-time or part-time further education teachers when they undertake their training; many already have substantial experience of teaching or working in learning support roles. Courses include a mix of taught and practice elements. The taught element usually involves attending a part-time programme for half a day each week, although some trainees undertake full-time pre-service training courses prior to taking up employment in the sector. The practice or workplace element takes place wherever they are employed or placed as teachers. For most trainees, this workplace element involves teaching in a college. Others may work in a community or adult education setting, hospital, prison or with private providers of work-based learning.

The 2003 survey report that led to the implementation of the 2004–2008 inspection cycle judged the system of further education teacher training to be unsatisfactory. Inspectors were critical of the national standards for teaching and supporting learning in further education, drawn up by the Further Education National Training Organisation. They considered that the standards did not lend themselves to judging what a new career teacher should be achieving in their period of initial teacher training.³ Inspectors were also critical of the limited opportunities for trainees to learn how to teach their specialist subjects and of weak mentoring and support in the workplace. The report commented on training programmes that were insufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of this diverse group of trainees and the constraints this placed on the progress that trainees made.

¹ *The initial training of further education teachers* (HMI 1762), Ofsted, 2003; www.ofsted.gov.uk.

² The findings from the inspections of higher education institution-validated courses are also published in separate institutional reports.

³ *Standards for teaching and supporting learning in further education in England and Wales*, Further Education National Training Organisation, 1999; www.home.freeuk.com/aptt/articles/FENTO991.pdf

In 2007/08, which was the end of the four-year cycle of inspection, the overall quality of the training in the providers visited was mostly satisfactory or better, with much of the taught element judged to be good. Trainees' understanding of the relevance and importance of the minimum core subjects of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology was better than that seen in previous years. The overall quality of the assessment of trainees was good or better in just under half of the partnerships inspected. Providers gave greater attention to the development of trainees' subject specialist knowledge and skills. Mentors in further education colleges frequently provided trainees with good support in acquiring the specialist skills to teach their subject. Nevertheless, the quality of mentoring was still too variable and not monitored well enough to bring about overall improvement. Mentors did not always undertake the training offered to develop their practice. Trainees who were employed in work-based and adult and community learning settings continued to be the most disadvantaged in the quality and extent of their workplace support. Typically, mentoring arrangements and workplace support for these trainees was too informal and reliant on goodwill. This weakness persisted despite £30m of additional funding in 2007/08, which was targeted at employers to support continuing professional development and mentor support for trainees.

During inspection visits in 2007/08, inspectors interviewed individuals and groups of trainees in each centre and observed 171 of them teaching. Although most of the trainees observed reached a satisfactory or better standard, less than one in 10 were outstanding. Trainees were usually well qualified in their own vocational area and were strongly committed to teaching in the post-compulsory sector. They established good working relationships with their students and had high expectations of them. Typically, they were highly motivated and focused well on their own learning and continuing professional development.

Trainees received good personal and academic support, but the methods used to monitor their progress and secure improvements were not developed sufficiently. Providers had not established a clear strategy for evaluating the impact of the training on trainees' progress, given their different starting points and range of experience. The effectiveness of the moderation of teaching practice outcomes was one of the weaker aspects of provision inspected.

Overall, very good progress has been made on the changes needed to ensure that teacher education and training are linked to other college functions such as quality assurance and human resources. This was a key weakness in the 2003 survey, but in 2007/08 almost all of the providers had taken steps to address this important aspect of quality improvement.

Previous findings from Ofsted inspections of teacher training for the further education system informed the development of new qualifications and professional standards that were introduced in September 2007. The new structures have increased the focus on the minimum core elements of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology with the aim of improving trainees' personal skills in these aspects and developing trainees' capacity to support their

students' acquisition of these skills in the context of the specialist subject. The qualifications give greater prominence to the enhancement of trainees' subject pedagogy; to reducing the burden of assessment on national awarding body qualifications and to the lack of common practice across higher education institutions in defining the levels of courses and the associated entry requirements. The providers and awarding bodies have met challenging deadlines to develop the new provision.

Key findings

The key findings below are presented under the three main headings of the *Framework for the inspection of the initial training of further education teachers*.⁴

Trainees' achievement

- Trainees demonstrate strong commitment to the values of the post-16 sector and have high expectations of their own students.
- Trainees display good and improving levels of reflection on, and evaluation of, the impact of their teaching on learning.
- There are limited opportunities for trainees to experience the full range of assessment activity in their teaching practice.
- Trainees with identified learning needs at the start of the course are still not taking up the support available to them.

Quality of training

- The taught element of the training is good and improving with much effective modelling of good practice by teacher trainers.
- New programmes are well designed with increased focus on subject specialist teaching and the minimum core elements of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
- Systems for evaluating trainees' progress are underdeveloped, given their different starting points and range of experience.
- The quality of target-setting to improve trainees' performance and track their progress remains highly variable.

⁴ *Framework for the inspection of the initial training of further education teachers* (HMI 2774), Ofsted, 2003; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Framework-for-the-Inspection-of-initial-training-of-further-education-teachers>.

Management and quality assurance

- The quality assurance and monitoring of workplace support for trainees is often weak.
- Systems for recruiting, selecting and interviewing trainees and arrangements for gathering baseline information about trainees' needs are now generally good.
- The monitoring of the impact of equality and diversity policies across providers and partnerships is underdeveloped, and under-represented groups in further education are not targeted sufficiently.

Recommendations

Higher education institutions and national awarding bodies should:

- establish clear systems and procedures for tracking the progress trainees make from their different starting points on entry to the training
- ensure that trainees' practical teaching experience, in particular the development of their expertise in teaching their specialist subject, is central to their training and the assessment of their progress
- apply the same rigour to the monitoring and evaluation of the trainees' experience in the workplace as that applied in the taught courses
- define clear progression routes from national awarding body to higher education institution qualifications.

Further education colleges and employers should:

- secure good-quality workplace mentoring for trainees to support them in developing the necessary skills to teach their specialist subjects.

The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills should:

- review the adequacy of short-term funding arrangements and clarify accountability for the implementation of actions to raise the standard of support for further education trainee teachers in the workplace.

Trainees' achievement

Professional values and practice

1. Typically, trainees were effective practitioners and some brought considerable prior experience of teaching to their training. They developed good and productive relationships with learners, setting high expectations and offering them encouragement to reach their full potential. Over half of the trainees observed in 2007/08 demonstrated good or better teaching skills, but less than one in 10 were judged to be outstanding. In the final year, and throughout the

four-year cycle of inspection, trainees' high levels of commitment to the further education system and to the progress of their own students were clear.

2. The trainees were aware of students' differing socio-economic circumstances. They understood the principles of equality and diversity and promoted mutual respect and tolerance in the classroom. They knew about the process of initial assessment and were adept at using the information they had about students' prior achievements and educational experiences to plan programmes to meet differing learning needs. However, not all trainees were able to access this key information, often because of a narrow teaching role and insufficient opportunity to apply what they had been taught about initial assessment and effective planning for learning.
3. Across all partnerships visited in 2007/08, inspectors noted the improvement in trainees' ability to reflect on how well their teaching influences learning. There were very good examples of trainees evaluating their own performance systematically and carefully, using feedback from students, tutors and mentors. In establishing pertinent links between theory and practice and through good analysis and insight, they understood the significance of different approaches to teaching and learning well. Individual learning plans, although used increasingly in the training, did not always include actions to inform and track improvements in trainees' performance. As well as hindering their own progress, this often impacted on trainees' ability to set effective learning targets for the students they worked with. In one good example:

The trainee very successfully set and reviewed her own learning targets. Her individual learning plan was detailed and included very clear time-related action points: for example, the increased use of information learning technology in lessons; the further development of her skills in working with learners with different levels of ability working in the same group; and improvements needed in her academic writing. Her reflective log records the significant progress and personal development that she has made during the course.

4. Typically, the trainees observed were fully committed to improving their teaching and were engaged frequently in additional continuing professional development activities offered in the workplace. Many contribute a great deal to the organisations in which they are employed, showing an enthusiasm and willingness to add value to team working in a variety of ways. In one good example:

The trainee, who has a part-time post at the college, engaged enthusiastically in team activities, including attending course team meetings and supporting moderation of assessment decisions. In addition, the trainee was fully involved in offering advice and guidance to literacy students on possible progression routes. Consequently, this trainee had a broad understanding of the wider roles and responsibilities of teachers in

further education and developed good skills beyond those developed in the classroom.

In contrast, pre-service trainees, on full-time training courses, tended to focus exclusively on the lessons assigned and were not involved sufficiently in the wider aspects of college life.

Teaching and learning

5. In the 2003 survey, inspectors were highly critical of the Further Education National Training Organisation standards as a tool to model trainees' progress. From 2007/08, trainees following new qualification routes were studying units in which the new national standards are embedded and where programmes of study better support their coverage. The standards set out those expected of an experienced teacher, but the providers visited are yet to develop clear strategies for evaluating the progress trainees make, given their different starting points and range of experience.
6. In 2007/08, the trainees evaluated were satisfactory or better at using a range of teaching and learning strategies. They had a clear understanding of how those strategies impacted on their students' individual learning needs. As their confidence developed, the most skilful adopted imaginative methods using interesting resources and were prepared to negotiate activities with their students. The trainees became increasingly adept at justifying their planning decisions as they progressed. They generally had good information and communication technology skills and used these well to promote and develop learning, as for example in authoring study support pages for intranet sites. In the main, trainees undertook precise and detailed planning. The very best of them considered higher level cognitive skills, paying exceptionally close attention to the matching of teaching to individual learning and progress. A common feature of weaker planning was characterised by trainees struggling to write appropriate aims and learning outcomes, in particular confusing the latter with the means of achieving them.
7. The better trainees observed were well organised and managed their classes efficiently. They set and applied suitable ground rules for behaviour, paid good attention to health and safety, and generally created secure learning environments. They communicated well, employing praise and humour judiciously and to good effect. The careful consideration the trainees gave to how they might meet the individual needs of students with different abilities working in the same group was not always matched with the successful implementation of the strategies identified. Nevertheless, the questioning techniques of trainees observed in 2007/08 – a weak aspect of the training sampled earlier in the inspection cycle – had improved as illustrated in the example below.

In one college trainees spoke with enthusiasm about how their questioning skills had been transformed by the good practice modelled by teacher trainers. They demonstrated confidence in their practical teaching in using a very wide range of techniques which they adjusted to ensure and extend student responses and learning.

8. In the 2003 survey, inspectors were highly critical of the failure of the training to ensure a systematic development of the specific skills and understanding needed for effective subject specialist teaching, through effective mentoring, and of the infrequent structured sharing of good practice. In 2007/08, it was rare to find a trainee without a named mentor. However, not all mentors had relevant subject expertise, had attended appropriate training or were given sufficient time to carry out this important role. Trainees were typically well qualified in their own subject area and enlivened their lessons by drawing on their occupational expertise.
9. The poor entry levels of many trainees' literacy and numeracy skills persisted as an area of concern throughout the inspection cycle, although inspectors noted positive developments in 2007/08. In the providers inspected in the final year, these minimum core aspects were more effectively embedded in courses and more clearly linked to the progress trainees make. The better trainees were confident in working to support their own students' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills and many of them planned carefully for this. Nevertheless, trainees with learning needs still failed to make best use of the literacy and numeracy support available to them and this constrained the progress they made.

Assessment and student support

10. In 2007/08, the trainees' practical experience of the assessment process remained patchy. Although they completed their courses with a sound knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of assessment, their opportunities for the application of these skills were less secure.
11. Typically, trainees selected assessment methods suited to the learning outcomes they planned for. Their feedback to learners was generally thorough, accurate and constructive, although the interaction between the assessor and student on written coursework was often limited. In the best practice observed, trainees gained experience of devising and marking assignments and using awarding body criteria. Common features of weaker practice included, insufficient opportunity for trainees to engage with the full range of assessment in the workplace. For example, few opportunities to participate in summative assessment or double marking of coursework. In 2007/08, this was particularly the case for pre-service trainees on full-time courses. Across all settings, trainees did not work routinely with their own students to agree individual

targets for improvement, or follow these up as part of ongoing reviews of learning. In an example of good practice:

The trainee had worked hard to ensure that he knew and understood the assessment requirements of the specifications that he was teaching. His mentor had confirmed the subsequent assessment and grading of marked work he had undertaken as accurate. The mentor also noted how the trainee wrote detailed and helpful written comments on students' essays. By way of follow-up, the trainee required students to identify key learning points based on the feedback offered, to inform future improvements.

12. The trainees interviewed and observed by inspectors showed an appropriate understanding of their students' differing learning needs. Those working in college settings often had a good awareness of the various support services available and many had been involved in securing additional support and advice for individuals and groups of learners. The trainees provided much support themselves, both in and out of lessons, and frequently in their own time. They offered their students useful guidance on progression to other courses or employment, typically underpinned by their own substantial vocational or academic experience. They were less successful in the effective management of working relationships with additional learning support assistants in their lessons. For example, they rarely took the time to engage support assistants in planning for learning or to brief them on anticipated learning outcomes.

Quality of training

Content and structure

13. The 2007/08 academic year marked a period of transition for initial teacher training in the further education system. New qualifications were in place and in many instances legacy qualifications were being delivered for the last time. The new courses, endorsed by Standards Verification UK, received positive comments from inspectors about their design and the way they support links between the taught elements and the workplace experience of trainees. Occasionally, the higher academic level of the Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses validated through universities raised questions about access, suitability and ease of progression for some trainees. Other concerns identified by inspectors related to the gap that exists between the initial stage of the national awarding body qualification, Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector, and the next stage, Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, offered as part of the diploma course in higher education institutions. In response, institutions offering higher education institution-validated courses were beginning to develop bridging modules to support progression more effectively.
14. Overall, inspectors judged course content and structure to be strong features of recent revisions to the training, in particular the higher profile afforded to the

development of trainees' subject-specialist pedagogy, which had been a key weakness in the 2003 survey inspection. Inspectors commented positively on units of study and associated assignments which were directed specifically to trainees' areas of specialism. Similarly, they noted the good work done to ensure that links between theory and workplace teaching practice are highlighted. Trainees' strong criticism, apparent in previous years, of too many assignments and of the repetition of subject content at different stages of the training, was less of a concern in the 2007/08 visits. Despite this, trainees already employed as further education teachers who had a heavy teaching commitment and little or no protected time for study, still found the workload burdensome.

15. In the 2003 survey, inspectors judged mentoring for trainees in the workplace to be inadequate and this had an impact on their ability to develop and improve their subject-specialist teaching skills. In 2007/08, despite improvements, the overall picture remained variable. Most trainees working in colleges had mentors who received some form of honorarium or time allowance for the job. Trainees from other settings who were observed teaching and interviewed by inspectors in their place of employment – such as work-based and adult and community learning settings – continue to be the most disadvantaged in the quality and extent of their workplace support. Arrangements for them remained too informal and reliant on goodwill.
16. In order to improve the focus on subject-specialist skills, the providers visited in 2007/08 were beginning to develop opportunities for training to take place in vocational and subject groups: in one case the national awarding body qualification, Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector, was studied by discrete groups of modern foreign languages and British sign language trainees. Such opportunities remained largely untapped, although there were some imaginative teaching approaches that encouraged trainees to work in specialist learning groups during centre-based training sessions.
17. In 2007/08, there were still insufficient opportunities for trainees to teach subjects at different levels and in different contexts. This was particularly the case for trainees following pre-service Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses who may only experience a single placement during their one year of training. To improve the breadth of their experience trainees were encouraged occasionally to observe teachers in other settings, sometimes utilising the other centres in the partnership. However, this was not always well coordinated and the providers visited had not given sufficient thought to the development of more creative solutions to extending the breadth and depth of teaching experience.
18. Training programmes were updated to take account of current government initiatives and those providing training ensure that trainees are aware of issues of national importance, such as *Every Child Matters*, the reforms to the 14–19

curriculum and the principles of equality and diversity. The development of new programmes has enabled awarding body and university-validated courses to incorporate units of study to address these and other national issues through trainees' written coursework and in their teaching practice.

Effectiveness of training

19. The quality of the taught element of the training in 2007/08 was good or outstanding in 12 of the 17 partnerships inspected. Teacher trainers ensured that clear links were established between educational theory and practice, drawing on trainees' previous and current teaching to strengthen these links. They planned the centre-based training well and shared planning decisions appropriately with trainees. They took opportunities to model good practice in the use of varied teaching strategies and to encourage engagement and debate. Teacher trainers were generally adept at using a good range of resources, as illustrated in the example below:

A wide range of low and high technology equipment from prompt cards and flip charts to interactive whiteboards and audio/video clips and slides via data projection are available to support training, and are well used by teacher trainers and trainees. The provider's virtual learning environment is very well populated with learning materials. The trainees, who were able to add their own materials for use by their peers, made excellent use of it.

20. There were a few occasions where teacher trainees' use of information technology was restricted to PowerPoint for presentation purposes. These teacher trainers did not take the opportunity to demonstrate innovative use of technology to enhance learning or to exploit the potential of a virtual learning environment by, for example, supporting subject-specialist development and promoting other forms of peer group interaction.
21. Centre-based teams clearly understood individual and team roles and responsibilities. The best of them were able to demonstrate a very broad range of vocational and academic expertise and complementary skills. This was often extended through the use of guest speakers and sometimes with university staff supporting training in partner colleges.

Meeting the needs of trainees

22. As in previous years, in 2007/08, trainees received considerable personal support from their tutors and mentors and were especially appreciative of the ready availability of this support. The diagnostic assessment of trainees' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills was usually thorough, although this was not always synchronised appropriately with the start of the course.

23. Where individual learning needs were identified, trainees were informed well about how they could access support to reach the appropriate level of skills in literacy and numeracy. The very best providers inspected in 2007/08 had effective arrangements. Some provided intensive courses prior to the start of the programme, culminating in the opportunity to take a national test at the appropriate level. Although support was more widely available, the extent to which trainees followed this through was compromised by the lack of systematic monitoring. Increasingly, institutions were making it a requirement for trainees to achieve level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications prior to starting the course; others required it before the start of the second year of the training.
24. The effectiveness of the use and monitoring of individual learning plans, highlighted as a cause for concern at the time of the survey inspection in 2003, was very variable during the four-year inspection cycle. In 2007/08, providers generally had some form of trainee learning plan in place. Nevertheless, weak practice often revealed vague target-setting and a lack of coherent communication between the tutor, the mentor and the trainee. Learning plans were not reviewed systematically and were deficient in contributions from mentors or other subject specialist links. For example, in one college:

The use of individual learning plans to set targets and monitor trainees' progress is significantly underdeveloped. The college has not developed any form of dynamic, incremental, evaluative narrative of how a trainee has made progress over time and therefore trainees do not experience a good model on which to base their own practice of using learning plans with their students. Despite knowing their trainees well, teacher trainers do not have at their disposal in lessons a detailed profile of trainees, derived from initial assessment and from interview notes which might help to identify particular ways in which they might engage or support them to improve their performance.

25. Where learning plans were used well, they became effective tools for professional development and promoted good reflective practice. They offered a sound framework for tutorial discussions, were integral to the assessment of progress and provided a secure basis from which to encourage trainees and measure further achievement.

The assessment of trainees

26. In the 2003 survey, findings revealed inadequacies in the over-assessment of trainees on national awarding body qualifications and the lack of specific criteria for the assessment of practical teaching skills. In 2007/08, inspectors judged the overall quality of the assessment of trainees to be good or better in just under half of the partnerships inspected. Weaker aspects in the assessment of trainees' teaching practice included insufficient attention given to securing trainees' entitlement to subject-specific feedback on observed lessons and in

establishing the overall progress trainees make in developing their teaching skills, given their different starting points.

27. The best feedback on trainees' teaching offered subject-specific elements, was accurate and detailed, and resulted in the clear setting of targets for future improvement. The trainee's areas for attention were checked at subsequent observations and, where this occurred, there was a clear audit of the progress made. Limitations to the effectiveness of subject-specialist observations were characterised by mentors who were not sufficiently experienced in the process of observation or who failed to convey specific subject-specialist feedback points effectively, and by those mentors who were restricted in their opportunities to observe trainees, often through time constraints and the demands of their own workload.
28. Written assignments devised by providers, which were evaluated in 2007/08, were well designed and interesting, with clear assessment criteria and plenty of opportunities for trainees to draw on their subject-specialist knowledge and experience in the workplace. Teacher trainers assessed written work rigorously and many of them supported informal opportunities for trainees to submit work, especially in the early stages of the training. Trainees appreciated the interim feedback offered and this helped them to build confidence and improve their performance.

In one partnership, teacher trainers assessed trainees' work very thoroughly and encouraged detailed self-assessment by the trainees in advance of the submission. The feedback was comprehensive and supportive. Teacher trainers were very particular in ensuring that requirements were met in full before accepting an assignment for marking. Potentially good assignments were referred because of inaccurate technical aspects, and spelling and grammatical errors were corrected thoroughly. Most trainees' work was of a high standard, partly due to trainers' insistence on demanding good work and not accepting the mediocre. Trainers provided useful workshops on assignment writing and referencing in the first year and reflective writing and critical analysis in the second year. Trainees valued these sessions highly.

29. The common features of less effective approaches in the marking of written coursework in 2007/08 highlighted deficiencies in the clarity of assessor feedback on intended learning outcomes and how well the trainees' work met them. This was often coupled with inconsistent practice between assessors, within individual institutions and across higher education partnerships.

Management and quality assurance

Procedures for selecting trainees

30. Of the 17 providers inspected in 2007/08, more than two thirds had good systems for recruiting and interviewing trainees and improved arrangements for gathering baseline information about trainees' individual needs at the start of their course. These systems were frequently very rigorous and set high expectations of trainees. Typically, trainees are provided with good information about their programmes through carefully prepared publicity materials and course handbooks.
31. Although more common in individual institutions rather than across partnerships, in 2007/08, inspectors noted better use of equality and diversity data to establish and monitor under-represented groups and to market the programmes to encourage wider recruitment. For example, as illustrated below, in increasing the number of minority ethnic and male trainees.

The first year of the course has been the subject of a project to attract more minority ethnic trainees. The focused promotional campaign was successful in increasing the numbers of the target group of trainees and there is now a much higher proportion on the programme than in previous years.

32. In the 2003 survey, inspectors were critical of the failure of the further education colleges sampled to integrate initial teacher education activity with other aspects of the management of their staff. All of the colleges sampled in 2007/08 inspections had taken steps to address this. Many had established very clear links between teacher trainers and other staff with responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and learning, such as quality assurance coordinators and advanced practitioners. Human resource departments were working routinely with teacher trainers to ensure that newly recruited members of staff were trained promptly to meet legislative requirements.

Management of the training

33. In 2007/08, in 10 of the 17 partnerships inspected, many aspects of the management of the training courses were good or outstanding. Teacher training teams were usually well qualified and frequently supported to engage in research and other development activities that enhanced the context and content of the training programme. Partnership working was a strong feature of inspection findings. University and college partners have worked together effectively to meet legislative and new training requirements. Difficulties identified, which related to the progression from awarding body qualification levels and those prescribed for some university programmes, were beginning to be addressed.

34. Delivery of the taught element of courses was well planned. Teams met regularly in colleges and with their partners to discuss operational issues and to share good practice. Where awarding body qualifications and university validated courses were offered in the same institution, these were usually taught by the same team and this helped to ensure the consistency of trainees' experience on different routes. In the main, lead university partners provided clear strategic direction and good support for staff from partner colleges, including continuing professional development and the deployment of university staff to teach or provide other support in partner institutions. Arrangements for capturing trainee evaluations of the programmes were well organised and in the best practice prompt action was taken to address issues arising as part of routine quality assurance.
35. During 2007/08, the Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training, a national initiative to improve the quality of the training, had been identified and were operational. However, not all the providers inspected were affiliated to one of these centres. Consequently, they were unable to benefit from the activities and guidance that the Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training provided, such as a training needs analysis for teacher trainers to inform continuing professional development and to support the sharing of good practice.
36. The 2007/08 inspections revealed that, typically, trainees had a nominated mentor in the workplace and an additional £30 million of government funding was targeted at employers to support this development. Even so, inspectors found little parity in the way the funding was applied across the range of settings in which trainees were employed and some confusion as to the purpose of, and accountability for, the funding. Trainees teaching in the colleges sampled most frequently benefited from the best mentor support. In non-traditional further education contexts, mentors were more often not identified or carrying out the role without the time available to undertake their responsibilities successfully.
37. In 2007/08, centre-based training was usually well resourced. Teaching rooms provided good quality learning environments and were well equipped with interactive whiteboards, personal computers and digital projectors. Additional good resources were available in colleges and universities, either in libraries or online. Occasionally, trainees experienced difficulties accessing university virtual learning environments or these were insufficiently populated. Trainees following national awarding body courses appreciate the virtual learning environment offered by the awarding body to support their studies.

Quality assurance

38. The overall monitoring of the impact of equality and diversity policies was underdeveloped in the providers inspected across the four-year cycle. Data gathered were not always used in a systematic way to improve provision. In the better providers, thorough monitoring of available data occurred regularly and

actions identified to bring about improvements were followed up. Data relating to retention, achievement and success were more widely collected and used to support self-evaluation judgements. Nevertheless, the absence of national data to assist providers in benchmarking the progress they are making limits the effectiveness of these initiatives. In 2007/08, the providers visited were increasingly benchmarking data across their own partnership institutions.

39. Moderation of the assessment of practical teaching remained a weaker aspect of the training. In the 2007/08 inspections, more providers had drawn up proposals to ensure that this would be carried out. However, in practice, samples were small and it was too early to judge whether the process was contributing to overall quality improvement.
40. Although the provision of mentor training was widespread, not all mentors participated. Furthermore, the providers inspected in 2007/08 were insufficiently rigorous in their attempts to get them to do so. Mentors' practice, for example in reviewing trainees' teaching, was rarely subject to routine quality assurance. In contrast, teacher trainers were often observed as part of their internal college quality assurance schemes. Increasingly, observations were undertaken by peers from the universities and occasionally by external examiners; however, the resulting comments on teacher trainers' performance and in peer reviews were not always evaluative enough to inform improvements.
41. The moderation of the assessment of written coursework was invariably more rigorous than that for assessing workplace teaching practice. In 2007/08 there was plenty of evidence of systems and of activities of moderation events, committees and examination boards to show, for the most part, that processes for assessing assignments were working effectively. Occasionally, variations in the standard of marking, within a team or across a partnership, were not addressed systematically. The sharing of best practice was too often of an informal nature.
42. The overall effectiveness of self-evaluation systems and procedures was satisfactory. In the weaker examples, self-evaluation was insufficiently rigorous or overly descriptive. Typically, the various stakeholders involved, in particular mentors and employers, did not contribute sufficiently to establish a secure judgement of the impact of the training on trainee progress. In 2007/08, the better providers drew on a range of data to support their judgements. The resulting documents were subject to further close scrutiny by internal systems prior to their incorporation in a partnership self-evaluation document. The best university-led partnerships took full account of partner colleges' experiences of self-assessment to bring about overall improvements in provision. In one good example:

The partner colleges produce an annual self-evaluation document which informs the overall self-evaluation for the pre- and in-service provision.

This contains reference to analysis of statistical data, trainee evaluation forms, mid- and end-of-module and trainers' evaluations, external examiners' samples of assignments across three centres, cross-centre moderation reports and programme committee reports. The comprehensive review contained much evaluation of the quality of training and identified clear action points for maintaining strengths and improving weaknesses. Progress against actions was monitored carefully by the programme committees of which there are four annually and included the partner colleges.

Notes

In November 2004, the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education announced the Government's proposals for the reform of initial teacher training for the further education sector. Many of the changes were based on the findings of the Ofsted inspection survey report and subsequent inspection findings. These were reinforced and developed in the further education White Paper *Raising skills, improving life chances* in 2006, which expanded the scope of the reforms to include the wider further education learner base, such as work-based learning and adult and community learning. On 1 September 2007, legal and contractual requirements were implemented to support the reforms. These included:

- revised teaching qualifications for new teachers and a professional status for all teachers in community learning and development, further education, offender learning and work-based learning
- continuing professional development requirements for all teachers
- principals' qualifications for all newly appointed principals of further education institutions.

The focus of this report is on the general teaching qualifications, known as 'legacy' qualifications, endorsed by Standards Verification UK, formerly the Further Education National Training Organisation. These qualifications must meet the 2001 statutory requirement for teachers in further education to gain an endorsed teaching qualification, based on the standards for teaching and supporting learning in further education, and the new qualifications to meet the Regulations which came into force on 1 September 2007.⁵ These new Regulations require all new teachers appointed from 1st September 2007 to hold or acquire within a specified period of time:

- (a) a 'Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector' (PTLLS) award (or its equivalent), which is a minimum threshold licence to teach for all who have an element of teaching in their role, irrespective of job title; and
- (b) a Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector at minimum Level 5 (or its equivalent) leading to Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status for those in a full teaching role; or
- (c) a Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector at Level 3 or 4 (or its equivalent), leading to Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) status for those in an associate teaching role, (i.e. a role that carries significantly less than the full range of teaching responsibilities carried out in a full teaching role); and

⁵ *The further education teachers' qualifications (England) regulations, 2007*; http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20072264_en_1.

to complete a period of professional formation, (the post-qualification process by which a teacher demonstrates through professional practice that they meet the standards, and can use effectively the skills and knowledge acquired in teacher training).

In most cases, the trainees were studying on a part-time and in-service basis, while working as full- or part-time teachers. The evidence is derived from inspections carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors and Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated provision in 17 higher education institutions partnerships and 22 colleges. The quality of training and management and quality assurance procedures were inspected during the first phase, which took place in the autumn and spring terms. During the second phase, inspectors concentrated on evaluating the achievements of trainees through observing the teaching of 171 trainees and gathering evidence of their progress, and that of other trainees, through interviews with groups and individuals during the course. Phase two of the inspection was completed in the summer term.

Qualifications based on the national standards are offered by both higher education institutions and national awarding bodies. In accordance with the procedures outlined in the *Framework for the inspection of the initial training of further education teachers*, the findings on higher education institution qualifications are published in separate institutional reports based on the lead higher education institution.