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1 **Ofsted – ‘brief encounters of a second kind’?!**

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15 **Key words**

16 OFSTED, Inspection, Initial Teacher Training, Physical Education, Secondary

17
18 **Biographical note**

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20 Sciences at Loughborough University. Jo is also Director of Teacher Education and

21 Lorraine is Director of the Post Graduate Certificate in Education PE course.

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Ofsted – ‘brief encounters of a second kind’?!

Abstract

Background

Since 1995, the Office for Standards in Education has inspected the quality of all Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provision in England on behalf of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). Ofsted inspection results are published and are highly significant because the TDA has a statutory duty to take account of them when allocating trainee numbers, funding ITT provision and making accreditation decisions. Yet, concerns have been expressed over the reliability, validity and credibility of inspections as well as over limitations in the methodology and/or the ‘high stakes’ involved. More recently however, there have been revisions to the inspection framework and the current inspection arrangements, which now comprise full and short inspections, propose to be effective, efficient, cost effective and less burdensome (Ofsted, 2005b; Ofsted & TTA, 2004).

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical account of our most recent ‘short’ Ofsted Inspection of ITT at Loughborough University as a follow up to earlier papers published by ourselves and colleagues on the inspection of our secondary Physical Education ITT provision (Hardy & Evans, 2000; Cale & Harris, 2003). In particular, we consider the extent to which the process is effective, efficient, cost effective, less burdensome and represents a ‘brief encounter’.

49 **Method**

50 The account is informed by data from various sources. ITT staff kept journals for a period
51 of 7 months leading up to, during, and following the inspection in which they detailed their
52 Ofsted activities, experiences and reflections. Staff periodically completed their journals
53 recording the preparation, work and meetings they were involved in, and noting and
54 reflecting on any problems, issues, concerns, anxieties, frustrations and/or other emotions
55 they experienced. Documentary evidence in the form of Ofsted Handbooks, Guidance plus
56 other paperwork the inspection generated was also collected for analysis. Finally, to
57 augment and support the findings from the journals and documentary evidence, a review of
58 related literature was undertaken. Analysis of the data involved identification of key issues.

59

60 **Discussion and Conclusion**

61 Based on our experiences and reflections and the findings from the literature, a number of
62 issues and limitations with the inspection process and framework are highlighted. Given
63 these, we declare that we remain cynical about the whole process and the validity of the
64 outcomes. We contest the notion that the inspection process is effective, efficient and cost
65 effective and feel that it still places an enormous burden on providers. Further, we suggest
66 that the framework is fundamentally flawed which could have serious consequences not
67 only for the future of our own course, but for the future of ITT.

68

69

70 **Introduction – A ‘brief’ update on developments**

71 Since 1995, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)¹ has inspected the quality of all
72 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provision in England on behalf of the Training and

73 Development Agency for Schools (TDA)² (formerly the Teacher Training Agency (TTA)). A
74 number of possible purposes of inspection in ITT have been identified including
75 assessment for improvement, comparison, resource management (Williams, 1997), or
76 compliance (Blake et al., 1995). According to the current Ofsted framework, the main
77 purposes of the inspection of ITT are to:

- 78 • ensure public accountability for the quality of ITT
- 79 • stimulate improvement in the quality of provision
- 80 • provide objective judgements on providers for public information
- 81 • inform policy
- 82 • enable the statutory link to be made between funding and quality
- 83 • check compliance with statutory requirements. (Ofsted, 2005a, p. 1).

84

85 Ofsted inspection results are published and are highly significant because the TDA 'has
86 a statutory duty to have regard to the outcomes of them when funding ITT provision'
87 (Ofsted 2005b, p.1). The evidence gathered from inspections is converted to grades
88 and is taken into account in the allocation of trainee numbers and funding to ITT
89 providers, and in accreditation decisions. If any aspect of provision is judged to be non
90 compliant, accreditation of all the ITT courses an institution provides may be withdrawn
91 (Sinkinson, 2004). Following inspection, the TDA use the Ofsted data to produce
92 'quality categories' on an A-E scale (where A is the highest category), which are
93 published as 'league tables'. Thus, there is a close and crucial link between the
94 outcome of the inspection of any course and the viability and reputation of the ITT
95 provider (Sinkinson, 2004), with institutions standing to make significant gains or losses

96 consequent upon the outcome (Williams, 1997). Furlong et al., (2000) note how in
97 some instances, quality ratings have led to the disciplining of higher education
98 institutions (HEIs), whilst Ghouri & Barnard (1998) have reported that unsatisfactory
99 inspection reports have led to the closure of courses, and in some cases, whole
100 institutions. Similarly, Jones & Sinkinson (2000, p.81) warn how a poor Ofsted rating
101 can lead to ‘...course closure, while even satisfactory ratings can lead to uncertainty
102 over course quota, leading to a spiral of decline in course viability’. Indeed, Sinkinson &
103 Jones (2001) note how issues concerning funding allocations, trainee numbers and
104 institutional reputations, not to mention lecturers’ jobs, are a direct consequence of the
105 outcomes of inspections and argue that it is therefore vitally important that all involved
106 have confidence in the inspection methodology and judgments made.

107

108 Yet, generally the response to the inspection process from teacher educators has been
109 negative (Graham, 1997; Sutherland, 1997) and inspections have been viewed as
110 heavy handed and invasive (Furlong et al., 2000). Furthermore, concerns have been
111 expressed over the reliability, validity and credibility of inspections (Campbell &
112 Husbands, 2000; Cale & Harris, 2003; Graham & Nabb, 1999; Jones & Sinkinson, 2000;
113 Hardy & Evans, 2000; Sinkinson & Jones, 2001; Sinkinson, 2004; 2005) and the
114 methodology and/or ‘high stakes’ involved (Campbell & Husbands 2000; Jones &
115 Sinkinson, 2000; Sinkinson & Jones, 2001; Tymms, 1997; Williams, 1997). For
116 example, fired by a mix of dismay and frustration for the practices Ofsted and the TTA
117 demonstrated in the 1996/97 inspection of our secondary Physical Education (PE) ITT
118 course, Hardy & Evans (2000) highlighted numerous faults and limitations in the system

119 which they claimed needed to be addressed for it to have validity and credibility.
120 Following a survey of all HEI partnership providers of ITT courses, Graham & Nabb
121 (1999) reported that fewer than 10% of 152 providers were confident that the inspection
122 of courses was a valid, reliable and consistent process. Similarly, on the basis of
123 analyses of published Ofsted inspection reports for secondary mathematics (Jones &
124 Sinkinson, 2000; Sinkinson & Jones, 2001) and humanities courses (Sinkinson, 2005),
125 a number of variations and inconsistencies in reports were highlighted. Sinkinson &
126 Jones (2001) concluded that there was 'much room for development in order that all
127 participants in the process ...are confident that it is reliable, valid and robust' (p.235). In
128 2004, Sinkinson (2004) focused on the role of the managing inspector in effecting
129 consistency of judgement and reporting in reports of four HEI-based providers.
130 Revealing several important inconsistencies of reporting in the data and examples
131 given, she questioned how confident providers should be about the consistency of
132 judgements made through inspection.

133

134 Likewise, based on evidence drawn from inspections of ITT between 1996-1998 at the
135 University of Warwick, Campbell & Husbands (2000) argued that the inspection
136 methodology and the application of published criteria were insufficiently reliable to bear
137 the weight of the consequences of the outcomes. Tymms (1997) meanwhile, adopted a
138 simulation approach to estimate the likelihood of an institution being identified as non
139 compliant. From his analysis he concluded that 'very satisfactory institutions have a
140 high chance of failing an inspection' (p.1). In a previous article (Cale & Harris, 2003) we
141 noted how, the penalty for our 'mediocre' set of grades following our first inspection of

142 secondary PE ITT in 1996/97 was a 'dented' reputation and a 10% reduction in trainee
143 numbers with an associated loss of funding, not to mention reduced morale. Following
144 a successful inspection in 1999/2000, we still reported many limitations of ITT
145 inspection, and suggested that 'the credibility of the process remains questionable'
146 (Cale & Harris, 2003, p.136).

147
148 Given the above, and following two further inspections in the past three years, we have
149 felt compelled to once again share with fellow professionals our experiences and
150 reflections on ITT inspection, this time based on our most recent 'brief' encounter with
151 Ofsted. We use the term 'brief' intentionally here as our previous two inspections have
152 both been 'short'. Since last writing, there have been two further revisions to the
153 inspection framework (Ofsted, 2002a; 2005a), and the current framework (Ofsted,
154 2005a) (as was the preceding one) is differentiated and comprises full and short
155 inspections. According to the quality of provision, an institution receives either a full or
156 short inspection (Ofsted, 2005a, p.1). Category A and category B providers receive a
157 short inspection whereas category C providers receive a full inspection. According to
158 Ofsted and the TTA, recent changes to the inspection arrangements propose to 'both
159 improve the effectiveness of inspection in ITT and reduce its burden' (Ofsted & TTA,
160 2004, p.1) and aim to 'be efficient and cost effective for both providers and Ofsted'
161 (Ofsted, 2005b, p.2). The focus of short inspections is on Management and Quality
162 Assurance (M&QA) across an institution's ITT provision as a whole (referred to as the M
163 cell), and the main purpose is to check that, overall, at least good quality training
164 provision has been maintained (Ofsted, 2005b). Thus, although individual secondary

165 subjects are still centrally involved in the inspection, they are no longer individually
166 inspected, graded and reported upon.

167

168 The secondary ITT course at Loughborough is a one year Post Graduate Certificate in
169 Education (PGCE) course³ which trains approximately 130 teachers a year in three
170 subjects, Design & Technology, Science and Physical Education. By way of
171 comparison, and as a follow up to earlier commentaries, this paper provides a critical
172 account of our 2005-2006 'short' inspection, reflecting on the inspection as a whole, as
173 well as at subject level within one of the three subjects, Physical Education. In
174 particular, we consider the extent to which the process is effective, efficient, cost
175 effective, less burdensome and represents a 'brief encounter'.

176

177 The account is informed by data from various sources. From receipt of the news from
178 Ofsted that we were to receive a second 'short' inspection until the publication of the
179 final inspection report, a period of approximately 7 months, ITT staff kept journals in
180 which they detailed their Ofsted activities, experiences and reflections on the whole
181 process. The journals were completed periodically, with staff recording the preparation,
182 work and meetings they were involved in, and noting and reflecting on any problems,
183 issues, concerns, anxieties, frustrations and/or other emotions they experienced leading
184 up to, during, and following the inspection itself. During this time, documentary
185 evidence in the form of Ofsted Handbooks, Guidance plus other paperwork the
186 inspection generated was also collected for analysis. In addition, to augment and
187 support the findings from the journals and documentary evidence, a review of related

188 literature was undertaken. Analysis of the data involved identification of key issues,
189 some of which the literature revealed to be common to ITT inspection and all providers,
190 and others of which were unique to our experience. Based on our experiences and
191 reflections and the findings from the literature, a number of issues are highlighted and
192 discussed in the form of a chronological commentary.

193

194 As before (Cale & Harris, 2003), the commentary presented within this paper, whilst at
195 times critical of the inspectorate and the inspection process, is not intended as a
196 reflection of the quality of the individual inspectors involved, nor should it be taken to
197 imply that we are anti-inspection. To the contrary, we accept the importance of
198 accountability and strive for continuous improvement in our course. However, we agree
199 with Jones & Sinkinson (2000, p.81) that the inspection of teacher education should be
200 open to 'proper academic scrutiny' and that 'the Ofsted inspection process is not itself
201 above critical examination'. As this paper reveals, we have also been very pleased with
202 the outcomes, albeit not with the implications of, our last three inspections, a point
203 which we re-visit later within the paper.

204

205 **An expected 'brief re-encounter'**

206 Gray & Wilcox (1996) suggest that the frequency and scale of Ofsted inspections since
207 1992 represents external scrutiny on a scale hitherto unparalleled in the world. Given
208 our last inspection had been three years ago, it came as no surprise to receive official
209 confirmation on 23rd November 2005 that we were to receive another 'short' inspection.
210 The Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011) states

211 that 'providers will normally be informed of the inspection at least eight weeks before the
212 first inspection visit' (Ofsted, 2005b, p.2). However, our inspection was to take place
213 during the week commencing 30th January 2006 and the Managing Inspector (MI) was
214 to make his preliminary visit on 9th/10th January, meaning we were given only 6 weeks
215 notice to the first visit and 9 weeks notice to the inspection itself. With the Christmas
216 holidays falling within this period, this left us with just 4 and 7 working weeks
217 respectively to prepare.

218

219 Added to the above, we received news from the TDA on 21st December that, in line with
220 cuts nationally, our ITT allocation was to be reduced. We were particularly concerned
221 to discover that the allocation for PE was to be reduced by a total of 21 places between
222 2006-2008. In percentage terms, this represented a 26.3% decrease in places meaning
223 we, along with one other much smaller provider, had been hit harder by the reductions
224 than any other PE ITT providers in England, irrespective of Ofsted category rating⁴.

225 Such cuts would have serious financial implications and pose a real concern for the
226 sustainable future of ITT at Loughborough. Thus, far from satisfactory ratings leading to
227 uncertainties over quotas and the viability of courses (Jones & Sinkinson, 2000), it now
228 seemed that 'good' ratings could lead to the same uncertainties. On top of the Ofsted
229 preparations therefore, lengthy and time consuming communication also began
230 between ourselves and the TDA to urge them to re-consider this decision, as well as
231 with Ofsted, the Association for Physical Education, our local MP and the Joint Advisor
232 to DfES/DCMS to alert them to the situation.

233

234 The timing of the inspection week itself was not ideal in that it was to take place during
235 one of the busiest weeks of the PGCE year. The inspection fell during the first week
236 back for the trainees following their first block teaching practice. During this week
237 sessions were scheduled for the trainees from 9am-4pm each day and a number of
238 administrative and other tasks also required completion at this time such as audits,
239 school evaluations and personal tutorials. Given there is only one week respite
240 between the end of the first teaching practice and the beginning of the serial practice in
241 a second school, these tasks need attending to urgently in order that the relevant
242 information can be passed onto schools.

243

244 In 'theory' though, since this was to be a 'short' inspection, we should have been more
245 than adequately prepared and able to cope with the associated pressures and
246 demands. However, when scrutinising the new 89 page Inspection Handbook more
247 closely (Ofsted, 2005b), it became evident that there was still much involved in
248 preparing for the inspection. The pages of guidance notes outlining the process,
249 requirements and inspection activities made us soon begin to doubt whether Ofsted's
250 interpretation of the word 'short' was the same as ours, and we suspected that this was
251 going to be no 'brief re-encounter'.

252

253 **The 'brief' preparation begins**

254 On receipt of the news of the inspection, one of the first tasks was to inform all parties
255 concerned, which led to a flurry of e-mails and letters. In accordance with the
256 requirements of Circular 2/02 (DfES & TTA, 2002)⁵, our secondary ITT course is based

257 on a model of partnership between the university and schools and the university works
258 in partnership with over 50 schools spanning five counties. Thus, numerous individuals
259 required notifying about the inspection including the Dean of Faculty, Heads of
260 Department/School for the three subjects, all full and part time university-based ITT
261 staff, plus staff in the 50+ partnership schools.

262

263 An urgent task was fully familiarising ourselves with the requirements and procedures
264 for short inspections outlined in the latest Ofsted framework and Handbook (Ofsted,
265 2005a; Ofsted 2005b). As in previous inspections, a managing inspector (MI), with the
266 support of an assistant managing inspector (AMI) and specialist (subject) inspectors
267 (SIs) would carry out the inspection. The MI arranges the inspection programme in
268 consultation with the provider, manages the inspection team, and leads on the
269 inspection of M&QA. In short inspections, SIs make judgments in a sample of subjects
270 about whether the quality of provision is at least good, and contribute to the judgment
271 on the impact of M&QA on training and outcomes (Ofsted, 2005a). We would be
272 informed of which subjects were to be focused on during the MI's preliminary visit but
273 until such a time, preparations had to be undertaken across all three.

274

275 In summary, the short inspection comprises a preliminary visit by the MI and the
276 inspection week itself. The process includes scrutiny of documentation, interviews with
277 university staff, trainees, visits to schools and interviews with school-based staff
278 including headteachers, professional tutors and mentors. These requirements were all
279 familiar and reflected those of previous full inspections. Staff were thus well aware how

280 time consuming the above were going to be. A notable change from this to previous
281 inspections however, was the emphasis placed upon self-evaluation. In reality though,
282 the perception was that the only real difference between a short and full inspection was
283 that the former did not involve the 'dreaded standard visits!' (Cale & Harris, 2003,
284 p.154). The Standards visits assess the extent to which trainees meet the QTS
285 Standards⁶ and involve providers 'grading' trainees against the Standards and
286 inspectors judging the accuracy of this assessment. The issues and problems
287 presented by these visits and the grading have been well documented (Cale & Harris,
288 2000; Campbell & Husbands, 2000; Hardy & Evans, 2000; Sinkinson & Jones, 2001;
289 Tymms, 1997) and are not relevant here. Suffice is to say that their absence on this
290 occasion was as a relief.

291
292 Another imminent task was collating and in some instances producing the
293 documentation requested by Ofsted. On this issue, the Inspection Handbook states that
294 'the minimum information necessary to carry out the inspection will be requested' and
295 how 'it is not intended to place heavy demands on providers to produce documentation
296 specifically for the inspection...' (Ofsted, 2005b, p.4). The 'minimum information
297 necessary' and requested for the inspection is summarised in table 1.

298

299

Insert Table 1

300

301 Whilst much of this information was already in place and simply required collating and
302 presenting in a coherent fashion, in itself a time consuming process, other aspects took

303 a good deal of time to prepare. For example, as a provider keen to continually review,
304 develop and improve our course, there had been a number of changes worthy of
305 drawing to the attention of the inspectors within the 'summary of significant changes'
306 and 'subject questionnaire' documents. It was important that we did not under sell
307 ourselves by failing to provide full details of all such developments.

308

309 The tedious job began of printing, photocopying, collating and checking the
310 documentation and organising it into evidence files for the inspectors. Administrative
311 staff were paid over time to manage this task whilst tutors worked tirelessly without
312 reward into the evenings and weekends to check the files. The outcome was four lever
313 arch files (A-D) of documentation comprising: A: generic documentation; B: subject
314 specific documentation; C: evaluation data; and D: record of training and meetings. On
315 completion of this task, and to allow easy access to the documentation during the
316 inspection week, the MI requested for the files to be duplicated three further times in
317 order that each inspector had their own copies. To us this hardly involved providing the
318 'minimum information necessary...' (Ofsted 2005b, p.4) and entailed yet more time,
319 effort and expense.

320

321 **The Managing Inspector makes a 'brief' appearance**

322 As noted earlier, the MI's preliminary visit was arranged for 9th/10th January. In
323 readiness for the visit and on request, an office with telephone and internet access was
324 set aside and prepared for the MI's use over the two days.

325

326 The objectives of the preliminary visit are to discuss any issues arising from the self-
327 evaluation, clarify and establish the procedures for the inspection, prepare a pre-
328 inspection commentary for the inspection team, and use preliminary evidence to form
329 hypotheses about how effectively the provider is meeting requirements (Ofsted 2005b).
330 During the visit the MI scrutinised the preliminary documentation and met with the
331 Director of Teacher Education (TE), the Partnership Manager (PM), and subject leaders
332 (SLs) from all subjects. He confirmed that two of the three subjects, Science and
333 Physical Education, would be under scrutiny. During the meetings, the inspection
334 programme and arrangements, including the schools to be visited, were agreed. In
335 addition, the general needs and requirements for the inspectors during the week were
336 discussed. These included meeting rooms, access to plug sockets, internet, printing,
337 and photocopying facilities, car parking, lunches, refreshments and maps.
338
339 During his preliminary visit, the MI appeared keen to re-assure staff and answer any
340 questions about the inspection and arrangements. Indeed, during a meeting with the
341 Director of TE, the PM and SLs, and presumably in an effort to give re-assurance, he
342 advised that we should 'regard the inspection as free consultancy'. This comment
343 raised a sigh of disbelief amongst the group as we pondered over the enormous cost to
344 the university already incurred by the inspection in terms of staff time (including over-
345 time), energy and resources. Before his departure, the MI shared with us areas that
346 were to be a focus of the inspection leaving us feeling reasonably clear about the
347 preparations that were required. Despite this, we realised that the main visit would
348 seem far from 'brief' and that it would no doubt present many challenges.

349

350 **The 'brief' build up**

351 During the 'brief' build up to the inspection, numerous meetings took place. These
352 included regular meetings between university staff, plus meetings between university
353 and school staff and between university staff and trainees. The former were held to
354 organise and agree the detailed arrangements, programme, procedures and protocol for
355 the inspection week and to agree common responses to questions. Given the
356 inspectors' numerous requirements and needs, and because staff and trainees were so
357 heavily committed during the inspection week and rooms were heavily booked for
358 teaching, planning the programme proved to be a complicated jigsaw.

359

360 An important undertaking during the preliminary visit had been agreeing the sample of
361 schools to be visited, based on the criteria the MI had given us. The MI and AMI would
362 visit four schools between them during the inspection week. The MI requested that the
363 schools selected should ideally train teachers in all three subjects, be in relatively close
364 proximity to the university, include a mix of high schools (11-14 years) and upper
365 schools (11-16/18 or 14-18/19), plus a school with a new mentor and a school that was
366 new to the partnership. In theory, given the number of partnership schools we work with
367 the selection should not have posed a problem. However, the criteria narrowed the field
368 and we were left with relatively little choice as to which schools could be involved. Four
369 schools which collectively met the criteria plus two reserve schools were eventually
370 selected. Whilst we have confidence in our partnership schools and nothing to hide, we

371 are also realistic and aware of the variable practice that exists amongst them and were
372 anxious about this being all too evident to the inspectors.

373

374 Immediately following the MI's preliminary visit, the schools concerned were contacted
375 to inform them of their involvement and of the details of the inspection. In addition, we
376 proposed for the Director of TE and the PM to visit the schools, including the reserves,
377 approximately 10 days to two weeks in advance to help them to prepare for the visit.

378 The intention was to meet with the headteacher, professional tutor and mentors in each
379 school to discuss the purpose of the inspection and the issues that were likely to be
380 pursued by the inspectors. Conscious of the disturbance these 'preparation' visits
381 would cause, each school was offered a financial contribution towards supply cover to
382 release staff to attend the meetings. Whilst this was both time consuming and
383 expensive, previous experiences of inspection had taught us that it was best to leave
384 nothing to chance (Cale & Harris, 2003). We wanted all involved in the process to be
385 well versed and to feel adequately supported and prepared.

386

387 Given the short notice we and subsequently the selected schools received and the
388 limited time therefore available in which to conduct the visits, it was perhaps not
389 surprising that some difficulties were encountered. The professional tutor who was also
390 the PE mentor in one school was away on a school trip during the week of the visits,
391 whilst the PE mentor in another was involved in off-site professional development on the
392 day of the visit. All meetings nevertheless went ahead with the staff who were available
393 and they agreed to 'relay' information to 'missing' colleagues, as appropriate. Follow up

394 phone calls were also made by the PE SL to offer support and discuss any issues that
395 had arisen during the meetings.

396

397 Whilst school staff on the whole gave generously of their time and appeared
398 appreciative of the support they were given by the university, it was interesting to note
399 that, despite ITT being a partnership, the consensus view seemed to be that it was the
400 university that was being inspected as opposed to 'the partnership'. This paralleled our
401 experiences in previous inspections (Cale & Harris, 2003). On this issue, Cale & Harris
402 (2003, p.138) remarked how, 'despite the requirements for partnership..., it is
403 interesting that the base for an OFSTED inspection is the university, and the resulting
404 report is issued to the university'. Similarly Williams (1997) has noted how, regardless
405 of the level of control actually exercised by the university, the public perception is that it
406 is the relevant and responsible organisation. Indeed, Furlong et al., (2000) suggested
407 how, because schools' involvement in ITT is a voluntary commitment and one which, if
408 they are found to be failing to deliver adequately, they can withdraw from at any time, it
409 is those in higher education who are in effect held responsible. This point was perhaps
410 exemplified by the comments made by staff in two schools during the visits who asked
411 where they should send their invoices to cover the time they were to spend with Ofsted.

412

413 Equally though, it could be argued that we are in part responsible for and reinforce this
414 view. On the one hand, and as we noted in 2003, we have endeavored over the years
415 to involve all members of the partnership including school-based professional tutors and
416 mentors in all aspects of provision and decision making. In fact, the progress we have

417 made in this respect has been formally acknowledged in our Ofsted and External
418 Examiner reports in recent years. Yet, as in previous inspections, as soon as Ofsted
419 arrived on the scene, aware of the high stakes involved and that, as highlighted by
420 Williams (1997), we would ultimately be viewed as responsible, we reverted back once
421 more to 'driving' the proceedings, temporarily abandoning the 'true ethos of partnership'
422 we have worked so hard to develop (Cale & Harris, 2003, p.144).

423

424 Also of interest was the fact that the school-based ITT staff again appeared content for
425 us to take the lead and grateful for our intervention. Our experiences during this and in
426 past inspections (Cale & Harris, 2003) reinforce the findings of national survey and case
427 study work which have revealed that, whilst the role of schools in ITT is changing and
428 schools are generally willing to take on more responsibility for the support of trainees in
429 developing practical classroom competence, the majority do not want to take on more
430 than this and are unwilling to do so (Furlong et al., 2000). As a consequence, in the
431 vast majority of courses those in higher education remain 'firmly in charge' (Furlong et
432 al., 2000, p.113).

433

434 In addition to preparing the schools for the inspection, we also felt it necessary to
435 prepare the trainees. During the preliminary visit the MI established that the inspectors
436 would wish to meet approximately 50 trainees across the subjects. This number was to
437 comprise 23 PE trainees (29.5% of the cohort) plus 6 reserves. Within the sample, the
438 MI also requested for us to select 'special cases' or 'stories', which might include a 'high
439 flying' trainee, a 'baseline' trainee, and one or two trainees with special needs who had

440 used the services offered by the university's Disabilities and Additional Needs Service
441 (DANS). We had concerns with the MI's requests on a number of counts. Firstly, the
442 number of trainees involved seemed to be excessively high. Secondly, for the
443 inspectors to gain a representative view of the quality of the course we would rather
444 them meet a representative sample of trainees as opposed to 'special cases' or
445 'stories'. It was also frustrating that the MI asked for additional information to be made
446 available to the inspectors for each of the 'special cases' they were to meet, over and
447 above the information already provided. This included a summary of the trainees'
448 backgrounds and details as to how their individual needs were being addressed on the
449 course. This request resulted in the PE SL having to produce detailed notes about the
450 trainees specifically for the inspection, contradicting the guidance given on
451 documentation in the Inspection Handbook (2005b). Extracts of these notes for two
452 trainees are presented in table 2.

453

454

Insert Table 2

455

456 A final concern related to the MI's request to meet with trainees who had received
457 support from DANS. This raised data protection and confidentiality issues in that
458 permission had to be sought from the trainees to firstly share this information with
459 Ofsted, and secondly to be interviewed by the MI about their needs, experiences and
460 the support they had received.

461

462 Once the trainees had been selected, all were contacted and requested to attend a half
463 day meeting at the university on 16th January from 1-4pm. The meeting aimed to
464 explain the purpose and process of the inspection and to help the trainees prepare for
465 their involvement. Trainees were also asked to bring their teaching practice files to the
466 meeting, records of mentor meetings and targets, plus relevant assessment information
467 including coursework.

468

469 Given the trainees were undertaking their block teaching practice at this time, their
470 attendance required them to miss half a day of school. All partnership schools were
471 therefore contacted asking for those trainees involved to be released from teaching
472 commitments on this afternoon. To minimise the inconvenience this would cause and to
473 try to ensure continuity and progression of learning for the pupils affected by their
474 teachers' absence, the group were requested to plan any lessons they would have been
475 teaching in advance and pass their plans onto the usual class teachers. Thus, the
476 disruption caused by the inspection now extended beyond the university and the four
477 (plus two reserve) schools to be visited, to approximately 50 trainees, 30 more schools,
478 and hundreds of pupils.

479

480 During the meeting the purpose, requirements and programme for the week were
481 outlined and checks were made that trainees had all their paperwork in order. The
482 areas the MI had identified were to be a focus of the inspection were shared with the
483 trainees and the group was reminded of the course policies, processes and procedures
484 with respect to each. For example, we were aware that selection was to be a focus of

485 the inspectors' questioning but it was over 12 months since many of the trainees had
486 been interviewed for the course. For some this experience had now become a feint and
487 distant memory and some memory jogging was required.

488

489 The PGCE course is demanding and intense at the best of times and concerns have
490 been expressed previously over the increased workload and pressure inspections place
491 on all involved, including on targeted trainees (Cale & Harris, 2003). Whilst staff
492 reassured the trainees they were not being assessed during the inspection they, as their
493 predecessors before them did, found it difficult to disassociate an assessment of the
494 course from what they felt would be an evaluation of themselves. Eager to present
495 themselves in the best light, it was evident that some were already feeling the pressure
496 and were concerned about the added burden the inspection was going to pose.

497

498 **The 'brief' inspection gets underway**

499 Predictably, the week beginning 30th January was particularly hectic and stressful for
500 university staff. Not only did Ofsted appear on the scene but, as explained earlier, it
501 was the first week back for the trainees following their first block teaching practice. The
502 Inspection Handbook (Ofsted, 2005b) clearly outlines the activities to be undertaken on
503 each day of the inspection week and this was closely adhered to.

504

505 The inspectors had a total of 16 files to read between them and set to work scrutinising
506 them upon arrival on day one. Given the volume of paperwork the inspectors were
507 faced with however, it came as a surprise that the MI should still want more. The MI

508 requested to see 'raw' school evaluation data which he was aware was being gathered
509 from the trainees that very morning.

510

511 At lunch time on day one an orientation meeting was held between the PE SI and PE
512 SL and mid afternoon the MI met with the Director of TE and the PM. The day
513 concluded with the PE SI meeting a group of 8 PE trainees for an hour. Given that this
514 followed a full day of sessions, we feared the trainees may not be at their best.

515 Nonetheless, they were under pressure to 'do their best'. During the meeting the
516 trainees were reportedly asked about a range of issues not dissimilar to those we had
517 anticipated and afterwards the general feeling was that the meeting had gone well.

518

519 Days two and three however, were when the school visits and the bulk of the interviews
520 took place. Given that we were pleased with the progress and developments that had
521 been made since the last inspection and the MI had forewarned us of the main issues to
522 be pursued during the inspection, the interviews were not expected to pose too many
523 surprises or problems. The MI had requested that the Director of TE, the PM, SLs and
524 a further 15 PE trainees be interviewed over the course of days two and three and
525 meetings were arranged around the school visits and the inspectors', though
526 unfortunately not the trainees' commitments. This inevitably led to some disruption to
527 sessions and to the learning experience for the trainees concerned.

528

529 The meetings with the trainees on these days involved separate group meetings with
530 the MI and AMI and a sample of trainees selected from each subject, as well as

531 meetings with trainees who had been placed in the schools they had or were due to
532 visit. Following these, the PE trainees again seemed reasonably confident that they
533 had gone well and from their feedback it was evident that the inspectors were consistent
534 in the issues and themes they were pursuing. Given the efforts we had gone to in
535 briefing all concerned on such matters, we just hoped that the inspectors were hearing
536 consistent responses.

537

538 A meeting was held between the PE SL, a senior PE colleague and the PE SI on day
539 two. The discussion focused predominantly on developments since the previous
540 inspection which we were keen and appreciative of the opportunity to elaborate on.
541 Some searching questions were asked with regards to the impact of the developments
542 on the trainees' and schools' practice, but we felt satisfied we were able to provide the
543 evidence of impact Ofsted was looking for. Two lengthy meetings were also held
544 between the Director of TE, PM and the MI which focused on a range of issues. Some
545 of these included the issues being 'pursued', whilst others had arisen from the
546 documentation and interviews during the inspection week.

547

548 Finally, the school visits went ahead as planned which involved the MI and AMI visiting
549 the four selected schools. This aspect of the inspection perhaps troubled us most for a
550 few reasons. For example, just as we were concerned about the increased workload
551 and pressure the inspection was placing on trainees, we were also worried about its
552 impact on schools, professional tutors, and mentors. Recognising that schools are
553 under no obligation to be involved in ITT, Williams (1997) suggests that schools may

554 well opt out if unreasonable demands are placed on them. School staff had already
555 given generously of their time during the preparatory meetings and visits but it was also
556 clear from these that a couple of individuals were not overly interested or enthusiastic
557 about the prospect of their involvement. This left us wondering how well they would
558 prepare and perform for Ofsted for, as has been acknowledged elsewhere (Williams,
559 1997; Furlong et al., 2000), whilst inspection and quality control in ITT are a priority for
560 university staff, they are not for schools whose concerns are with its pupils. A final and
561 related concern was that, despite public perception and Ofsted's view that we are
562 responsible and accountable for the quality of the school-based training, in reality, we
563 know we have minimal control and influence (Cale & Harris, 2003). Despite the above
564 however, we were hopeful that most schools and staff would do their utmost to perform
565 well in the knowledge that they were representing over 50 partnership schools. In
566 speaking to school staff after the visits, it was reassuring to hear that they felt the visits
567 had gone well and that there had been no surprises in the questions the inspectors had
568 asked.

569

570 **The 'brief' verdict**

571 On day three, and following a review and moderation meeting involving all inspectors, the
572 PE SI met with the Director of TE, the PE SL and a senior PE colleague to provide oral
573 feedback on the subject specific elements of the inspection. According to the PE SI, the
574 feedback was restricted to the 'major areas of strength' she had identified and the aspects
575 that made the practice distinct. The feedback was extremely positive with a few of the
576 more notable comments including:

577 'The overall judgement is that there are many elements of very good and outstanding
578 practice'.

579 'The course is innovative and there is an ethos of continuous improvement'.

580 'Loughborough trainees are real ambassadors for the course and the profession'.

581 'The course fully reflects best practice across the country'.

582

583 Such feedback naturally raised staff's hopes that overall we would achieve the outcome
584 we were hoping for. However, we were also well aware that under the new inspection
585 framework the focus was on the M&QA of the whole provision, and that whilst the
586 judgment made in PE contributed to the overall judgement, the quality across subjects
587 and the provision was also crucial.

588

589 On day four the MI and AMI met to collate, review and moderate the inspection
590 evidence, had a final meeting with the Director of TE and the PM, and spent the
591 remainder of the day drafting their inspection report. All that then remained for the final
592 day was for the MI and AMI to provide feedback to ITT staff on M&QA and on the
593 quality of training, during which staff listened intently as the inspectors relayed their
594 findings. Much to the relief of all, the feedback was again overwhelmingly positive with
595 'many excellent features'. A few minor issues were highlighted, some of which we
596 agreed with but some of which we felt could be challenged.

597

598 The above point raises questions with regards to how Ofsted conduct the business of
599 giving feedback. Whilst in both feedback meetings the atmosphere was pleasant and

600 the comments on the whole very positive, the sessions were not seen as a forum for
601 discussion or an opportunity for professional debate. Following our first inspection in
602 1996, Hardy & Evans (2000, p.70) expressed their views of such a practice suggesting
603 that 'to reduce discussion of the complexity of ITT provision to an across-the-table (one-
604 way) 'exchange of views' was as preposterously risible as it was unhelpful'. Likewise,
605 Campbell & Husbands (2000) have highlighted the limitations of such a system in which
606 decisions are made without dialogue or discussion, arguing that a process designed to
607 contribute to quality enhancement would be committed to outward looking dialogue.
608 Nonetheless, during the meeting we tried unsuccessfully to engage in dialogue with the
609 inspectors over a couple of points of inaccuracy.

610

611 Further frustrations with the feedback process were that, despite the amount of positive
612 verbal feedback relayed to us, not all of it would appear in the final report and, because
613 the report was yet to be moderated, no grade could be given to us until after this had
614 taken place. With regards to the moderation of short inspections, the Inspection
615 Handbook explains how, during the moderation meeting the MI and AMI 'will match
616 carefully the evidence to the grade criteria for the M cell' which will 'lead to a
617 recommendation for the provisional grade...' (Ofsted, 2005b, p.72). A moderation panel
618 then meet to review the report and consider whether the evidence is accurately
619 reflected in the draft report and to moderate and agree the provisional grade. Following
620 this, a draft report is sent to the provider who is invited to check its factual accuracy
621 prior to publication (Ofsted, 2005b). Thus, if we simply did not agree with the judgment
622 or any of the content, we were relatively powerless to change it.

623

624 We sincerely hoped that the MI was to recommend a grade 1 for M&QA and present
625 sufficient evidence for this to be agreed at the moderation panel. Whilst in theory this
626 seemed a thorough process, we were still left wondering what exactly the moderation
627 process entailed and whether it had and would be afforded the time it deserved and
628 needed. Certainly flaws have been identified with the moderation of judgements in the
629 past. For example, in Sinkinson's (2004) study of the role of the MI in effecting
630 consistency of judgement and reporting on four HEI-based ITT providers, several
631 important inconsistencies were highlighted and discussed in terms of the actual and
632 potential role of the MI as the final moderator of consistency. Although Sinkinson
633 (2004) considers that a 'positive step forward' has since been made in that Ofsted's
634 recent frameworks involve on site moderation meetings at each stage of the inspection
635 (Ofsted, 2002b; 2005b), we still felt relatively in the dark and uneasy about the process.
636 On this note, Ofsted's procedures have been described as 'clandestine' (Campbell &
637 Husbands, 2000) and to be 'kept behind OFSTED's walls' (Sinkinson & Jones, 2001,
638 p.235). Sinkinson (2004) notes for example, how Ofsted does not yet allow public or
639 academic access to original inspection data, whilst Sinkinson & Jones (2001, p.235)
640 recommend that such '...evidence bases from which assessments are made and
641 moderated should be made transparent and explicit to all involved...'. According to
642 Jones & Sinkinson (2000), transparency is crucial if there is to be confidence in the
643 system.

644

645 **A 'brief' celebration**

646 Following the inspection week, many tasks remained. These included checking and
647 confirming the verbal feedback we had received during the feedback meetings with all in
648 attendance (which was important in the event of us wishing to challenge the outcome or
649 any aspects of the draft report), communicating the feedback to all concerned (including
650 school and university staff, trainees, the Dean of Faculty and Heads of
651 School/Department), and thanking them for their support. The latter also involved
652 sending personalised thank you letters to the schools, professional tutors, mentors and
653 trainees who had been directly involved in the inspection.

654

655 In addition, and in light of the feedback we had received, we wasted no time in writing to
656 TDA, Ofsted and our MP once again concerning our reduced ITT allocation. We wished
657 to share the feedback with them and also now question the rationale for cutting
658 numbers on a PE course described as 'reflecting best practice across the country'. In
659 addition, after the inspection was over we quizzed the MI over the anomalies within the
660 new inspection framework⁷ whereby a good (or very good) provider is unable to improve
661 its category rating from B to A. We also asked how a 26.3% reduction in our allocation
662 for PE could be justified when the course reflected 'best practice'. The MI replied that
663 these were interesting questions which should be pursued with Ofsted and the TDA.
664 We took his advice but this has been to no avail.

665

666 In April 2006 we received a copy of the draft report with confirmation that we had again
667 achieved a grade 1 for M&QA and we were pleased to read that, in Ofsted's eyes, 'the
668 partnership provides excellent training' (Ofsted, 2006, p. 5). Furthermore, a number of

669 key strengths were identified and only two relatively minor points for consideration. It
670 was also satisfying to see that a number of very positive comments relating specifically
671 to the PE course featured within the report. As we expected following the inspectors'
672 verbal feedback, there were a few issues we wished to and subsequently challenged
673 within the draft report. This resulted in yet further work but on the whole, our points
674 were accepted and minor changes were made to the final report which was published in
675 June 2006.

676

677 Whilst the grade 1 was well received, we were nevertheless amazed and exhausted by
678 the work entailed by this 'short' inspection which, we had been led to believe, would be
679 effective, efficient, cost effective and less burdensome (Ofsted, 2005b; Ofsted & TTA
680 2004). In our eyes, the inspection, far from being a 'brief encounter' had been an
681 enormous burden on university and school staff and on trainees. With regards to 'cost
682 effectiveness' and constituting the 'free consultancy' the MI proposed it to be, it had
683 proven to be a huge financial burden on the university in terms of staff time, energy and
684 resources.

685

686 In addition, the inspection could prove to be very costly to the university in other ways.
687 For example, the time staff spent on preparing for, undergoing and recovering from the
688 inspection detracted from and barred other important aspects of their work at the time
689 such as conducting research and securing publications for the 2008 Research
690 Assessment Exercise⁸. Potentially the greatest cost of inspection, however, is that
691 under the new inspection framework, despite having undergone two successful short

692 inspections and achieving a grade 1 for M&QA, we remain a category B priority
693 provider. In this respect, we are susceptible to further cuts in our ITT allocation and
694 funding and therefore, in terms of our financial viability and future, continue to be
695 vulnerable. This surely raises serious questions over the effectiveness and efficiency of
696 the inspection. Earlier, it was noted how one of the purposes of inspection was to
697 'stimulate improvement in the quality of provision' (Ofsted, 2005a, p.1). In our view, a
698 framework which fails to recognize or reward improvement, or which it could be argued
699 in our case punishes it, is fundamentally flawed and can do little to 'stimulate
700 improvement'. To the contrary, such a system leaves providers like ourselves feeling
701 frustrated, dismayed and potentially de-motivated.

702

703 Further, given the limitations inherent in the inspection methodology, some of which
704 have been highlighted here and others elsewhere (Campbell & Husbands, 2000; Cale &
705 Harris, 2003; Hardy & Evans, 2000; Jones & Sinkinson, 2000; Sinkinson & Jones, 2001;
706 Tymms, 1997), plus the measures we felt we had to take to prepare all involved, we
707 remain cynical about the credibility of the whole process and the validity of the
708 outcomes. Upon making a similar point in our earlier paper we asked 'What did the
709 report and the grades really reflect and mean? (Cale & Harris, 2003, p.156). Indeed, we
710 believe that our inspection results in part reflect the lessons we have learned over the
711 years in 'how best to organise, manage and manipulate the inspection process!' (Cale &
712 Harris, 2003, p.157).

713

714 Make no mistake, we agree with Ofsted that the Loughborough PGCE partnership is a
715 quality course. Further, we are keen to further develop and improve our provision.
716 However, and particularly within the current framework under which we are destined to
717 be forever 'good', this is in spite of, rather than because of inspection. Others
718 (Campbell & Husbands, 2000; Graham & Nabb, 1999; Sinkinson & Jones, 2001) hold
719 similar views that, contrary to the intended purposes of inspection, the process
720 contributes little to improvement and quality enhancement in ITT. Sinkinson & Jones
721 (2001) for example, note how there appears to be little confidence amongst providers
722 that the feedback given by Ofsted contributes to the development of practice, whilst the
723 survey conducted by Graham & Nabb (1999) revealed that three quarters of providers
724 feel that the system receives insufficient overall feedback about good practice based
725 upon inspection evidence. Similarly, Campbell & Husbands (2000) argue that an
726 inspection regime designed to ensure compliance, and in which criteria are imposed,
727 and decisions are made without dialogue or discussion is 'able to contribute little to
728 system improvement' (p.47). It has even been suggested that, far from leading to
729 improvements in ITT, the framework, with its limited conception of quality, failure to
730 acknowledge 'value added', and narrowly defined orthodoxy of what is appropriate in
731 ITT within which providers are required to simply comply, threatens development and
732 innovation (Sinkinson & Jones, 2001).

733

734 **A final 'brief' comment**

735 As the situation stands at present, given 'the overall quality of our training is at least
736 good', we are due to receive another short inspection in three years. By this time, we

737 will have lost 26.3% of our PE quota, trainees who Ofsted describe as 'real
738 ambassadors for the profession', the financial implications of which could jeopardize the
739 future of our 'excellent training' (Ofsted, 2006, p.5). Further, if we are to face a third
740 'brief Ofsted encounter', we will likely re-encounter the same process and frustrations
741 and, at best, again be destined to the same positive yet punitive outcome.

742
743 Based on our experiences and reflections and the findings from the literature, we contest
744 the notion that the inspection process is effective, efficient and cost effective and feel that it
745 still places an enormous burden on providers. Further, as our account illustrates, the
746 process hardly represents a 'brief encounter' and it certainly does NOT constitute 'free
747 consultancy'! What the cost of preparing for and undergoing the inspection itself was in
748 terms of staff time, energy and resources is anyone's guess but worryingly, the worst
749 expense may still be to come. The current inspection framework which, in our view, is
750 fundamentally flawed could ultimately cost us our ITT course. Our colleagues were 'fired
751 by dismay and frustration for the practices' Ofsted and the TTA (now TDA) demonstrated in
752 1996/97 (Hardy & Evans, 2000, p.58). Disappointingly almost 10 years on, and despite
753 revised frameworks and promises of improvement, we too are not only fired by dismay and
754 frustration at their practices, but deeply concerned about the impact these may have on the
755 future of ITT.

756

757 **Footnotes**

758 1. Ofsted is the inspectorate for children and learners in England. They are a non-
759 ministerial government department accountable to parliament that inspects the

760 quality and standards of publicly funded education and child care services. They
761 inspect, report on, and regulate schools, colleges, teacher training, childcare,
762 children's services, and youth work.

763 2. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (the TDA) is an executive non-
764 departmental public body of the Department for Education and Skills. It was formed
765 in 2005 from the merger of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the National
766 Remodelling Team (NRT). The TDA have responsibility for the initial recruitment
767 and training of teachers and for promoting teaching as an attractive career option. In
768 addition, they have the wider remit for the training and development of the whole
769 school workforce. With regards to ITT, the TDA has a statutory function to accredit
770 and fund providers of ITT who can demonstrate that they will satisfy the Secretary of
771 State's criteria for ITT and to allocate trainee numbers.

772 3. Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses are University-based initial
773 teacher training courses for graduates and those with equivalent level qualifications,
774 which, on successful completion, lead to recognition of Qualified Teacher Status
775 (QTS). The duration of a PGCE course is normally one year, with 24 weeks of the
776 course being spent in at least two different schools.

777 4. The TDA has a legal duty to make decisions on ITT allocations based upon quality
778 of provision and use Ofsted inspection gradings/categories as the quality measure.
779 Due to achieving a grade 1 for Management and Quality Assurance following our
780 previous inspection, Loughborough was assigned 'category B priority' status under
781 the previous inspection framework. Under the formula that was applied, and in line
782 with other category B priority providers, we were subjected to an overall 11%

783 reduction in numbers across three years. However, the other two ITT subjects
784 offered at Loughborough are both shortage subjects and are therefore protected
785 from any cuts. As a result, PE was particularly disadvantaged in that it had to carry
786 the entire reduction.

787 5. Circular 2/02 (DfES & TTA, 2002) sets out the Standards for the award of qualified
788 teacher status (QTS) and the requirements for Initial Teacher Training (ITT). The
789 requirements for ITT specify what providers must do and are organised into four
790 sections: trainee entry requirements; training and assessment; management of the
791 ITT partnership; and quality assurance. Under 'management of the ITT partnership'
792 all providers must, amongst other requirements, work in partnership with schools
793 and actively involve them in planning and delivering ITT and in the selection and
794 assessment of trainees.

795 6. The Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Standards are outcome statements that set out
796 what a trainee teacher must know, understand and be able to do to be awarded
797 QTS. At the time this research was undertaken, these were organised in three inter-
798 related sections: Professional Values and Practice; Knowledge and Understanding;
799 and Teaching.

800 7. Presently, the only providers protected from the TDA's allocation cuts are category A
801 providers. However, the current Ofsted framework does not allow good or very good
802 providers to shift from category B to category A status following a short inspection. It
803 only permits confirmation of a previous grade. Furthermore, as a good or very good
804 provider, providers are not eligible to receive a full inspection.

805 8. The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) is conducted by the Higher Education
806 Funding Council for England and assesses the quality of research in universities and
807 colleges in the UK. The RAE provides quality rating for research in each HEI across
808 all disciplines and the outcomes are published. Its main purpose is to enable the
809 higher education funding bodies to distribute public funds for research selectively on
810 the basis of quality. Thus, institutions conducting the best research receive a larger
811 proportion of the available grant.

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893

894 **Table 1 - Documentation requested by Ofsted (adapted from Ofsted, 2005b, pp. 33-34)**

List 1 - Documentation requested for the MI's preliminary visit
Examples of programme or course reviews undertaken since the last inspection, together with improvement/action/development plans
Summary of any significant changes to course design and structure, staffing, resources and partnership arrangements since the last inspection
Course handbooks, including handbooks in all subjects/curriculum areas and GPS
Equal opportunities and race relations policies
Details of the schools in which trainees were placed
The partnership agreement (including the rationale for the partnership) and partnership handbook
Details of how resources are allocated between central and school-based provision
Management structures for ITT and quality assurance arrangements, together with examples of committee meetings illustrating how the provision is managed and/or quality assured
A list of all staff involved in ITT and their main responsibilities
Job descriptions for senior ITT managers and for partnership management roles
External examiners' arrangements for ITT, terms of reference and reports
List 2 – Additional documentation requested for the main inspection
A selection of GTTR forms for trainees, including in those subjects for which there is no specialist inspector
Guidance for selection interviews and a sample of selection/interview records for each course, including in those subjects for which there is no specialist inspector
Assessment records and reports for a sample of trainees for each course
External examiners' reports for the previous three years (those not provided for subject inspectors)
Any quantitative data used for benchmarking or evaluation purposes (e.g., employment data)
List 3 - Subject specific documentation requested for the main inspection
The subject questionnaire (summarising the changes to the course since the last inspection)
A list of trainees giving age, ethnicity, gender and subject qualifications
A sample of ten GTTR forms for trainees
External examiners' reports for the past three years and any other monitoring or evaluation reports
Procedures for assessing and responding to the needs of individual trainees,
Plus, documentation for those trainees to be interviewed
Examples of mentor records to include weekly training plans and details of training activities
Examples of short and medium term lesson planning
Lesson observations and formative action plans
Subject knowledge and ICT audits or other assessments
Copies of completed assignments

895

Table 2 – Example summary information provided for the inspectors

Trainee 1 – female ‘high flyer’	Trainee 2 – male ‘baseline’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated with a first class honours degree from Loughborough University in Sports Science with Management in 2004. • Completed a number of pedagogy related modules (such as equity and inclusion in physical education, adolescence, and analysis and performance in sport (covering dance, swimming, basketball and hockey) as part of her degree course. • Prior to the PGCE course, worked as a teaching assistant in a local secondary school primarily working with children with severe learning and behavioural difficulties. • Is particularly strong in the area of invasion games (most notably hockey). • Acted upon all of the recommendations made to her at and post-interview (including gaining a first aid qualification, attending the booster course in gymnastics, and developing subject knowledge in cricket and rugby). • Has produced an excellent first piece of written work for PE (rated ‘very good’ - (subject to moderation)). • Has made very good progress in her teaching on the course to date. The professional tutor at her phase 1 school has specifically written to the TEU informing us what an excellent trainee she has been. <p>The trainee is being challenged via the general and subject specific methods and strategies outlined in the TEU policy paper ‘Meeting Individual Needs’ and within the PE Subject Questionnaire. A specific PE example includes her involvement in planning and delivering aspects of the PGCE hockey session to her peers in October, a challenge she responded very well to.</p> <p>She is also being challenged to further develop her subject knowledge in some areas by registering for relevant coaching courses organised by the Sports Development Centre here at the university.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated with a 2:2 joint honours degree from Loughborough University in English, Physical Education and Sports Science. • Completed a number of pedagogy related modules (such as equity and inclusion in physical education, teaching and coaching studies, young people, physical activity and pedagogy, and analysis and performance in sport (covering rugby, football, athletics and dance) as part of his degree course. • Prior to the PGCE course was elected to work for a year in University Sport. • Is strong in the area of games (most notably rugby and tennis). • Acted upon 2 of the 3 recommendations made to him at and post-interview (due to limited availability of places, his application for the gymnastics and dance booster courses was unsuccessful). • Has produced written work in PE and GPS of a satisfactory (subject to moderation) and good standard respectively to date. • Has suffered a couple of personal setbacks during the course but has made adequate progress in his teaching during phase 1. <p>The trainee is being challenged via the general and subject specific methods and strategies outlined in the TEU policy paper ‘Meeting Individual Needs’ and within the PE Subject Questionnaire. A specific PE example includes the targets set/agreed for him for phase 1, which focus on developing subject knowledge and observing and gaining experience of gymnastics in schools (given he was not accepted onto the gymnastics booster course prior to the course), and gaining a first aid qualification (a recommendation made at interview that he did not achieve).</p> <p>The trainee’s prior work experience has given him a good deal of confidence and his social and communication skills are well developed. In this respect, he was invited to put himself forward as a candidate to represent his group on the staff-trainee committee (and was voted by his peers to assume the role of staff-trainee representative).</p>

	He is also a popular and well respected member of his practical group who has been instrumental in promoting the use of LEARN (the university's server for on-line teaching and learning') and the subject knowledge development groups (within practical groups).
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