



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cardiff Partnership for Initial Teacher Education
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by

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and Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Cardiff Partnership for Initial Teacher Education

The Cardiff Partnership for Initial Teacher Education comprises Cardiff Metropolitan University and its initial teacher education (ITE) partnership schools, working in collaboration with the University of Oxford, Cardiff University, Central South Consortium (CSC), Education Achievement Service (EAS), Partneriaeth and Powys and Cardiff local authorities.

The partnership provides three programmes of ITE. These programmes were accredited by the Education Workforce Council (EWC) from September 2019:

- PGCE secondary (11-18), with pathways in music, drama, art & design, physical education, history, religious education, geography, Welsh, English, modern foreign languages, mathematics, biology with science, chemistry with science, physics with science, information communications technology and computing and design and technology)
- PGCE primary (3-11)
- BA (Hons) primary education with QTS (3-11)

All programmes are full time and all are offered bilingually. The BA (Hons) primary education programme is a three-year course, the PGCE primary and secondary programmes are one-year courses.

There are 315 students following the BA Primary programme, of whom 47 are taking the course through the medium of Welsh. There are 190 students on the PGCE Primary programme with 43 studying through the medium of Welsh. There are 260 students following the PGCE Secondary programme, of whom 45 are taking the course through the medium of Welsh.

The leadership structure includes a strategic board, a management group, five steering groups and a research advisory board. The partnership leadership structure is overseen by the Cardiff School of Education and Social Policy (CSESP) Senior Management Planning Team (SMPT).

The partnership works with over 220 schools across south Wales. Many of these schools are 'clinical practice' schools which support students with their school experience. Twenty-three secondary schools and 39 primary schools, work as lead schools, or in small groups as lead school alliances.

Summary

The Cardiff Partnership is founded on strong collaborative working relationships and a sense of mutual endeavour. Partnership members share a vision for initial teacher education, rooted in national priorities with a commitment to developing high quality professionals. Senior leaders provide strong and sensitive leadership. There is a clear leadership structure that allows all partners to play to their strengths and work together effectively for the benefit of students.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the partnership has continued to provide many aspects of its work in ITE successfully in line with its vision. The university worked creatively with its partner schools so that elements of the taught programme were delivered online, and schools supported students well to enable them to undertake their school experiences effectively, albeit in a more constrained way. The partnership strengthened its processes for supporting students' well-being and retained these approaches beneficially post-pandemic. However, the restrictions meant that the partnership was unable to carry out a few processes as planned, such as the quality assurance of school experience, and a few aspects of the programmes were not linked coherently enough. As a result, although they have met the standards for qualified teacher status successfully, a minority of students have not improved their planning and teaching in school as well as they might.

All programmes offer a wide range of stimulating learning experiences including opportunities to explore ideas in the school context, and to explore creative teaching approaches with their peers and partnership staff. Most tutors and mentors establish positive working relationships with students and support them purposefully to make good progress.

A particularly positive feature of the partnership is its promotion of a strong research culture which is having a beneficial impact on many aspects of its work. Many partnership staff model effectively how research and enquiry are an important part of professional practice. There are significant strengths in supporting race equality and developing the Welsh language in ITE.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve students' lesson planning skills
- R2 Improve students' critical skills, especially in relation to linking theory to practice
- R3 Improve the quality of mentoring
- R4 Strengthen the continuity and progression of learning experiences in all programmes

What happens next

Estyn will invite the partnership to prepare case studies on its work in relation to the development of the Welsh language and the work of the research champions for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards

Most students make good progress over the duration of their programme. Those who are about to qualify meet the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) securely.

Most secondary students have strong subject knowledge. A minority are developing their knowledge and skills beyond the subject that they are training to teach by making the most of opportunities in school and university to work in related subject areas. For example, students have benefited from the chance to plan and teach cross-curricular projects and skills lessons in school. Most students training to become primary teachers are developing their skills, knowledge and understanding to teach across areas of learning successfully.

Through the taught elements of the programmes, most students are developing a valuable understanding of the key features of the Curriculum for Wales such as the four purposes, the areas of learning and experience and the progression steps. Primary and secondary PGCE students develop useful knowledge about planning across phases and subjects in the curriculum through a beneficial cross-phase collaborative project. Many primary students in particular show through their tasks and assignments that they are considering elements of the curriculum critically. In a few cases, students' understanding of the notion of a purpose driven curriculum is very well developed. However, during school experience, a minority of students' planning reflects the misconceptions held by school staff about the Curriculum for Wales, for example by planning to include the four purposes in each lesson.

Overall, in their school experiences, many students demonstrate a good understanding of the specific phase, age and curriculum requirements of the classes they teach. They plan lessons that have relevant content and identify appropriate skills for pupils to develop and practise. Most secondary students have a thorough understanding of GCSE specifications and criteria. However, a minority of students training to teach the youngest pupils in the primary phase tend to focus too much on teaching a small group of pupils rather than planning and teaching purposefully for the whole class. Furthermore, mentors tend not to address this issue because it mirrors practice in the placement school.

Many primary students and a majority of secondary students plan creatively, designing interesting and engaging learning experiences for pupils. Where students' planning is less imaginative, this tends to be because they feel restricted to plan and teach within the school's schemes of work.

Most students plan their lessons diligently and in detail. Many show that they have a wide repertoire of teaching strategies and can plan appropriate activities to enable learning. A minority of students work exceptionally hard to create and source imaginative learning resources that engage pupils effectively. Many students plan a suitable range of assessment strategies.

Although, generally, students plan well-organised lessons that engage pupils, a majority of students do not always identify learning intentions and success criteria

that are specific enough. This limits their ability to assess pupils' progress accurately and means that their interactions with pupils in the classroom tend to focus on keeping pupils on task, rather than deepening their learning.

Many students are conscientious in working with their mentors to get to know their pupils well. They plan with consideration to individual pupils' needs and take suitable account of their previous learning. However, although many students identify opportunities to differentiate learning for specific pupils, they do not always plan work that will meet their needs well enough.

During the programme, most students have planned a sequence of lessons that show a sufficient understanding of how to plan for pupils' progression. A few primary students have worked effectively with school staff to engage in curriculum design, and this has strengthened their understanding of assessment and progression in planning. However, in practice, students share their classes with their mentor or miss lessons due to the structure of the programme, and this means that they do not have enough opportunities to enhance the skill of planning and teaching a consecutive series of lessons.

Most students develop their teaching skills well. Many assert a confident and positive presence in their classrooms. They manage pupils, resources and spaces assuredly. They use the school's behaviour policy effectively to manage their classes.

Many students interact well with pupils in the classroom, encouraging engagement and checking on progress. However, a minority of students find maintaining pupils' engagement challenging and misjudge the pace of learning required. They move either too quickly or too slowly through planned activities.

Many students communicate clearly and purposefully in the classroom. They use modelling and exemplification well to explain activities and provide instruction. Many are beginning to use questioning effectively. They are becoming competent at orchestrating class discussion. However, a majority of students do not always probe pupils' responses well enough to gauge their understanding or to extend their learning.

Most students are good language models for their pupils. They speak confidently and clearly. They use subject terminology appropriately and many take opportunities to develop pupils' subject-related vocabulary.

Most students are conscientious about tracking their progress and, generally, many are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in their teaching. When discussing progress with their mentors, many are honest and reflective. However, they do not consider the quality of their planning well enough. Many students' evaluations of their lessons are often superficial, descriptive and lacking in analysis. They do not focus well enough on what they intended pupils to learn, and they do not evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching by considering its impact on pupils' progress. Although many students make helpful connections between theory and practice in their assignments and tasks, they rarely link their research, reading and observations to their evaluations of their day-to-day classroom practice.

Most students have suitable literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They plan appropriate opportunities to develop these skills in their pupils. However, although most students make suitable reference to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in their planning, a majority do not have secure enough strategies to do so effectively in practice. Furthermore, their understanding of how to assess pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is underdeveloped.

Many students of all levels of language competency make good progress in developing their Welsh language skills. However, although many English medium primary students use Welsh words and simple phrases in the classroom, they do not have a good enough understanding of how to support pupils' progress in Welsh. In their school experiences, the use of Welsh by English medium secondary students is even more limited. This is partly because they do not have sufficient opportunities to observe everyday Welsh in their placement schools.

Generally, students engage enthusiastically in their taught sessions and make well-considered contributions, especially when these sessions are face-to-face. They ask pertinent questions and reflect thoughtfully on their school experiences. A minority of students engage critically with research materials and express clear and relevant views on published research. However, in a few sessions, students are constrained by teaching approaches and do not develop their critical thinking well enough.

In the school-led training days, many students make good progress in developing their understanding of classroom and whole-school practice. They make germane links to educational theory, and a minority of students make insightful connections between their reading and real-life contexts, for example when discussing Maslow's 'Hierarchy of needs' in relation to deprivation and their experiences of pupils who are disadvantaged by poverty.

In their academic assignments, students engage well with a wide range of relevant educational research. PGCE students are particularly resourceful and imaginative in identifying useful sources to support their written work and many seek out relevant journal articles and recent research to analyse together with the better-known texts. A few students produce assignments of a high quality. They write persuasively, drawing together sources skilfully to construct a cogent argument.

However, a minority of students struggle to communicate their ideas clearly, rely too heavily on an uncritical use of texts, and write in a convoluted style that does not demonstrate their thinking well enough. In contrast, for one assignment, students create an infographic, which shows that many are able to synthesise and evaluate information from a variety of sources to draw out the salient points effectively. Through this assignment, many students show that they are able to use research effectively to find solutions to real life priorities in their lead schools.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most student teachers form strong and positive professional relationships with their mentors and tutors. They recognise that their mentors are supportive of their wellbeing and mental health and that this is integral to their development as teachers. Many students make effective use of the university's wide range of pastoral support

systems. They assess their own well-being beneficially through weekly self-declaration forms.

Most students know how to make informed choices about their mental and physical health, particularly in the post-pandemic period. They are developing an understanding of how to balance workload pressures. For example, they break down their targets into small manageable steps to prioritise them.

However, a minority of students occasionally struggle to manage their workload, especially when balancing the demands of assignments and preparing for teaching.

Most student teachers feel safe in school and university and say that they are treated fairly. Nearly all say that they understand the required child protection and safety procedures and are clear about what these are. For example, in lessons they remind learners of important safety rules, such as handling materials appropriately when undertaking scientific experiments. They apply school procedures effectively, for example by seeking parental permission forms for trips and visits, and they attend relevant professional learning in schools such as Prevent training. Most students uphold school policies and procedures well. They are developing strategies to manage challenging behaviour appropriately and safely, following individual pupils' learning plans and pastoral targets where appropriate. Most students are developing a good understanding of how to develop constructive relationships with key stakeholders such as parents.

Nearly all students build positive working relationships with the pupils in school. Many use humour appropriately and are relentlessly positive. Many student teachers show that they understand the relationship between pupils' well-being and learning. They are beginning to consider how to plan valuable learning experiences that help pupils to consider issues such as identity, feelings and confidence, for example when designing a project for pupils moving from Year 6 to Year 7.

Many students feel that the partnership listens to their views, and that they have an influence over what and how they learn. For example, as a result of feedback from students, the partnership provided examples of assignments and exemplar materials, and the school experience observation period was extended. Student representatives contribute positively to the partnership's decision-making through membership of various leadership groups, including the steering groups and strategic board. In school, many students take appropriate opportunities to develop their leadership skills, for example by sharing their expertise with staff in areas such as the application of digital technologies. They are beginning to understand the teacher's role in school improvement. For instance, they explore their school's improvement plan to identify where they can support priorities in the classroom and present their ideas to the school's governors. Many students collaborate well with staff in school to begin to lead aspects of learning. Where appropriate, they contribute well to extra-curricular activities in school such as sports and digital clubs. They make effective use of their enrichment placements to contribute to the wider life of school, such as supporting transition activities.

Most students have a positive professional attitude. They are well motivated and committed to their teaching. They demonstrate enthusiasm for their learning in school and in university. Many students show a professional commitment to seeking,

accepting and acting on constructive advice and feedback. They are willing to have their misconceptions challenged and are keen to improve.

Many students understand the importance of research as a professional commitment. They benefit from the expertise of staff in their lead schools who model practice effectively. They engage enthusiastically with research and enquiry tasks, particularly when these have taken place in school. However, in a minority of taught sessions, students do not prepare well enough, for example by undertaking preparatory reading. Furthermore, a few students do not realise fully how academic tasks and assignments support their development as teachers.

Most students are diligent in using their professional learning portfolios to reflect on their progress. Many log feedback from their mentors carefully, considering how this advice might impact on their teaching. However, the extent to which students develop a critical approach to their reflections and make coherent links between their school experiences and their reading is variable.

Many students recognise the benefits of collaborating with their peers and other practitioners. They participate enthusiastically in activities such as team teaching and joint planning and reflect thoughtfully on these experiences. Most students work well together in pairs and small groups. They are generous with one another and share ideas and experiences helpfully.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, many student teachers' attendance and punctuality in school and in university are good.

Teaching and learning experiences

The curriculum for student teachers at the partnership is developing well in many ways, having not yet run its full course unhindered by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. All programmes are designed to enable students to achieve QTS successfully and meet the ITE accreditation requirements appropriately.

Many students feel that they benefit greatly from their school experiences. In many cases, they receive useful support and guidance as well as helpful sessions and experiences. In some cases, this provision is particularly wide-ranging, creative and comprehensive. For example, staff in one school take students on a tour of the community, engage them in the delivery of assemblies and organising community or charity events, and give them experience of the school's pastoral provision beyond form periods.

The structure and timing of the periods spent in schools pose challenges in terms of providing students with suitable experiences of continuity with classes, planning for progression and assessment for learning. For example, students on the PGCE do not experience a full week in a school, and opportunities for BA students to plan and teach independently are not integrated well enough into the programme as a whole.

There is a clear focus on research and enquiry. The Partnership provides useful opportunities for students to apply their research and enquiry work to their practical teaching, for example through assignments and tasks that require students to consider research in relation to live issues in their schools. The School Led Training

(SLT) days are planned to complement school experience and provide a practical lens on the theory introduced during the university sessions. Students are generally positive about these days. They provide opportunities for them to consider important aspects of professional practice such as behaviour management and pedagogical approaches and how they might use these in their own practice.

Students benefit from valuable opportunities that broaden and enrich their experiences. These include cross-phase days and enrichment periods at the end of the year where students choose to pursue a particular interest, such as leading a primary/secondary transition project.

Subject or phase-specific university sessions are generally valued and enjoyed by students. They engage particularly well in the face-to-face sessions and benefit from the opportunity to work with their fellow students, share experiences and discuss subject or phase specific issues. In the best examples, these sessions offer focused and timely provision that helps students to understand how to become effective teachers of a particular subject or phase. This supports them well as they develop along their journey as student teachers. However, the quality and content of these sessions vary too much and there is no overarching plan to ensure that key topics are covered at the most appropriate times on all programmes. As a result, students are not having equitable experiences across programmes.

Despite the many strengths of the programmes, overall, the different aspects of each programme do not link together well enough. Additionally, staff across the partnership do not communicate with each other well enough regarding the content of the programmes. As a result, the programmes lack coherence at times and do not support the development of students' pedagogical skills as well as they could. For example, clinical practice schools are not always sufficiently aware of what happens on SLT or university days and therefore are unable to plan complementary provision or avoid duplication. In addition, important pedagogical aspects, such as lesson planning and pedagogy for the youngest pupils, are not considered in sufficient depth or sequenced appropriately.

Students benefit from helpful opportunities to explore and learn about the Curriculum for Wales through professional studies provision, online resources and subject or phase specific sessions. As a result, many are well informed about the theory and thinking behind the Curriculum for Wales. However, misconceptions are sometimes reinforced on the programmes and students' experiences of the Curriculum for Wales in schools vary widely.

The Partnership supports the development of students' own literacy, numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills through specific resources and skills sessions that are provided to all students. These cover a range of relevant topics. There is a clear process for identifying those in need of additional support, and they are provided with helpful, targeted provision. The programmes also help students to understand how they can support the development of pupils' skills through their teaching, though the effectiveness of this aspect of provision is too variable.

The provision to support the Welsh language is a strength. The Partnership provides graduated courses to improve the Welsh language skills of all students, whatever their proficiency in the language. The 'Pontio' course is an innovative development to

encourage Welsh-speaking students who are studying through the medium of English to transfer to the Welsh sector. Welsh tutors provide helpful guidance and training to all other university tutors on the Cwricwlwm Cymreig. This enables tutors to incorporate aspects of the linguistic, historic and cultural context of Wales into their own subject or phase provision appropriately. Many students are enthusiastic and positive about the provision to support them with their Welsh language skills, but the impact remains limited in terms of their use of Welsh in the classroom. The Partnership is working creatively to try to address national and local issues with recruitment to the Welsh-medium sector, but this remains a challenge.

Across the Partnership, almost all tutors and mentors establish positive working relationships with students and support them purposefully to develop their skills as teachers. Generally, tutors and mentors provide worthwhile opportunities for students to reflect upon their classroom practice. This helps students to develop their teaching skills effectively and is beginning to have a positive impact on the links students make between theory and practice.

Most tutors establish and maintain positive working relationships with students during their university taught sessions and when they are on school experience. Most tutors demonstrate a good knowledge of their subject or phase-specific areas and plan learning experiences that engage students and support them appropriately to develop their understanding of effective teaching. When planning for students' learning, many tutors reflect on their students' starting points, and their knowledge and skills within subjects, and use this information to tailor programme material as required. Where this is most effective, tutors collaborate and work closely with lead and partner school mentors to plan and adjust content throughout the programme. Welsh second language tutors, for example, identify the skills of their students and refine the programme content based on student needs and feedback from schools. However, tutors do not always plan well enough to support students' understanding of the important features of effective lesson planning, for example in identifying the intended learning for pupils or planning for progression in learning over time.

Many tutors plan sessions that include worthwhile opportunities for students to reflect upon educational theory and subject specific issues and relate this to their own practical teaching experiences. Where this is most effective, tutors facilitate critical discussion of research and encourage students to relate this to their own experience. In a few sessions, tutors intervene skilfully to address misconceptions and make astute links between theory and practice, which extends students' understanding of teaching. A minority of tutors use learning environments thoughtfully to engage and deepen students' understanding of effective teaching, for example when challenging students to create a classroom that reflects their understanding of practice for the youngest years in primary school. However, in a minority of instances, tutors do not always challenge students' thinking well enough or provide sufficient opportunity for them to reflect critically on their own or their peers' learning. As a result, tutors do not always help students develop enough confidence in expressing their thinking or deepen their understanding of important topics.

The Partnership provides a suitable range of tasks and assignments to help students make links between theory and their experiences in school. Where this is effective, students develop practice to target key priorities within a real-life context of their placement schools, for example assignments that allow students to consider,

implement and reflect on strategies to address a priority area within the placement school's improvement plan. Most tutors mark assignments in line with clear assessment criteria, using a shared matrix that supports consistency across students' work. Many tutors provide helpful written feedback that challenges students' thinking, signposts further research and helps students understand what they have done well. However, this practice is variable, and in a few cases tutor feedback is limited to basic grammatical errors and does not help the student understand how to improve their work. In cases where a student has not reached the required standard, feedback is often useful and specific, supporting the student to make progress.

During SLT days, in general, senior mentors draw helpfully on their own classroom practice to help students explore topics such as supporting pupils' well-being. Where SLT days are particularly effective, mentors develop and deepen students' thinking by facilitating effective discussion on the links between theory and practice. They encourage students to make specific references to the required reading for the sessions and exemplify how theory has had an impact on practice in schools. However, many mentors do not have a detailed enough understanding of the programme content to support students to make links to theory when reflecting on their classroom practice.

Tutors and mentors encourage students to reflect upon their practice regularly and support them well in understanding what is expected to make progress. The partnership has suitable systems in place to identify and support those students who are not making the expected progress. Tutors have developed helpful processes to monitor all students' progress and work effectively with school mentors to moderate judgements of students' progress. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, tutors resumed their face-to-face visits to schools and undertake joint observations of students with mentors. Tutors engage students and mentors suitably in professional dialogue to discuss students' progress across the required standards. This approach is developing in consistency and regularity across the partnership.

Almost all mentors have developed good working relationships with students during their school experiences and use a range of feedback strategies suitably to help students improve their practice. A majority of mentors use progress reviews purposefully to engage in professional dialogue that supports students in identifying their strengths and areas for improvement. Often in these reviews, mentors encourage students to reflect upon their practice carefully, asking questions that challenge students' thinking and deepen their understanding of effective teaching.

Generally, most mentors provide regular feedback on students' teaching. They provide helpful practical advice to students, particularly in relation to classroom management. In the best examples, mentors draw upon their knowledge of the programme to tailor feedback and encourage students to reflect on educational theory in relation to their teaching. However, in a minority of cases, feedback from mentors does not engage the student in thinking critically about their teaching and, in particular, the quality of their planning. Too often verbal feedback is overly directed by mentors, too generous in its praise, and does not help the student identify carefully enough those specific areas that need improvement.

Care, support and guidance

All programmes promote well the core values of what it means to be a teaching professional. These attitudes and behaviours are modelled effectively in many aspects of the programme. In particular, the partnership is developing a strong research culture, which is having a positive impact on many aspects of its work.

Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, the work of the research champions, the school-led training days, university sessions and the development of a clinical practice model for school experience are successfully encouraging students to engage meaningfully in research and enquiry to develop their practice. Many mentors and tutors model effective practice and demonstrate successfully how research and enquiry has an impact on their everyday practice. However, although the programmes are planned suitably to enable students to become reflective and innovative practitioners, a minority of mentors and tutors do not support students well enough to root the development of their teaching in their reading and research.

The role of the research champion in school is key to the development of students' life-long learning. The research champions are senior members of staff in lead schools who have been trained by the partnership in research methods. In many cases, they provide excellent models of professional practice. They provide strong support for students to engage with research and enquiry. Many guide students towards relevant literature and assist them skilfully to carry out enquiries in school. In a minority of instances, research champions have had a positive impact on professional learning for staff in their own schools, promoting the benefits of partnership working.

The programmes provide many useful opportunities for students to collaborate with their peers and with other practitioners in school. There are suitable opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills, for example through acting as student representatives who take an active role in the development of the partnership. Programmes support student teachers appropriately to take responsibility for their own learning and professional development, including developing their personal literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills and their digital competence. There are many worthwhile opportunities for students to record and reflect on their professional experiences, including feedback from others, and to identify their next steps for development.

The programmes include helpful opportunities to support students' well-being, including managing workload and guidance to help with life-style choices. The partnership has continued to provide beneficial support systems developed during the pandemic to support students well, including those who are most vulnerable. There are helpful processes to audit well-being across the provision. The partnership has strong systems in place to monitor students' attendance and performance in university and in school. Partnership staff identify students in need of support swiftly, and there are timely and well-co-ordinated processes for individual students who require specific intervention and support.

The partnership supports student teachers with additional learning needs well. For example, students with dyslexia are provided with valuable support strategies. The partnership signposts clearly the wider university support systems and services

available for students. Student services provide strong support for the partnership and there is an established line of communication between partnership schools and these services. There is appropriate, individualised support for students. Partnership leaders meet termly with programme and school leads, to monitor and support student teachers and adjust support mechanisms accordingly.

The partnership arrangements for safeguarding meet the requirements and give no cause for concern. There are robust processes for safe recruitment to ensure students' suitability for the teaching profession. There are appropriate programme requirements to make sure that students have relevant inputs on child protection in university and in school.

There is valuable work at a strategic level to support the development of an anti-racist education system and diverse workforce in Wales. The plans to increase the number of students recruited from under-represented groups, to strengthen elements of well-being support and to develop provision for the teaching of antiracism and diversity are an important step towards addressing national strategy. This planning has been supported well by the experience and expertise of a range of staff across the partnership, including those who have been involved in research and policy development at a national level.

Leadership and management

The Cardiff Partnership is built on noteworthy collaboration and trust between all partners. Collectively, they demonstrate a strong ambition and drive to design and deliver programmes that give the best possible start for teachers entering the profession. All partners contribute positively. For example, lead partner schools value the autonomy they are afforded within the agreed parameters, and they work diligently to ensure that initial teacher education is valued as a core responsibility within their school community. In turn the university values highly the contribution of the lead schools, clinical practice schools, regional consortia, and other stakeholders. The partnership as a whole is highly regarded within the wider university.

Senior leaders provide strong and sensitive leadership. They have high expectations of the partnership and exemplify the high standards that they expect from members of the partnership. Through a strong collaboration of research-informed and practice-focused activity, senior leaders prioritise the progress that student teachers make towards the standards for QTS. In addition, they have made it a high priority to support students in their understanding and use of Welsh language and the culture of Wales.

The partnership is underpinned by a clear and creatively communicated vision for initial teacher education. This vision is well understood and shared by staff across the partnership, and clearly reflects current national educational priorities. The partnership has a strong framework of systems and structures that are flexible enough to ensure that the process of creating the teachers of the future adapts as education in Wales develops. In addition, there are a variety of robust policies and procedures, which ensure that aspects of the requirements for the criteria for accreditation continue to be met. For instance, there are clear pathways for the selection and deselection of lead partner and clinical practice schools.

There is a clear structure for the roles and responsibilities of all partners, which are thoughtfully designed and balanced. Members of the partnership understand their roles and feel that their views are valued. Nearly all are generally aware of the broad roles and responsibilities of others in the partnership, and this ensures that students receive a joined-up experience. However, a few members of the partnership, in particular some clinical practice schools, are not aware of the contribution that lead partner schools make across the full range of student experience. In these instances, a few students do not receive a fully integrated experience. For example, clinical practice schools do not always build on the SLT days well enough.

Within the partnership, governance arrangements through the strategic board are effective in providing a successful model of joint accountability. Membership of the board consists of senior leaders within the university, representatives from lead partner and clinical practice schools, and representatives from external partners such as partner universities, regional consortia, and Cardiff Council. Through robust communication and the sharing of good quality information it challenges and supports all facets of the partnership suitably. The wider university governance processes recognise the value and contribution of initial teacher education within Cardiff Metropolitan University as a whole.

Senior university leaders know the partnership's strengths, for example their work with race equality and development of the Welsh language, and their areas for development. They recognise the benefits of partnership working and are justifiably proud of the strong practice demonstrated by the partnership. They are keen to learn from the School of Education and Social Policy and adopt these approaches across the university.

Leaders have improved and simplified the channels and methods of communication between different facets of the partnership. For example, they share a weekly bulletin with university tutors and senior mentors to highlight operational details, available resources, and relevant research. This is valued by members of the partnership.

University staff use a data management system to help ensure that the model they offer is sustainable. For example, the system helps senior leaders to cross reference enrolment data with the staff student ratio. As a result, they deploy high-quality staff with relevant qualifications and experience to sustain the teaching commitment, or they ascertain whether there are aspects of the curriculum structure that are not financially viable. In addition, the system tracks aspects such as applications, admissions, module evaluations, retention figures and professional affiliations. University staff at all levels use this data to consider whether arrangements are appropriate in their areas of responsibility. For example, staff use the data on student retention to understand the movement of students, the groups that are most affected and the reasons why, and successfully identify appropriate interventions.

The partnership has a clear quality assurance system in place, which is understood well by stakeholders. Leaders and managers regularly gather and analyse programme data and the views of student teachers, tutors, external examiners, partnership schools, headteachers and newly qualified teachers. It does this effectively through questionnaires, staff and mentor meetings, and advisory committee and reports. Programme leaders respond to feedback from stakeholders

regarding provision and make suitable ongoing changes to programmes, such as holding SLT days face-to-face rather than online.

The links between the partnerships' self-evaluation and planning for improvement are generally clear. In the aspects that have been identified from the partnership's rich sources of data analyses, leaders are able to outline suitable priorities with associated targets and planned actions. However, overall, self-evaluation findings are too broad because they do not draw sufficiently well on first-hand evidence. For example, there is little first-hand evidence of the quality of university-based teaching and limited evaluation of session observations or the effectiveness of mentors. This means that the partnership in some areas misses opportunities to identify clear targets for development or aspects that would benefit from further professional learning.

The responsibility for monitoring identified priorities is allocated beneficially to relevant steering groups. Steering group leaders consider this a key aspect of their role and use their regular team meetings to routinely monitor whether planned actions have taken place. Overall, evaluation by these groups of the effectiveness of the work undertaken and the progress towards targets is less well developed.

The partnership benefits from the contributions made by the regional consortia. This ensures a valuable exchange of information, for example regarding regional approaches to national priorities. In addition, knowledge of the initial teacher education programmes across the partnership enables the consortia to design induction programmes that build on students' prior experience as they begin their teaching careers.

Leaders and managers have created a strong culture of professional learning that embraces all aspects of the partnership and is linked strongly to the performance management of individuals. Results from research activities inform the development of programmes. For example, leaders have developed successfully new ways of working virtually and they provide a wide variety of online professional learning. Lead schools in the partnership work with partnership staff effectively and are committed to developing as learning organisations. Partnership leaders support staff and student teachers within the partnership to be involved with professional enquiry and the results of these are shared system wide.

Since its formation, the partnership has identified consistency in the quality of mentoring as an area for improvement, although work to improve mentor development and training has been impacted by the pandemic. The partnership's model for training and developing mentors is one where senior mentors are responsible for the professional learning of their mentors in school. The partnership has recently refined its approach to developing mentors and senior mentors in line with the partnership's own research findings. This has helped to focus senior mentors on important aspects of mentoring such as supporting students' critical skills and their research and enquiry. The partnership is developing a beneficial suite of professional learning resources for senior mentors, and this is helping to shape a shared approach to mentoring across the partnership. Although many mentors believe that they are provided with useful and timely guidance to help them undertake their role effectively, a minority of mentors feel that they do not have

enough time to mentor their students successfully. Furthermore, a few mentors have had insufficient training for their role.

A range of effective methods are used to identify the professional learning needs of staff within the partnership. Mostly, relevant professional learning is identified and offered appropriately. In addition, the Cardiff partnership works well with a range of partners to share and develop appropriate professional practice. For example, their collaboration with other universities increases the focus and quality of scholarly activity in all parts of the partnership. Partnership leaders ensure that professional learning also meets key strategic priorities, for example by providing support for tutors to learn and improve their Welsh.

Professional learning is delivered to and received from domestic and international sources well. The partnership evaluation of the impact of these opportunities undertaken by staff is positive. In addition, these opportunities are valued highly and with pride within and beyond the partnership.

Evidence base of the report

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- meet the partnership leaders and individual teacher educators to evaluate the impact of the partnership's work
- meet with senior university leaders and governors to discuss the university's support for initial teacher education
- meet with senior mentors and mentors about the school-based elements of the programme and their assessment of student teachers
- meet student teachers to discuss their progress and to gain their views about various aspects of the partnership
- meet student teachers in leadership roles, such as student representatives
- visit a broad sample of learning sessions and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe students learning and to see staff teaching in school and in university
- observe a sample of students teaching during their final school experience when they are close to achieving Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
- observe a sample of mentors feeding back to students about their teaching
- scrutinise students' assignments, reflections and lesson planning
- look closely at the partnership's self-evaluation processes
- consider the partnership's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the partnership has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of partnership documents, including information on student assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and leadership groups, information on students' well-being, including the safeguarding of students and pupils, and records of staff training and professional development
- analyse the outcomes from the student and staff questionnaires and consider their views through their questionnaire responses

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

This report was produced in accordance with section 18c of the Education Act 1994, which was inserted by paragraph 13 of Schedule 14 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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