

**The University of Leeds**  
**EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2013– 2014**

**Part A: General Information****Subject area and awards being examined**

<i>Faculty / School of:</i>	Education
<i>Subject(s):</i>	
<i>Programme(s) / Module(s):</i>	Programmes: PGCE (Primary 5-9) QTS, PGCE (Primary 5-11) QTS, PGCE (Primary 7-11) QTS, PGCE Primary with QTS, 5-9 School Direct, PGCE Primary with QTS, 7-11 School Direct. Modules: EDUC3415: Foundation, EDUC5525M: EPS, EDUC5526M: English, EDUC5527M: Maths, EDUC5528M: Science, EDUC3420:TP
<i>Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):</i>	PGCE (QTS)

**Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner****Completed report**

The completed report should be attached to an e-mail and sent as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners, to [exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:exexadmin@leeds.ac.uk).

Alternatively you can post your report to: **Head of Academic Quality and Standards**  
Academic Quality and Standards Team  
Room 12:81, EC Stoner Building  
The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

**Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards****Matters for Urgent Attention**

*If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box*

**Only applicable in first year of appointment**

*Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?*

**For Examiners completing their term of appointment**

*Please comment on your experience of the programme(s) over the period of your appointment, remarking in particular on changes from year to year and the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision, on standards achieved, on marking and assessment and the procedures of the School*



**1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award**

- *The appropriateness of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
- *The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

I can confirm that the programme Aims, Intended Learning Outcomes and the standards expected and attained are commensurate with the level of this award.

**2. Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?**

- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

Based on the evidence made available to me I can corroborate that the Aims and LOs are broadly comparable to the outcomes and standards in PGCE programmes at similar ITT institutions.

**3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs**

- *The design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards;*
- *The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.*

The following comments are based on my review of thirty assignments and a sample of resit assignments in preparation for the resit board (students complete five, 3,000 word assignments in the programme period). It was particularly valuable to see a range of assignments as well as having access to all five assignments from a sample of six students. The accompanying data provided about number of grades and average marks was useful. A suitable proportion of assignments had been second marked and moderation had taken place. The generic mark sheet used across modules offered a very clear structure for markers to follow and the consistency of approach and overall quality of feedback was evident, and I am sure, very helpful to students. Targets identified for students were specific and it was evident that where students had acted on advice they had been able to improve their performance when completing the next assignment.

I found the assignments were worthwhile with regards to supporting students' professional development and required students to be reflective. This was a common thread running through the core subject related modules where students were asked to reflect on children's misconceptions and progress. Assignments related closely to the directed tasks and attempted to enhance students' ability to synthesise theory and practice.

**Feedback from students:** the students I met spoke highly of the support tutors provide with assignment work and felt that, apart from the heavy workload associated with school based tasks (PDRs), that the assessed assignments were manageable and useful.

**Suggestions for consideration:**

- The team noted during discussion that some students had failed to achieve masters level 7 (due to lack of critical appraisal and limited consideration of relevant research material) despite support with resubmissions and this is something that may warrant further investigation as the programme develops. As suggested previously - some of the assignments would lend themselves to a longer word count as 3,000 may constrain some students' ability to engage in critical appraisal of research as well as reflecting on school experience (particularly at level 7). Some of the subject-specific assignments require the students to focus on practical aspects of teaching, planning and assessment and although these develop valuable professional skills it may also reduce students' engagement with wider reading as they perceive that this type of critical debate is secondary to reflecting on practice. Perhaps the team could consider altering the form of some assignments (e.g. presentations, portfolios, reports instead of essays) and reduce the number so that an independent research assignment could be introduced to increase critical thinking skills and greater awareness of the role of teacher as researcher at level 7.

**4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs?**

- *The academic standards demonstrated by the students and, where possible, their performance in relation to students on comparable courses;*
- *The strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort.*

Students are assessed throughout the programme in a number of ways (formal essays which help to strengthen academic writing skills and school-based tasks which encourage students to reflect on theory and practice) and this regular formative feedback clearly has an impact on students' confidence and success. Students appreciated the purpose and value of school-based tasks (PDRs) but felt that there were too many and would have appreciated more specific guidance to share with class teachers about the timing and completion of these tasks.

Academic standards achieved are comparative with similar programmes and in line with my own departmental aims students do need encouragement to achieve greater depth in understanding by referencing original sources and journal articles and engaging in critical analysis (opposed to descriptive report writing) in level 7 assignments. Students were well supported in preparation for assignment writing and workshops on academic writing skills had been strategically timetabled.

Students achieving higher grades were able to synthesis theory and practice and referred to established and contemporary research to help them reflect on own practice. Students awarded lower marks often described and reported personal experience at the expense of critical evaluation and tended to rely on core texts rather than expanding their literature search. The core team are aware of this and have already initiated further support on academic writing and critical thinking at an earlier stage in the course.

**5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum**

n/a

**6. Please comment on the nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year**

*It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.*

The role of partnership cluster schools continues to expand with very positive results and this is a strength of the partnership process. There was evidence of school clusters sharing good practice and supporting continuing professional development for teachers and trainees. Students spoke highly of the support received and the opportunities for enhanced training that they had received in partnership clusters.

Feedback from students and tutors indicates the positive impact that University-based intervention training on developing resilience has had on participants. The students I spoke to reported that this training and support had been offered at a crucial stage in their programme and had made a difference enabling individuals to be more confident about managing time effectively, seeking support and achieving goals and targets. As this training was so successful the team plan to roll this out to all students next year.

**7. Please comment on the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching**

*This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.*

Students undertake school-based tasks, which engage them in reflective thinking, designed to unite theory and practice. Many of the tasks are related to national priority areas (EAL, SEND, behaviour management, phonics and early reading) and provided valuable experience for students in different key stages as well as encouraging students to talk about changes in pedagogy and practice based on recent research and government initiatives. Tutors are clearly aware of the need to engage students in discussion in taught sessions about recent and relevant research and many of the tutors use their own research interests and recent teaching experience to enhance the taught course (e.g. supporting EAL learners, language acquisition, teaching maths, drama, and pupils' motivation and resilience).

**For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements**

**8. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements**

**9. The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner.**

- *Whether External Examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

Yes – I had sufficient access to all the materials I needed and when I found it necessary to request additional information this was provided promptly.

**10. Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks, marking criteria?**

- *The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to External Examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

Yes – appropriate documentation has been provided.

**11. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?**

Modules are assessed by formative assignments rather than examinations on this programme.

**12. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?**

Yes – a sample of work was provided which presented a range of levels and allowed me to see the progress made across the year by six students. All scripts were marked using the agreed feedback proforma and marking criteria. Marking was thorough and detailed feedback was provided for students. The role of the second marker was evident and verification of marks had clearly been agreed.

**13. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?**

Students do not complete dissertations on this programme.

**14. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?**

Yes. The arrangements in place were thorough and professional. I was accompanied to school visits and meetings and appreciated the courtesy, hospitality and support afforded throughout the examination process. The examination period had been organised to allow time for both external examiners to talk to students and tutors and this was invaluable in gaining a better insight into the programme and recent improvements and developments.

**15. Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?**

Yes.

**Other comments**

**Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form**

As last year - I found this experience both enjoyable and valuable, as throughout my time spent in the External Examination process the School of Education tutors were very ready to engage in collegiate debate and to explain the rationale and aims of the programme. The tutors are clearly passionate about their modules and committed to the School of Education and its students and partnership schools.

One of the strengths of the programme is the care, support and guidance afforded individuals who are struggling and need pastoral and professional guidance. The tracking system in place, which identifies emerging needs, allows a swift response to schools who need to support students working at grade 3 at any point during a placement. The weekly review meetings and ongoing involvement of personal tutors coupled with joint moderation visits have helped to improve accuracy of assessment and the partnership's ability to implement targeted intervention strategies when required to help students make effective changes to practice. Mentors reported that they were impressed with the support received from University tutors in coordinating a joint plan

to support students requiring improvement and appreciated the swift response and agreed timescales with repeat observations in place to give students further valuable feedback about progress. Modifications to the observation proforma have underpinned this process and require mentors, class teachers and link tutors to identify subject-specific targets and the impact on pupils' progress in the observed lesson as well as badging evidence against specific aspects of the Teachers' Standards. I note that further training for mentors is planned in 2014-15 in order to highlight effective feedback and to focus on improving consistency in grading and accuracy of assessment.

I found the students I met were committed, hardworking, professional and very positive about the programme. In particular I observed some inspirational lessons from two outstanding students who were able to motivate and inspire their pupils, engaged pupils in assessment of learning, peer review and self evaluation and used praise and a sense of humour to keep the learning on track throughout the lesson. The students felt supported both on campus and during school experience placements. All the students I observed teaching were well prepared, competent and engaged their pupils in interesting, well-paced lessons. Students' files were well maintained, organised and provided evidence that students were encouraged to target personal areas of improvement (e.g. seeking more experience in teaching specific phonic phases by visiting other year groups). School co-ordinators reported that the calibre of trainees on placement had been very good and the majority of students I met had already secured their first teaching post (often in a school cluster based on placement performance).

Points for consideration:

- The students I observed seemed to have implemented varying approaches to daily or session evaluations and felt that some of this was repeated at weekly reviews. Perhaps asking students to summarise progress made and clearly identify at least two Standards that this relates to would help evaluation and feed into the weekly review progress (noting both strengths and targets each week).
- Observation proformas – the changes made to grading, subject specific targets and impact have been well-received by mentors but this may need further training input in briefing meetings in order to ensure the messages filter through to class teachers. I note that the team intend to follow this up with training in settings by link tutors during initial visits. A lead cluster school had plans in place to disseminate training to all the schools in their cluster – perhaps this is an opportunity for the University to lead whole school or cluster-based mentor training with strategic mentors.
- I noted that the planning proformas advocated by the University were more KS2 friendly and perhaps needed some adjustments to suit the common approach to continuous provision, free-flow play and focus groups implemented in most FS and KS1 settings. This is clearly under review as the PGCE 3-7 course is in development and will provide opportunities to make links to the Characteristics of Effective Learning which underpins pedagogy in the Foundation Stage.

Students in the focus group were very positive about the programme and felt that they had been well-supported throughout the PGCE year. In particular students complimented input given by core tutors. In order to improve things for next year they suggested that:

- more of the core texts should be made available as 'e' books so that they could access these on placement;
- further input could be offered on assessment (marking, types of assessment, APP, levelling and moderating children's work);
- opportunities to engage in mock lessons - to see the tutor acting as class teacher would allow students to understand planning in action.
- the input on PE was excellent but students would appreciate more in preparation for each placement.
- PDR tasks could be more clearly related to taught sessions and streamlined to ensure the most important tasks are prioritised (e.g. phonics phases need blocked time to observe and teach). Class teachers also need a document summarising PDR tasks and suggested timeframe for completion.

28 November 2014

Dear

Thank you for your helpful and supportive report. We are pleased that you recognise a number of positive aspects of our Primary PGCE programmes, for example, how the students found their assignments helpful and how they said they were well supported in preparing their assignment. It was particularly pleasing to read that you had noted progress in our ability to identify and support students who were making less than good progress in their teaching.

We have considered your suggestion about longer assignments to allow students to develop more in-depth discussion and analysis. We feel that it is important to retain a breadth of coverage of topics in the assignments; fewer but longer assignments might lead to a narrowing of the range of topics covered. We have also considered changing the form of one or more of the assignments but have resisted this as we feel that the students benefit from developing their skills in academic writing over the course of the programme.

We have radically changed the Professional Development Record (PDR) for 2014-15. Students are now given more freedom in how they respond to School-based Learning Tasks. The tasks have also been re-structured in terms of their timing, there is greater flexibility for the students. We are pleased that you recognised the importance of these tasks.

We note the points you make about making sure that our procedures and practices are appropriately adapted for the new 3-7 programme. We have worked with colleagues from our partnership schools to try and ensure that we reflect current classroom practice in this age-phase. Our lesson observation forms have undergone another review (in relation to changes in the Ofsted Framework). Using these forms will be a key feature of mentor training sessions as we appreciate the importance of the accurate assessment of our student teachers.

Thank you again for your very positive comments and the very helpful guidance and advice that you have provided in this report. We look forward to seeing you again later in the year.

Yours sincerely

Head of School of Education



## The University of Leeds

## EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2013– 2014

**Part A: General Information****Subject area and awards being examined**

Faculty / School of:	Education
Subject(s):	<i>National Curriculum</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Primary PGCE – EDUC5526M – Primary English, EDUC5528M – Primary Science, EDUC5527M – Primary Maths, EDUC5525M – Education and Professional Studies, EDUC3415 – Foundation Subject Studies, EDUC3420 – Primary Practical Teaching
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	PGCE

**Name and home Institution / affiliation of Examiner****Completed report**

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The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

**Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards****Matters for Urgent Attention**

*If there are any areas which you think require urgent attention before the programme is offered again please note them in this box*

NA

**Only applicable in first year of appointment**

*Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?*

NA

**For Examiners completing their term of appointment**

*Please comment on your experience of the programme(s) over the period of your appointment, remarking in particular on changes from year to year and the progressive development and enhancement of the learning and teaching provision, on standards achieved, on marking and assessment and the procedures of the School*

I have reached the end of my three year term but I am keen to extend this by a year if possible.

## Standards

### 1. Please indicate the extent to which the programme Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were commensurate with the level of the award

- *The appropriateness of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the programme(s)/modules and of the structure and content of the programme(s);*
- *The extent to which standards are appropriate for the award or award element under consideration.*

I can confirm that the Intended learning outcomes for each of the modules on this degree are appropriate for the award. The standard of work that I reviewed is relevant and appropriate for the award.

### 2. Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?

- *The comparability of the programme(s) with similar programme(s) at other institutions and against national benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.*

Based on my experience, the marks awarded for the modules that I scrutinised are commensurate with those at similar institutions.

### 3. Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs

- *The design and structure of the assessment methods, and the arrangements for the marking of modules and the classification of awards;*
- *The quality of teaching, learning and assessment methods that may be indicated by student performance.*

Every assessed piece of work that students on this programme complete are standard essay style assessments. In previous years I have suggested that for students on this professional programme, it may be relevant to use alternative assessment approaches to assess the learning outcomes. For example a presentation or a conference style poster will enable markers to assess the same outcomes whilst providing opportunities for student teachers to demonstrate a wider variety of skills related to their profession. In discussion with the PGCE teaching team this year it is clear that they intend to pursue alternative modes of assessment.

### 4. Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Aims and ILOs?

- *The academic standards demonstrated by the students and, where possible, their performance in relation to students on comparable courses;*
- *The strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort.*

Each assignment has detailed guidance provided to support students. My scrutiny of scripts indicated that students achieving the highest marks were making good use of a range of academic journals whereas the weakest assignments made limited use of academic sources and were largely descriptive.

### 5. For Examiners responsible for programmes that include clinical practice components, please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum

The visits that I made to schools enabled me to observe students teaching, provide brief feedback to students and discuss their experience on the course, as well as meet with mentors. This enabled me feel convinced that the assessment of students against the Teachers' Standards are rigorous and accurate. A new development this year was the introduction of grading lesson observations. Feedback from schools and students indicate that this has been successful in ensuring all members of the partnership are aware of how well students are meeting the Teachers' Standards. This has also ensured that any student not meeting the standards at the required level are given more specific targets with associated support provided. I believe that this has resulted in a reduction of students meeting the standards at the minimum level by the end of the course. Students also confirmed that they agreed with the final grade that they were awarded and all members of the partnership that I spoke to (Head teachers, mentors, link tutors and students) felt that this development had been effective in ensuring students and mentors were constantly aware of how well the standards were being met.

A strong feature of the course is the cluster model of training which draws on specific expertise in their partner schools. This model is still being developed and the course team are ensuring that new clusters are being developed each year. Furthermore the course team are continuing to work exceptionally hard to ensure that the students on the traditional route have had exciting training opportunities on their 'enhancement' days. For example students on this route had the opportunity to visit a special school on one of their enhancement days. They also had dedicated EAL and behaviour management days where they all went into schools with expertise in these areas.

The PDR tasks and other paper work featured strongly in my discussion with students. These are understandably time consuming to complete and students felt that there was some repetition in the requirements. For example students didn't seem to recognise the importance of the evaluation of lessons, weekly evaluations and self-reflections and I recommend that the team consider these areas to ensure that the students are aware of the purpose of these activities.

### 6. Please comment on the nature and effectiveness of enhancements to the programme(s) and modules since the previous year

*It would be particularly helpful if you could also identify areas of good practice which are worthy of wider dissemination.*

The cluster model of partnership has been developed further and this is a real strength of the course. The OfSTED requirement to ensure that initial teacher education programmes are school-led is evident in this course where school partners take a leading role in supporting students in their cluster in areas such as assessment, planning and behaviour management. It was also clear from my discussion with school based mentors that they have been

involved in the development of the PDR tasks which reflects a commitment to involving school partners.

**7. Please comment on the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching**

*This may include examples of curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research.*

The design of the programme has clearly drawn on recent and relevant research which students are expected to make use of within their assignments. The focus group of students that I met identified that a strength of the programme was the expertise and enthusiasm of the lecturing staff in their subject areas.

**8. Where the programme forms part of an Integrated PhD, please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD**

NA

**For Examiners involved in mentoring arrangements**

**9. If you have acted as a mentor to a new External Examiner or have received mentor support please comment here on the arrangements**

NA

**The Examination/Assessment Process**

**10. The University and its Schools provide guidance for External Examiners as to their roles, powers and responsibilities. Please indicate whether this material was sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner.**

*Whether External Examiners have sufficient access to the material needed to make the required judgements and whether they are encouraged to request additional information.*

All documentation that I have received has been helpful.

**11. Did you receive appropriate documentation relating to the programmes and/or parts of programmes for which you have responsibility, e.g. programme specifications or module handbooks, marking criteria?**

*The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to External Examiners and whether they match the explicit roles they are asked to perform.*

I have received all necessary paperwork in a timely manner which has enabled me to prepare beforehand. This has meant that during my visit I am able to discuss any issues arising from the documentation.

**12. Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments? Was the nature and level of the questions appropriate? If not, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?**

NA

**13. Was sufficient assessed / examined work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work? Were the scripts clearly marked/annotated?**

I had sufficient time to scrutinise scripts prior to exam boards. Feedback was extremely detailed and helpful for students but due to submission procedures I was not able to see the annotations on the scripts that students would have seen. However feedback on the formal documentation was sufficient to indicate that students were being provided with specific ways on how to improve their work.

**14. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations appropriate? Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate?**

NA

**15. Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Board of Examiners? Were you able to attend the meeting? Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board?**

Administrative arrangements have always been exemplary. I was able to attend the board of examiners which ran efficiently and I was entirely satisfied with the recommendations made. The team had also responded to feedback provided last year about the limited amount of time available to discuss the programme development with the team. The period of my visit was extended by a day and I felt that I had plenty of opportunities to talk to different members of the team.

**16. Were appropriate procedures in place to give due consideration to mitigating circumstances and medical evidence?**

Yes

**Other comments**

**Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments not covered elsewhere on the form**

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the outcome of the most recent OfSTED inspection. I strongly believe that this programme deserves to be graded as at least 'good', particularly due to the strength of the partnership. The recent development of 'Clusters' enables schools to take a greater role in developing the programme and the team at Leeds have embraced the suggestions made by schools. They are also drawing on the strengths of the variety of schools in their partnership through the 'enhancements' offered by schools. I understand that the programme will be inspected again next academic year and I fully anticipate that the recommendation will be for the course to reopen in 2015-16. Although I have reached the end of my three year term of external examining, I am keen to take advantage of the optional additional year to support the team through the significant programme development that has already begun.

1 December, 2014

Dear

Thank you for your helpful and supportive report. We are pleased that you recognise a number of positive aspects of our Primary PGCE programmes, for example, that our assessment of students' against the Teachers' Standards is rigorous and accurate and that the introduction of the grading of lessons has been effective in supporting their progress and attainment. We are also pleased that you recognise how the design of the programme draws on recent research and how tutors' enthusiasm and expertise is appreciated by the students.

We understand the issues you raise about the Professional Development Record (PDR) and have made significant changes to this for 2014-15. Students are now given more freedom in how they respond to School-based Learning Tasks. The tasks have also been re-structured in terms of their timing, there is greater flexibility for the students. We are pleased that you recognised the importance of these tasks. We have also changed the structure of the lesson evaluations to make them more focussed (on pupils' progress) and purposeful.

We haven't implemented any changes to the style of assignments for 2014-15. We are mindful of the need to do this but thought it best to leave this until after this year when a major review of the programme will take place. The content and style of assignments will be part of this review.

Thank you again for your very positive comments and the very helpful guidance and advice that you have provided in this report. We look forward to seeing you again later in the year.

Yours sincerely

Head of School of Education