

The University of Leeds
EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2016-17

Part A: General Information

Subject area and awards being examined

Faculty / School of:	Education
Subject(s):	<i>Primary Teaching</i>
Programme(s) / Module(s):	Programmes: PGCE Primary 5-9 and PGCE Primary 7-11 QTS Modules: EDUC3415: Foundation, EDUC5525M: EPS, EDUC5526M: English, EDUC5527M: Maths, EDUC5528M: Science, EDUC5149M: Curriculum Studies (science)
Awards (e.g. BA/BSc/MSc etc):	PGCE (QTS)

Part B: Comments for the Institution on the Examination Process and Standards

Points of innovation and/or good practice

Please highlight areas of innovation or good practice within the programmes or processes you have been involved with in this box.

- Very supportive mentors and University tutors
- Enhancements made to observation forms and weekly review process were appreciated by mentors and trainees
- Very clear target setting and action plans in place for trainees failing to make required progress at strategic points in the year.
- Strong links with teaching alliance clusters in local area.
- Rigorous assessment and second marking process in place.

Enhancements made from the previous year

Please highlight any enhancements made to the programme(s) or processes over the past year in this box.

- Wider range of assessment methods implemented (e.g. poster presentation and group presentation tasks)
- Streamlined range of school based tasks with specific tasks tailored to suit different pathways

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

For Examiners in the first year of appointment

1.	Were you provided with an External Examiners Handbook?	Y / N
2.	Were you provided with copies of previous relevant External Examiners' reports and the response of the School to these?	Y / N
3.	Were you provided with a External Examiner Mentor?	Y / N

For Examiners completing their term of appointment

4.	Have you observed improvements in the programme(s) over the period of your appointment?	Y
5.	Has the school responded to comments and recommendations you have made?	Y
6.	Where recommendations have not been implemented, did the school provide clear reasons for this?	Y
7.	Have you acted as a External Examiner Mentor?	Y

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

Please see comments in later sections.

Standards

8.	Is the overall programme structure coherent and appropriate for the level of study?	Y
9.	Does the programme structure allow the programme aims and intended learning outcomes to be met?	Y
10.	Are the programme aims and intended learning outcomes commensurate with the level of award?	Y
11.	Did the Aims and ILOs meet the expectations of the national subject benchmark (where relevant)?	Y
12.	Is the programme(s) comparable with similar programmes at other institutions?	Y
<p><i>Please use this box to explain your overall impression of the programme structure, design, aims and intended learning outcomes.</i> I can confirm that the programme Aims, Intended Learning Outcomes and the standards expected and attained are commensurate with the level of this award.</p>		
13.	Is the influence of research on the curriculum and learning and teaching clear?	Y
<p><i>Please explain how this is/could be achieved (examples might include: curriculum design informed by current research in the subject; practice informed by research; students undertaking research)</i></p>		
14.	Does the programme form part of an Integrated PhD?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the appropriateness of the programme as training for a PhD:</i></p>		
15.	Does the programme include clinical practice components?	N
<p><i>Please comment on the learning and assessment of practice components of the curriculum here:</i></p>		
16.	Is the programme accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB)?	Y / N
<p><i>Please comment on the value of, and the programme's ability to meet, PSRB requirements here:</i> Assessment criteria is in line with requirements of initial teacher training and tracks trainees' progress towards meeting the Teachers' Standards.</p>		

Assessment and Feedback

17.	Does the programme design clearly align intended learning outcomes with assessment?	Y
<p><i>Please comment on the assessment methods and the appropriateness of these to the ILOs, in particular: 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.</i></p> <p>The following comments are based on my review of fourteen assignments and a sample of resit (failed) assignments in preparation for the resit board. It is always valuable to see a range of assignments as well as having access to all five assignments from a sample of four students. I was also able to view a selection of 'failed' assignments and 'borderline' assignments on the cusp of level 6 and level 7 awards. The accompanying data provided about number of grades and average marks was useful. A large proportion of assignments had been second marked and moderation had taken place. Discussion between the first and second marker was made visible to me and clearly reflected the fair moderation process. 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 via summary comments and annotations on the script 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. Weaker assignments were characterised by inattention to the assignment guidance given in the module handbooks and in taught sessions.</p>		

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. Students I spoke with reported that they had found the maths reflective assignment particularly useful as it challenged them to reflect on pedagogy and theory however, some students struggled to maintain a professional academic style when writing in first person about their own practice. Assignments related closely to the directed tasks and attempted to enhance students' ability to synthesise theory and practice. Linking some assignments to national priority areas e.g. behaviour management, inclusive practice, phonics and comprehension, raised students' awareness of key issues and encouraged them to reflect on the effectiveness of strategies used in their own practice.

Feedback from students: the students I met spoke highly of the support tutors provide with assignment work and felt that the assessed assignments were manageable and useful. In particular students cited English and maths sessions and accompanying school-based tasks as being especially helpful and relevant as they supported students in uniting theory and practice. Several students in the focus group described science sessions as 'inspirational' and gave examples of how they had replicated ideas from sessions during their placements. They enjoyed the practical tasks and mentioned the way that science advice had been provided for different age phases. They appreciated the strong focus on subject knowledge enhancement from initial audits to ongoing subject knowledge support.

Points for consideration:

The timing of the final assignment and some core subject tasks (which coincides with final practice and first post applications and interviews) may need to be considered so that students can be encouraged to submit early when possible. Tutors may need to consider how trainees can reflect on evidence towards meeting Standard 6 in their weekly reviews.

18.	Is the design and structure of the assessment methods appropriate to the level of award?	Y
19.	Were students given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes?	Y

Please comment on 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:

Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make in relation to assessment and feedback:

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 enthusiastic about sharing their own research interests with students and ensuring that students keep abreast of local, national and international developments in pedagogy and practice. Many of the trainees I visited in schools elected to teach a maths lesson as they felt that would best demonstrate their confidence and innovative practice - and I was suitably impressed. Opportunities for trainees to select an aspect of 'science' to study in practice allowed trainees to develop a genuine interest in topic areas and to share this love of learning with their pupils. Similarly, trainees designed and implemented intervention strategies to meet individual needs of children often to support early reading and communication.

The arrangements in place surrounding school visits were thorough and professional. I was accompanied to some of the school visits and meetings and appreciated the courtesy, hospitality and support afforded throughout the examination process. I visited a range of school settings and had time to talk to school mentors, class teachers and trainees. The examination period had been organised to allow time for me to talk to students and tutors and this was invaluable in gaining a better insight into the programme and recent improvements and developments. I viewed a range of assignments in advance of the examination period and was able to discuss module modifications with tutors.

The Progression and Awards Process

20.	Were you provided with guidance relating to the External Examiners role, powers and responsibilities in the examination process?	Y
21.	Was the progression and award guidance provided sufficient for you to act effectively as an External Examiner?	Y
22.	Did you receive appropriate programme documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
23.	Did you receive appropriate module documentation for your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
24.	Did you receive full details of marking criteria applicable to your area(s) of responsibility?	Y
25.	Were you provided with all draft examination papers/assessments?	N/A
26.	Was the nature and level of the assessment questions appropriate?	Y

27.	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on assessment questions?	Y
28.	Was sufficient assessed work made available to enable you to have confidence in your evaluation of the standard of student work?	Y
29.	Were the examination scripts clearly marked/annotated?	N/A
30.	Was the choice of subjects for final year projects and/or dissertations appropriate?	Y
31.	Was the method and standard of assessment appropriate for the final year projects and/or dissertations?	Y
32.	Were the administrative arrangements satisfactory for the whole process, including the operation of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
33.	Were you able to attend the Progression and Awards Board meeting?	Y
34.	Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
35.	Were you satisfied with the way decisions from the School Special Circumstances meeting were communicated to the Progression and Awards Board?	Y
<p><i>Please use this box to provide any additional comments you would like to make on the questions above:</i></p> <p>Assessments were suitably challenging and appropriate for trainees working at levels 6 and 7. Marking was rigorous and evidence of second marking and moderation highlights the quality assurance mechanisms that are so effective in this programme. Module board and exam boards are efficient and professional with any individual needs or extenuating circumstances identified at pre-board meetings.</p>		

Other comments

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

In my four years as the External Examiner for this programme I have always found that the Leeds University trainees are characterized by positive, professional and resilient dispositions that have been inspired and nurtured by an extremely dedicated experienced and knowledgeable team of tutors. Evidence informed practice and pedagogy is at the heart of what they do and this provides a strong foundation for the next community of practice. School and University partnerships have remained strong despite changes to available routes into teaching. Mentors continue to commend the support and guidance they receive from University tutors and clearly enjoy this supportive relationship. Hopefully this relationship will continue to benefit schools and trainees as school led teaching training takes the place of this programme in the future.

I have enjoyed working with esteemed colleagues at Leeds over the last four years and I have learnt a great deal from them. Thank you.

Name of School and Head of School (or nominee)

Title and Name of Responder:	
Position*:	Head of School
Faculty / School of:	<i>School of Education</i>
Address for communication:	Hillary Place University of Leeds Leeds LS2 9JT
Email:	
Telephone:	

**If the individual responding to the report is not the Head of School please state their position within the School.*

Completing the School response

The completed School response (including the full original report) should be attached to an e-mail and sent to the Pro-Dean for Student Education in the relevant Faculty. Following approval by the Pro-Dean for Student Education, the School must send the response (including the full original report) directly to the External Examiner. A copy must also be emailed to the Quality Assurance Team at qat@leeds.ac.uk. External Examiners should receive a formal response no later than six weeks after receipt of the original report.

Response to Points of innovation and/or good practice

We are pleased to note that you recognise a number of features of good practice in the programme.

Response to Enhancements made from the previous year

The diversification of assessment methods has been popular with the students

Response to Matters for Urgent Attention

If any areas have been identified for urgent attention before the programme is offered again please provide a specific response to them here:

Response to questions 1-7 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

It is encouraging that you have observed improvements in the programme during your time as External Examiner.

Standards**Response to questions 8 to 16 (and related comments)**

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We are pleased that you found standards to be commensurate with those in other similar institutions and they meet the expectations of national benchmarks.

Assessment and Feedback**Response to questions 17 to 19 (and related comments)**

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We are pleased that you acknowledge the thorough and consistent way that tutors assess students' work and how the advice they give in the form of targets are acted on by the students. Similarly, you appreciate the relevance of the assignments to the students' professional development. The high quality of the taught sessions and the efforts tutors make to engage and motivate the students is another pleasing aspect of your report. Your comments later in your report clearly suggest that this has a positive influence on the quality of the students' teaching in schools.

The point you raise about the timing of the final assignment and associated tasks is helpful. Student teachers do find getting to grips with assessing pupils (Teachers' Standard 6) challenging and we will consider this in discussions with our school partners on the PGCE SCITT programme.

The Progression and Awards Process

Response to questions 20-35 (and related comments)

Schools may provide a general response; however, where Examiners raise specific points these must be addressed individually:

We are pleased that you found the Progression and Awards Process to be of a high standard. Tutors devote much time and effort to the assessment process and will be gratified by your positive comments. Similarly, support staff who organise the exam boards take great pride in their work and will appreciate your positive feedback.

Other comments

Response to items included in the 'Other Comments' section of the report

Thank you for your positive and constructive contribution to the Primary PGCE programme over the last 4 years. You have helped us to build what we considered to be a high quality teacher training course. We have all enjoyed working with you.