Section C

Management of Partnership

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Our Secondary Partnership Ofsted (2014) acknowledged…

Key strengths of the secondary partnership

The exceptionally coherent way in which trainees are prepared, through the Education, Pedagogy and Professional Studies Programme (EPPS), to teach the new National Curriculum from September 2014 and support disadvantaged pupils, which is a strength worthy of sharing beyond the partnership.

Management of Partnership

Each course in the Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences has a Board of Studies which is responsible to the Faculty Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee and Faculty Board for ensuring that it meets its aims and outcomes through systematic monitoring and evaluation. The Course Director has overall responsibility, under the Head of the School of Education, for the day-to-day operation of the course and for maintaining and enhancing its quality.

The Director of Education Partnerships, with the support of the Secondary Partnership Manager and Administrator and the course team, is responsible for organising and supporting teaching placements and for monitoring the operation of partnership agreements with schools and other providers. The Director of Education Partnerships is also responsible for training mentors.

The membership of the Board of Studies includes two trainee representatives from each specialist subject and two nominated mentor representatives from partner schools.

The Examination Board considers the results of all assessments and makes decisions regarding the progression of trainee teachers on the course and their final award. All staff teaching on the course are entitled to attend, as are mentors from partner schools.

The remit of the Secondary Strategic Leadership Committee, which consists of mentors and tutors, includes responsibility for the Partners' Handbook; determining the roles and responsibilities of trainee teachers, mentors and tutors; mentor training; the Partnership Agreement; placement documentation; moderation, evaluation procedures, and monitoring and reviewing improvement planning.

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Quality Assurance Procedures

Trainee teachers are asked to evaluate each placement using a pro-forma evaluation sheet (see Section F). Their evaluations are read, annotated where necessary and countersigned by the tutor who has supervised the trainee teacher during that placement. Mentors are asked to complete an evaluation that mirrors that of the trainees. The Secondary Partnership Manager compiles a report based on the evaluations received, which is presented to the Secondary Partnership Committee and published on the Secondary Partners' website, http://www.ed.bcu.ac.uk/secondary/. Copies of the trainees' evaluations are forwarded to their schools along with a summary of the placement report, so that schools receive an overview of the placement as well as individualised evaluations. Schools are invited to respond to evaluations received.

The placement reports and any responses from schools are incorporated into the Programme Annual Review.

External examiners meet with mentors in schools when moderating the teaching of the selected sample of trainees as part of their annual examination of the course. External examiners may include comments from mentors in their reports, which again are considered in the Programme Annual Review.

Tutors moderate the work of mentors across the partnership during their school visits. The grading system provides benchmarks to be used throughout the partnership and helps to standardise the quality of assessment across the partnership. Quality across the partnership is a central focus for external examiners during their annual visits.

If problems arise during a school placement, tutors will visit the school in the first instance to try to resolve them. If this does not prove to be possible, the Faculty Practice panel may need to adjudicate on difficult placement issues. This panel operates in the context of the University's *Fitness for Practice Policy and Procedure* and *Breakdown of Placements* (see Section F).

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Mentor Training

Training for new mentors takes place each year. There are also a number of other briefing, training and support meetings organised, as appropriate, throughout the year to which individuals or groups of mentors are invited. A list of proposed mentor training and support events is included in Section A.

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Training of Faculty Staff

Tutors attend briefing and training meetings arranged for mentors (see Section A), and tutors new to the secondary partnership or to the Faculty are briefed by the Director of Work Based Learning as to the procedures and requirements of partnership. As part of their induction, new tutors will accompany an experienced tutor on one or more school visits.

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Selection of Schools

Selection and Deselection of Schools ('School' is used generically to refer to a range of educational institutions including sixth form centres and further education colleges.)

Principles for partnership arrangements are set out in 'Policy Governing Partnership Arrangements operated by the Faculty' (see Section F). Section 1 identifies general criteria for the selection of partner institutions.

Schools join the Secondary Partnership by one of two routes; either the school approaches the University or the University approaches the school.

Typically, a school will approach the University where the teaching staff in the school's subject department have expressed a particular interest in working in Initial Teacher Training. This might have been initiated by the appointment of new staff or in order to enable staff development.

Typically, the University will approach a school where the school can offer the experience particularly required by a trainee teacher, whether specifically or generally. On occasion, the geographical location becomes a factor.

Criteria to be met by schools joining the Partnership:

- the head of the school must sign a Partnership Agreement;
- the school must have a professional mentor (also known as the general or senior mentor);
- the school must also identify a subject mentor;
- mentors must be trained to fulfil their roles. The Faculty recognises the mentor training of other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);
- a school may take trainee teachers before mentor training has been completed provided arrangements have been made for the training to take place as soon as possible. As an interim measure, a tutor will visit the school to brief mentors on their role.

Partnership Agreements are valid for a period of five years. Being in partnership is an indication of a willingness to accept trainee teachers on placement and is not a guarantee that trainee teachers will be placed in the school. Schools are asked annually to indicate the placements for which they are willing to take trainee teachers. Schools are able to make offers in the light of their own circumstances which may vary from year to year.

Route Leaders, in consultation with tutors, will place trainee teachers in a school where:

- the school can meet the terms of the Partnership Agreement;
- the policy and practice of the school and/or subject department is such that it will expose trainee teachers to good practice, providing experiences that will challenge trainee teachers as they address the Teachers' Standards;

- the philosophy or ethos of the school and/or subject department will challenge the thinking of trainee teachers, presenting them with a widening range of experiences and opportunities in their professional development;
- the school and/or subject department can demonstrate a commitment to initial teacher training, supporting trainee teachers' development as teachers by providing and resourcing an appropriate programme of training, teaching, and opportunities for review and reflection;
- its location is within reasonable access for the trainee teacher.

Trainee teachers will not be placed in schools where these criteria cannot be met.

The school's Partnership Agreement remains valid and may be used for subsequent placements as long as the criteria can be met. If a school breaks the terms of the Partnership Agreement, the Agreement will be deemed invalid and trainees will not be placed in the school.

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Partnership Agreement between Birmingham City University and its Secondary Partner Schools

The Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences, Birmingham City University, and <<School_Name>> agree to form a partnership in the training of the University's secondary trainee teachers according to the following conditions.

The Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences of Birmingham City University undertakes to:

- Ensure full compliance with the procedures prescribed by the Training and Development Agency for Schools with regard to trainee teachers and the safeguarding of children and young people;
- Support trainee teachers in all matters relating to their individual needs as registered students of the University, e.g. in respect of welfare, accommodation, services etc.;
- Provide adequate induction and training for all school mentors and Faculty staff;
- Involve mentors in partnership schools in the admissions and recruitment process;
- Ensure that the PGCE Secondary course prepares trainee teachers for school placements;
- Ensure quality assurance procedures are communicated and implemented and that any issues raised are addressed;
- Support all staff in the partnership in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities, as defined in the Partners' Handbook;
- Offer appropriate training and personal opportunities to ensure high quality support for trainee teachers;
- Take account of factors which may affect the quality of school-based provision and take appropriate action;
- Communicate effectively with all involved in the partnership;
- Pay the participating schools the sum agreed per trainee teacher as specified in the document "Funding for school placements". (A detailed breakdown of how the University apportions funding is included in the Partners' Handbook)
- Ensure that trainees, as students of the University, are at all points in their training treated in accordance with the University's policies on equal opportunities and race relations as published on the University's website, http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-procedures/equality-scheme-action-plan

The School undertakes to:

- Support Faculty and school-based staff working with trainee teachers to fulfil their partnership responsibilities;
- Identify appropriate staff as Subject and General mentors who have been trained for their role;
- Maintain regular contact with appropriate members of the partnership;
- Attend briefing meetings and training as appropriate;
- Ensure that partnership information is disseminated to relevant colleagues;
- Support trainee teachers as appropriate to the stage of training and individual need;
- Adhere to the partnership processes in relation to all aspects of a placement;
- Place trainee teachers with appropriately trained and experienced subject teachers;
- Inform the Faculty of changes which will affect the provision of suitable placements;
- Ensure that trainees work in a context which provides examples of good practice in respect of equality of opportunity and the avoidance of discrimination.

Equal Opportunities: Policies and Codes of Practice

In order to meet the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012), trainee teachers need to demonstrate their understanding of equal opportunities issues. Standard S5 is the most direct statement of this:

A teacher must:

S5 adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- *Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.*

The purpose of this document is twofold: firstly to provide an institutional context for these requirements, and secondly to give trainees, mentors and tutors some guidance on how to deal with some situations they may encounter.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Schools will have their own equal opportunities policies and trainee teachers should be supplied with details of these as part of their general introduction to each of the schools in which they are placed. Trainees must ensure that all aspects of their work in school conform to the requirements of current legislation and to school policies and procedures. In addition, trainee teachers are students of Birmingham City University and must conform to the University's policies on equal opportunities.

Birmingham City University's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement states that:

Birmingham City University promotes equality of opportunity in respect of every aspect of its provision. University policy and practice will seek to provide an environment that is free from discrimination against students, staff, visitors and others. The University will ensure that all students and staff, current or prospective, are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. The University will seek to prevent any form of unlawful or unfair discrimination, and will be concerned with the prevention of direct and indirect, associative and perceptive discrimination on the grounds of age, sex (gender), disability, race, sexual orientation, transgender status, family circumstances, marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief, citizenship, colour or ethnicity, social and economic status, or other irrelevant personal characteristic

.

The University is committed to fairness in its practices and in meeting the needs of our diverse student and staff bodies. Where appropriate and within our means, the University will take positive action to meet these commitments.

The full document can be viewed at http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity

Race Equality Policy

One very significant aspect of equal opportunities is race equality, and this is addressed in recent legislation. The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000) requires all public authorities, including schools, to promote good race relations. The general duty has three parts:

- eliminating unlawful race discrimination
- promoting equality of opportunity
- promoting good relations between people from different racial groups

The Act lays down specific duties for schools and for FE and HE institutions.

Schools must:

- prepare and publish a race equality policy
- monitor and assess how their policies affect ethnic minority pupils, staff and parents; the emphasis here is on pupils' achievements

Additionally, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002 introducing a duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion.

Schools will therefore have their own policies, and trainee teachers must familiarise themselves with them and any associated codes of conduct.

Higher and further education institutions must:

- prepare a race equality policy
- assess how their policies affect ethnic minority students and staff
- arrange to publish their policy, and the results of assessments and monitoring

Birmingham City University's race equality statement can be found at http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity .

PGCE Secondary Course

The PGCE Secondary course addresses equal opportunities and race equality issues in a number of ways. These include:

- a taught programme focusing on diversity, transition and inclusion during the spring term
- a Professional Development Profile Task which asks trainee teachers to discuss pupils' achievement in School 1 in relation to the school's social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic mix
- termly Diversity Discussion meetings open to all trainees at which any aspect of equality of opportunity, race equality, English as an Additional Language and inclusion can be raised

When organising school placements, care is taken to ensure that, wherever possible, all trainees have an opportunity to train in schools in which different ethnic and religious groups are represented, in order to heighten their awareness of equal opportunities and race equality issues.

Complaints regarding Equal Opportunities

The secondary partnership agreement between the Faculty and schools includes an undertaking that the school will

- Ensure that trainees work in a context which provides examples of good practice in respect of equality of opportunity and the avoidance of discrimination

However, despite the existence of policies in the University and in schools and the importance accorded to them, there may be occasions when staff and students feel that these policies are being contravened. The University has a formal Student Complaints Procedure, details of which are given in the Student Handbook to which each trainee teacher has access. Schools may have their own procedures, and trainee teachers should ask for details of these.

Guidance on action

If mentors are concerned about any aspect of a trainee teacher's work in relation to equal opportunities and race equality policies and procedures, they should in the first instance bring this to the attention of a university tutor or the Course Director so that a decision can be taken about how to proceed. In some instances it may be necessary to invoke the University's *Fitness for Practice Policy and Procedure*, details of which can be found in Section F. Similarly, any concerns that a university tutor may have about a trainee teacher's work in school should be communicated to the school mentors, and appropriate action discussed.

There may be occasions when a trainee teacher feels that s/he has encountered breaches of equal opportunities, either in the university or during placements, directly or by observation. Trainees may be uncertain how to respond since these are controversial and delicate areas and they may feel that action would affect their relationships in the university or the placement, and possibly the relationships between the placement institution and the university. However, there are statutory requirements and policies regarding equal opportunities and race relations that will support trainees.

The partnership is committed to promoting equal opportunities. If any trainee feels that their choice of teaching strategies and materials is being restricted or criticised in a manner which contravenes the university's policies or that they are not being supported in action they take in response to such contravention, they should inform their tutor, their route leader or the Director of Work Based Learning as soon as possible. Provided that they have acted professionally and in line with the above policies, the Faculty will act on their behalf in the most appropriate manner.

Breaches of Equal Opportunities by pupils

Offensive actions, such as racist or sexist comments, by pupils to fellow pupils or to school staff, are a challenge to trainee teachers' authority and to school and university equal opportunities policies. Trainees should intervene and clearly state their disapproval,

in the context of these policies. The intention may not have been consciously racist or sexist, especially where comments are made by younger children - or the offender may have been looking for an over-reaction! However, offensive behaviour needs to be addressed professionally. Trainee teachers should always discuss with mentors the best way to proceed, and should ensure that mentors are made aware of any such incidents.

Complaints about Equal Opportunities from pupils or parents

Again, any such complaints should not be dealt with by a trainee teacher in isolation; they should always be discussed with mentors in the first instance so that appropriate action can be taken.

Breaches of Equal Opportunities by school or university staff

There may be instances where a trainee teacher believes that he or she has been the victim of discrimination and sometimes a trainee teacher may feel that he or she has observed instances of breaches of equal opportunities policies. Examples might include comments made by school or university staff to or about pupils, other trainees, or school or university staff; instances of harassment; inappropriate use of language; or issues relating to the curriculum. There are a number of possible courses of action, and choosing which to take is likely to depend on the circumstances. If possible, the trainee teacher should discuss the incident with the person concerned in the first instance, and this may lead to a successful resolution. Other possible courses of action would be to seek the advice of the Course Director or a union representative. In some instances the trainee teacher may feel that they have no choice but to make a formal complaint.

Equal opportunities policies cover a wide range of areas, and it is not possible to do justice to them in a paper such as this. Trainee teachers need to develop their understanding through reading, discussion, and reference to policies and codes of conduct. However, there is one area that may cause particular anxiety, and this is discussed below.

Sexual orientation

The Faculty undertakes to support gay and lesbian trainee teachers and staff if they suffer discrimination in the Faculty or in partnership schools. Their position may be particularly vulnerable as a result of prejudices and misconceptions. If a trainee teacher feels that they need additional advice or guidance before going in to schools, they should talk in confidence to a tutor or to the Course Director. Teachers and tutors have a duty to act for the welfare of their pupils by protecting them from bullying and victimisation from others who may taunt them because they are believed to be lesbian or gay.

The aim of all equal opportunities and race equality policies in schools and other educational establishments is a relatively simple one, although effective implementation is far from straightforward. The purpose of this document is to assist the partnership in establishing an environment in which a positive approach to equal opportunities enhances teaching and learning.

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