

APPG Teaching Profession November meeting

This report to the APPG notes the state of the labour market for teachers during September and October; a report from the EPI on men and teaching and the section of the Migration Advisory committee Report that dealt with teaching as a career.

Teacher Labour market – current thoughts

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Teacher Shortage over: well almost

The latest data from UCAS about postgraduate ITT numbers for September provides a first view of what the outlook for the year is likely to be. The September data will provide the basis for the likely supply of teachers into the labour market for September 2021 and January 2022 vacancies.

In view of the shock to the economy administered by the covid-19 pandemic, it is not surprising that there were nearly 7,000 more applicants in 2020 than in 2019. Up from 40,560 to 47,260 for those in domiciled in England. The number placed or 'conditionally placed' increased from 28,500 to 33,800. This is an increase of around 20% on last year.

The number of applicants placed increased across the country, although in the East of England the increase of only 120 was smaller than in the other regions. In London, the increase was in the order of an extra 1,000 trainees placed on courses compared with 2019.

More applicants from all age groups were placed this year, although the increase was smaller among the youngest age group of new graduates. This might be a matter for concern. Over, 2,000 more men were placed this year, compared to 4,500 more women. This is proportionally a greater increase in the number of men placed.

There was much more interest in secondary courses, where applications increased by nearly 14,000 to more than 81,000. For primary courses, the increase was near 6,000 to just over 53,000. The difference may be down to the date the pandemic struck home, and the availability of courses with places still available at that point in the cycle. Many primary courses will already have been full by March.

Higher education seems to have been the main beneficiary of the wave of additional applications. Applications to high education courses increased from 55,000 last year to nearly 65,000 this year. Applications for apprenticeships reached nearly 1,600 and there were 1,800 more applications to SCITT courses. The School Direct fee route attracted nearly 6,500 more applications. However, the School Direct Salaried route only attracted 200 more applicants this year, and the number placed actually fell this year, by around 300 to just 1,470. Does this route have a future?

In most secondary subjects, more applications are recorded as placed this year than last. Geography, languages (where classifications have changed) are the key exceptions, with fewer recorded as placed than last year. Even in physics, there has been a small increase on last year. However, the increase in design and technology is not enough to ensure the DfE's Teacher Supply Model (TSM) number will be reached. This is also likely to be the case in physics, chemistry and mathematics. Fortunately, in the sciences, there are far more biology students than required by the TSM number.

I am also sceptical as to whether all the history and physical education trainees will find teaching posts in their subjects next year, because the excess of students placed to the TSM number is such that it is difficult to see sufficient vacancies being generated even in a normal year. If fewer teachers

leaves than normal, then the excess may be significant and these trainees might well want to look to any possible second subjects they could teach.

At this point in time, it looks as if 2020/21 round will start with a significant increase in applications over the numbers at the start of the last few years: we shall see.

See also: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4143/the_impact_of_covid_19_on_initial_teacher_training.pdf Page | 2

The data on vacancies recorded during September and October 2020

The recorded level of vacancies during October was around 30% below the number recorded during October 2019 with less than 4,000 vacancies recorded during October this year compared with more than 5,000 during October 2019.

As with other months this autumn, primary vacancies have been holding up better than those posted by secondary schools with the vacancies across the primary sector down by only some 13%. In the secondary sector, English, down by 50% on October 2019 and mathematics, down by more than 45% are amongst the subjects recording some of the largest declines in vacancy totals. By contrast, music has only recorded a fall of around 14% and art a fall of 24%. However, with not even 150 vacancies between the two subjects, these are not major recruiters of teachers.

Traditionally, the end of October marks the conclusion of the annual recruitment round. Most vacancies appearing from now onwards will normally be geared towards appointments for September. In this case that will be September 2021. In a normal year there are few vacancies advertised for an April start. It is too early to tell whether 2021 will be different in that respect.

Leadership vacancies remain another bright spot in an otherwise challenging recruitment market for job seekers. Head teacher vacancies have remained at very similar levels to October 2019. While there have been slightly fewer deputy and assistant head teacher vacancies across the secondary sector, this has been offset by higher vacancy levels in the primary sector for posts at these levels.

Most notable at this time of year is the high percentage of temporary and maternity leave vacancies advertised in the primary sector. During October 2020, some 20% of recorded primary vacancies were listed as a result of a teacher taking maternity leave and a further 28% were listed as temporary positions, some of which may also have been as a result of a teacher taking maternity leave. Overall, only just over half of the primary posts were offered as permanent positions during October 2020.

Although the percentage of vacancies resulting from a teacher taking maternity leave was similar in the secondary sector, at 195 of October vacancies, there were far fewer temporary vacancies advertised. Such vacancies only accounted for 10% of the total vacancies during October. This meant that permanent vacancies accounted for more than 70% of vacancies in the secondary sector during October. A much higher percentage than in the primary sector.

Men in teaching EPI Report

EPI, the Education Policy Institute, published a short report entitled '*Trends in the Diversity of Teachers in England*' that is largely about gender diversity in teaching. The report brings up to date some of the data that can be found in my post on John Howson's blog from April 2020 at: <https://johnohowson.wordpress.com/2020/04/09/are-new-graduate-entrants-to-teaching-still-predominantly-young-white-and-female/>

Interestingly, although the report does put the issue into the wider context of the attractiveness of teaching as a career, and the lack of women taking degrees in some subjects such as physics, it doesn't really consider the fact that some of the change may be down to teaching also becoming relatively less attractive to women, especially primary school teaching.

The EPI paper, while revealing the genuine concern about the issue, doesn't point out that at the end of the 1990s when the economy was also doing well, the percentage of male graduates accepted into teaching through the UCAS graduate entry system (then administered by the GTTR) was as low as it is now and possibly even lower in the primary sector.

Percentage of men accepted onto graduate teacher preparation courses

1998 31%

1999 30%

2000 29%

Source GTTR annual Report for 2000

The EPI paper is also correct to draw attention to the fact that men generally decide to apply later in the recruitment round than women, suggesting possibly that the attraction of teaching as a career is less strong for some male applicants. This is possibly also borne out by the higher departure rates from teaching for men, although some may remain in teaching, just outside of state-funded schools.

Linking the evidence to wage rates, where public sector workers have not fared well compared to other graduates in the South East, is interesting but doesn't explain why Inner London schools have the second highest percentage of male teachers. Perhaps, this is the Teach First effect?

So what might be done? EPI have some good suggestions. In taking over the admissions to teacher preparation courses, the DfE might want to look at how the process across the year might be more neutral in terms of encouraging diversity among both applicants and those placed.

However, one issue has always been that some course providers attract a disproportionately high percentage of applicants from certain groups. Male Black African applicants at one time largely only applied for places on four courses, and some early years courses rarely if ever saw a male applicant.

Finally, the media has a role to play in stereotyping certain careers. The anguish of those that suffered child abuse, mostly at the hands of men, may have deterred some men from choosing careers such as teaching.

But, that's not something just looking at statistics as both EPI and my blog does, can tell you. As the EPI paper concludes, *'it is important to understand the root cause of why more male graduates don't choose teaching.'*

Migration Advisory Committee – teaching conclusions

Teachers of all Modern Languages struggling to find a teaching post may be surprised to discover that the government's Migration Advisory Committee believes that their subject should be added to the list of shortage subjects. The Report from the MAC

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/922019/SOL_2020_Report_Final.pdf tackles the issue of secondary teaching on pages 606 onwards.

For anyone familiar with recruitment patterns in teaching, using data on job posting in August collected by a company called Burning Glass may raise some eyebrows. August is after all the least representative month for teaching vacancies, except perhaps in Scotland where school return from their summer break up to two weeks earlier than in England and Wales. Previously, Mandarin was on the list of shortage subjects, but not teachers of other languages.

TeachVac has recorded fewer vacancies for teachers of modern languages this year compared with last year since the start of the covid-19 pandemic, so the data from Burning Glass seems curious to say the least.

There is no mention of business studies as a shortage subject in the MAC report even though TeachVac has consistently pointed out that the subject tops the list of subjects where schools have found recruitment a challenge. Perhaps there is a pecking order of subjects that typifies their status. Following the Prime Minister's announcement this summer about a focus on skills, it is even more difficult to see why business studies is not even considered by the MAC in their report.

The fact that the MAC doesn't even seem to have taken into account the DfE's own vacancy site is also curious. As a result the outcome of the data analysis on secondary teaching must be open to discussion.

The MAC decision seems based on the fact that The APPG on Modern Languages was concerned about shortages and that an above average number of EEA nationals made up part of those students on teacher preparation courses. The fact that these courses filled more of their places than say, design & technology isn't mentioned.

The MAC noted that: *We recommend, in addition, adding all modern foreign language teachers within SOC code 2314 (secondary education teaching professionals) to the SOL. Overall the occupation has a relatively low RQF6+ shortage indicator rank and is less reliant on migrant employees than the UK average. Statistics show a gradual rise in the number of entrants to ITT (England only). However, there is also some evidence of shortage, particularly for MFL teachers, a subject more reliant of EEA employees.* Page 610

Interestingly, the MAC see no reason to add either primary teacher or FE lecturers to the list of shortage subjects. The former is understandable, the latter strange in view of some of the skills areas on the list. Did the MAC ask whether there was any difficulties in recruiting lecturers in these areas? On the face of their report it seems they treat FE like primary teaching as a single sector, whereas secondary teaching was looked at in more detail down to subject level.

New book

Exploring Teacher Recruitment and Retention

This book is sub-titled *Contextual Challenges from International Perspectives*, and is jointly edited by Tanya Ovenden-Hope and Rowena Passy, and was published by Routledge on the 2nd October. The ISBN is 9780367076450