

TEACHING AS A HIGH-STATUS PROFESSION: IMPROVING TEACHER SUPPLY

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION POLICY MAKERS



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Introduction

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Teaching Profession's Special Interest Group (SIG) for Teacher Supply was established in January 2022. The Teacher Supply SIG aims to provide a regular opportunity for experienced professionals in all sectors of Education in the United Kingdom (UK) to share insights and information about issues relating to teacher supply.

We are committed to supporting the government in matters relating to the teacher profession. This report meets a function of the APPG SIG: Teacher Supply to -

'2.3 Advise APPG on fitness for purpose of policies and practices of the government relating to teacher supply and their function in supporting qualified teacher numbers as needed.' (APPG SIG: Teacher Supply Terms of Reference, 2022).

The Teacher Supply SIG have considered the question:

'What action will support a high-status and sustainable teaching profession in English primary and secondary schools?'

We recognise that schools operate within a complex environment that is subject to social and system level variables, such as the alignment of education to party political policies and local authority/school/multi-academy trust culture. We also recognise that schools and colleges experience teacher supply¹ in different ways. Therefore, this report will focus on schools only.

¹ Teacher Supply is used in reference to both the recruitment and retention of teachers.

Recommendations

Teaching as a career must be in line with the expectations of the graduates the profession is seeking to recruit. It should be a fully qualified profession that provides intellectual stimulation, professional autonomy and tangible opportunities for agency and decision-making. Focusing on re-establishing the status of teaching will increase perceptions of the value of teaching, increase job satisfaction and result in a fulfilling and rewarding profession that retains its workforce.

The White Paper (2022) provided the perfect opportunity to consider changes to enhance teacher status and support the re-establishing teaching as a profession of choice. We would like to request that the Department for Education (DfE) considers the following recommendations in addition to the White Paper (2022) to support teaching as a high-status profession:

- **Recommendation 1:** Policy liaison with professional bodies for coherence and long-term planning.
- **Recommendation 2:** Recognise and promote the role of teachers and school leaders in securing learning.
- **Recommendation 3:** Increase job satisfaction for teachers and school leaders.
- **Recommendation 4:** Improve school funding.
- **Recommendation 5:** Re-regulate teaching.

Recommendation 1: Policy liaison with professional bodies for coherence and longer-term planning

The challenge

The pace of policy change has increased the burden on teachers and school leaders. The instability that constant and fast-moving policy changes bring to schools increases opportunities for teacher and leader dissatisfaction. Workloads increased by new policy requirements reduce the chance for evaluating and developing existing practices. Reaction to, rather than co-construction of, education policy can result in teacher attrition. It can also impact on recruitment, as teaching is perceived to have little control over its own destiny. Professionalism and agency are undermined when collaboration is inadequate between experts and the policy makers.

To reduce the potential for negative impact of education policy changes on teacher supply, policy makers could liaise further with the professional bodies that are expert in learning and teaching and teachers' recruitment and retention. The Chartered College of Teaching (CCT), Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), National Association of School Based Teacher Training (NASBTT) and subject associations could support the DfE in the development and delivery of new education reforms.

To support professionalism in teaching, we suggest:

- **A coordinated approach to policymaking.** Policies that are designed to impact on either teacher recruitment or retention should work to support, not oppose, each other². For example, in 2013 stricter admissions criteria for initial teacher training (ITT) were introduced. This policy change meant that

² See, B. H., & Gorard, S. (2020). Why don't we have enough teachers?: A reconsideration of the available evidence. *Research papers in education*, 35(4), 416-442.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02671522.2019.1568535>

the allocation of trainee numbers for universities were lowered, however at the same time the school leaving age was increased to 18 years old. These policies worked against each other to create a tension in teacher supply. It became more difficult to secure a place on an ITT programme, but more teachers were needed to support the increase in student numbers.

- **Planning and preparation time should be given to schools before any major policy implementation.** Policy reforms that could have an impact on teacher demand, such as increasing the school leaving age, should consider the supply end of the pipeline. Planning with schools and/or ITT providers in advance of any new reform should be considered. We suggest a minimum of two years to support pro-active changes that allow, for example, for adjustments to ITT intake targets. This approach would support policies such as, the change of Information Technology GCSE to Computer Science GCSE and the resulting shortage of computer science teachers (and the teaching of computer science by Information Technology (IT) teachers who could not code)³. Also, the Early Career Framework (ECF), while welcomed as funded professional development for Early Career Teachers (ECTs), the fast pace of introduction resulted in some schools not appointing ECTs⁴, as staff timetables had been prepared prior to confirmation of mentor and ECT teaching remission requirements. A policy intended to improve teacher retention unintentionally impacted on teacher supply due to the pace of introduction.

³ Younie, S. & Preston, C. (2020). *Understanding the contribution of professional communities of practice in education technology in influencing teacher recruitment and retention*. In Ovenden-Hope, T. Passy, R. (Eds) *Exploring Teacher Recruitment and Retention: contextual challenges from international perspectives* (pp.73-83). Oxon, Routledge.

⁴ Reddit (2021) What's the deal with schools not wanting NQT's/ECTS? [online] Retrieved from: https://www.reddit.com/r/TeachingUK/comments/q4g5po/whats_the_deal_with_schools_not_wantin_g_nqts_ects/

- **Long term planning with the professional bodies for teacher supply is needed⁵**. Although the DfE does have a 10-year forecast, it cannot anticipate policy changes that may be party driven and impact on teacher supply. We suggest that the DfE establish an 'agency' with the professional bodies; CCT, UCET and NASBTT, to develop and deliver a proactive apolitical approach to teacher supply needs.

⁵ See, B. H., & Gorard, S. (2020). Why don't we have enough teachers?: A reconsideration of the available evidence. *Research papers in education*, 35(4), 416-442.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02671522.2019.1568535>

Recommendation 2: Recognise and promote the role of teachers and school leaders in securing learning

The challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in additional challenges for school leaders and teachers, including how teaching as a profession is represented in the media. During the height of the pandemic, the media shared parents' recognition of the demands of teaching, which were based on their experiences homeschooling their own children. However, there was a paucity of media coverage on the additional challenges teachers and school leaders were faced with in sustaining learning and how they overcame this with very limited timely guidance from the DfE⁶. Media representation is not wholly supportive of the profession, and this can be hard for teachers to cope with⁷. It also reduces the attractiveness of the profession, impacting on recruitment. Teachers have not felt respected socially, despite having taken on caring workloads on top of learning and teaching, due to the lack of available social care and welfare service support for schools. Teachers consistently adapt to support the needs of their students, and this should be recognised and promoted. If teachers continue to feel undervalued, this will result in sustained attrition.

⁶ Acharidou, E., Mason, E., Behailu, A., Stiell, B., Willis, B. & Coldwell, M. (2022). *School Recovery Strategies: Year 1 findings*. Retrieved from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1045471/School Recovery Strategies year 1 findings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1045471/School_Recovery_Strategies_year_1_findings.pdf)

⁷ Bagnall, C. L., Skipper, Y. & Fox, C. L. (2022). Primary-secondary school transition under Covid-19: Exploring the perceptions and experiences of children, parents/guardians, and teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12485>

For teachers to be seen as professionals, the DfE and the media need to work collaboratively to promote the positive role teachers play in supporting our economy and, more importantly, the wellbeing of children and young people by providing a secure and safe learning environment. This was never more evident than in the pandemic.

The Government should review how reduced funding of children, families and young peoples' services has impacted on schools and consider a strategy that supports teachers being teachers. Students' other social needs should be met by professionals in the relevant fields e.g., social work and mental health. However, until the policy reform is in place, teachers' adaptability to undertake roles required to ensure wellbeing and support their students' engaging with learning must be recognised.

The Government should consider a coordinated approach to collaboration between services, ensuring schools have easy access to the wider resources needed for their pupils. These changes will enable the DfE to respond effectively to school leader calls for:

“Further cross-sector working with families and further support and funding for social care and welfare services to address the wide-reaching impacts of worsening inequalities in education and mental health, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas.”⁸

⁸ Acharidou, E., Mason, E., Behailu, A., Stiell, B., Willis, B. & Coldwell, M. (2022). *School Recovery Strategies: Year 1 findings*. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1045471/School_Recovery_Strategies_year_1_findings.pdf

Recommendation 3: Increase job satisfaction for school teachers and leaders

The challenge

Reduced feelings of wellbeing and autonomy among teachers and school leaders has resulted in less job satisfaction. In 2020, 95% of teachers and school leaders who responded to a survey conducted by the National Education Union (NEU) reported concerns about their wellbeing. Workload is a key factor influencing teacher wellbeing, alongside accountability pressures, working patterns, and autonomy⁹ ¹⁰. In turn, these factors impact negatively on job satisfaction and feelings of professionalism and lead to teacher attrition. Outward facing perceptions of teaching are that it is a highly performative and tightly controlled job with long working hours, which negatively impact on recruitment.

Increasing teacher and school leader job satisfaction will provide the agency expected of a professional role. We appreciate that this change will involve both policy and culture, but believe that it is needed to re-establish teaching as a high-status and desirable profession that recruits and retains high-quality teachers.

Job satisfaction in teaching can be increased through the Government implementing the following:

⁹ Long, R. & Danechi, S. (2021). *Teacher recruitment and retention in England*. Retrieved from <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7222/CBP-7222.pdf> ; https://tdtrust.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/08/teacher_autonomy_how_does_it_relate_to_job_satisfaction_and_retention-1.pdf

¹⁰ Ofsted (2019). *Teacher well-being at work in schools and further education providers*. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936253/Teacher_well-being_report_110719F.pdf

- **Accountability changes.** This will involve a review of the unintended consequences of how Ofsted impacts on school workloads and priorities in creating an ‘accountability culture’¹¹, and revising inspections to remove these.
- **Workload changes.** Teachers and school leaders must be supported in having flexible working options, such as job shares, as standard school policy. Reform in this area should include a review of hours spent working beyond the working day as part of the DfE workload strategy.
- **Autonomy for school leaders.** In 2012 the Government promised leaders more autonomy through a school-led system. What has emerged over the last ten years is an education system in which schools are controlled centrally¹², with school leaders responding to DfE requests and teachers actioning them. This control of schools, in matters ranging from curriculum to attendance, has reduced autonomy, agency and contextualising of school needs and need to be reviewed.

¹¹ For example, analysis of data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of over 100,000 teachers from more than 40 countries, reported that 68% of teachers in England felt accountability-related stress, compared to a cross-country average of around 45%. Jerrim, J. & Sims, S. (2020). *Teacher workload and well-being. New international evidence from the OECD TALIS study*. Retrieved from: <https://johnjerrim.com/papers/>

¹² Analysis for data from TALIS found that England sits towards the top of the ‘accountability’ scale when compared to other countries. Ibid.

Recommendation 4: Improve school funding

The challenge

Funding challenges have resulted in sustained and chronic issues for schools in accessing resources, including teachers. Schools are being run on budgets akin to 2009 in real terms^{13 14}. These challenges have also resulted in relatively low pay in schools. The reports of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on School Funding in 2021 demonstrate that action is needed to address the level of funding schools receive. The increase in unqualified teachers reflects both the difficulties in recruiting teachers, and a cheaper option for stretched school budgets. Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Higher Level TAs are being used increasingly to 'teach' classes to balance budgets. School funding needs to be improved to support teacher supply.

Once schools are appropriately funded (including the promised £30,000 starting pay for teachers in line with other graduate professions¹⁵), school leaders will be able to deploy qualified teachers, with appropriate subject specialisms, to teach all classes and attract more teachers to the profession.

The issues surrounding school funding have been well rehearsed and we appreciate that the DfE is fully aware of these and is considering ways forward. It is worth noting that in Quebec, Canada, teachers have a yearly pay increment (step) that is not performance based and includes inflationary increases. Teachers have

¹³ Siebta, L. (2021). *School Spending in England*. Retrieved from: <https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN334-School-spending-in-England-trends-over-timeand-future-outlook.pdf>

¹⁴ House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2021). *School Funding: Twenty-First Report of Session 2021–22*. Retrieved from: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/7577/documents/79574/default/>

¹⁵ See, B.H., Morris, R., Gorard, S., Kokotsaki, D., and Abdi, S. (2020). Teacher recruitment and retention: A critical review of international evidence of most promising interventions. *Education Sciences*, 10, (10), 262, 1-45.

high levels of wellbeing and job satisfaction, which has been linked to this approach to salary that is not tied to additional responsibilities.¹⁶ It would be worth considering this approach to teachers pay in the UK as it suggests a strategy for teacher retention that is linked to improved wellbeing, workload and job satisfaction.

¹⁶ Lofthouse, R. & Hollweck, T. (2021). Contextual coaching: leveraging and leading school improvement through collaborative professionalism. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*. ISSN 2046-6854 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-01-2021-0019>

Recommendation 5: Re-regulate teaching

The challenge

The de-regulation of teaching has reduced the status of teachers. In 2012 the DfE reformed education policy to enable Academies, Free Schools and Studio schools to employ unqualified teachers in full teaching roles and to use the title 'teacher'. An unintended consequence of de-regulating teaching has been the increase in unqualified teachers and leaders. In 2019, the School Workforce Census data recorded 25,078 unqualified teachers, the majority of who were found in Educationally Isolated schools¹⁷, secondary schools and special schools^{18 19}. De-regulation affects both teacher recruitment and retention by de-valuing teaching, establishing it in policy as a job that can be done without qualification.

Teaching as a fully qualified profession establishes the value of training and professional development and secures its status in society. Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) should be the minimum entry requirement into the profession²⁰. The challenges in Further Education caused by extended periods of de-regulation since 1990²¹ include issues with recruitment, retention, teacher identity and quality of

¹⁷ Educationally Isolated schools are those that are in areas that are geographically remote, socioeconomically deprived and cultural isolated, such as coastal, rural, ex-industrial. Tanya Ovenden-Hope, T. & Passy, R. (2019) *Educational Isolation: a challenge for schools in England*. Retrieved from: <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/educational-isolation/>

¹⁸ Ovenden-Hope, T. (2021). *Teacher as commodity versus teacher as professional: An international status-based crisis in teacher supply*. Retrieved from: https://my.chartered.college/impact_article/teacher-as-commodity-versus-teacher-as-professional-an-international-status-based-crisis-in-teacher-supply/

¹⁹ National Statistics (2020). *School workforce in England*. Retrieved from: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>

²⁰ Ingersoll, R. & Collins, J. G. (2018). *The status of teaching as a profession*. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1226&context=gse_pubs

²¹ Nash, I. (2012) *Deregulation and cuts provoke fears of a return to the bad old days*. Policy Consortium. Retrieved from: <https://policyconsortium.co.uk/deregulation-and-cuts-provoke-fears-of-a-return-to-the-bad-old-days/>

teaching and learning²². We urge the Government to recognise the relationship between an unqualified teaching profession and teacher supply, not in the way it can be used to remedy teacher shortages, but as a contributing and sustaining factor to these shortages.

The Chartered College for Teaching was established, in part, to consolidate Chartered Status, as in law, engineering, medicine and other professions. The White Paper (2022) presents an opportunity to consider the re-regulation of teaching in this context and thereby support teacher supply through:

- Increased status of the profession in society through the value placed on training.
- Increased job satisfaction for teachers who are all trained professionals on a clear career pathway.
- Enhanced opportunities for school improvement, for example through the employment of qualified subject and phase specialists, and by having all teachers with initial training that supports evidence-based practice.
- Re-establishing teaching as a profession of choice for graduates seeking a career with continuing professional development.

Professional development routes for unqualified teachers in schools to achieve QTS can be put in place through ITT providers to facilitate re-regulation.

Deregulation undermines professional status. High-status professions are typified by mandatory qualification requirements, strong CPD entitlements and a professional body that provides accountability and voice.

²² May 2010 all three regulatory planks of FE teaching have been removed: mandatory membership of a professional body; minimum CPD entitlements; and the requirement to hold or be working towards a teaching qualification. Source: National Education Union (2020) Deregulation of FE Teaching. Retrieved from: <https://neu.org.uk/advice/deregulation-fe-teaching>

Conclusion

The Teacher Supply SIG have considered the question:

‘What action will support a high-status and sustainable teaching profession in English primary and secondary schools?’

There is a crisis of teacher supply in England. The White Paper (2022) presents an opportunity to initiate changes that could impact positively on both the recruitment and retention of teachers. We believe our recommendations will provide a focus for improving the teacher supply challenges facing the country.

At the heart of the recommendations in this report is the re-imagining of teachers as professionals and teaching as a profession. We believe that by taking action to position teaching as a high-status role in society and a first-choice profession for graduates and career changers, the Government will improve teacher recruitment and retention. Our recommendations involve policy-making that is advised by our expert professional bodies for teacher supply and schools, with a focus on long-term planning for a sustained and high-quality workforce. We ask that the demanding role of teachers and school leaders be recognised and promoted positively, which includes actions to increase job satisfaction that make teaching an increasingly respected and attractive career choice. School funding is a known area for improvement, and we support any action that the Government can take to increase resources allocated to schools. Our last recommendation is for the Government to seriously consider the benefits of a regulated workforce, in all schools, as a way of improving teacher supply long-term.

It is worth re-visiting the statement from Damien Hinds, then Secretary of State for Education, in the Recruitment and Retention Strategy (DfE, 2019: 3)²³, which provides a worthy ambition for any actions considered to remedy teacher supply challenges:

²³ Department for Education (2019). *Recruitment and Retention Strategy*. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786856/DFE_Teacher_Retention_Strategy_Report.pdf

'But there are no great schools without great teachers. The key to education is the person at the front of the classroom. At a time when there are more pupils in our schools than ever before, we need to be attracting and keeping great people in teaching.'

Teacher Supply SIG members

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