

**House of Commons Education Select Committee
Inquiry into Supply of Teachers**

The NASUWT's submission sets out the Union's views on the key issues identified by the Committee in the terms of reference for the Inquiry.

This evidence is informed by NASUWT research and the views of teachers and school leaders.

The NASUWT is the largest union in the UK representing teachers and headteachers.

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Executive Summary

The NASUWT's evidence sets out the Union's concerns about Teacher Supply. The Union urges the Select Committee to consider the following:

- a) the introduction of strategies to address the low morale of the teaching profession, which include tackling excessive workload and the significant erosion of teachers' pay since 2010;
- b) recognise teaching as a highly skilled professional career where teachers' professional autonomy is encouraged and where teachers are recognised and rewarded as highly skilled professionals;
- c) recognise the negative impact of increased employer pay flexibilities and discretion on graduate perceptions of teaching as a career, and take steps to address this;
- d) commission a detailed independent examination of the effectiveness of the School Direct Programme, including the extent to which the Programme is advancing equality in accordance with the public sector equality duty;
- e) a review into the effectiveness of the Government's levers in securing equality in teacher supply;
- f) recognise that whilst teacher supply is critical to leadership supply, other factors which may impact on leadership recruitment should also be considered; and
- g) recognise the scale of the teacher supply crisis and the need to address this urgently.

Background and context

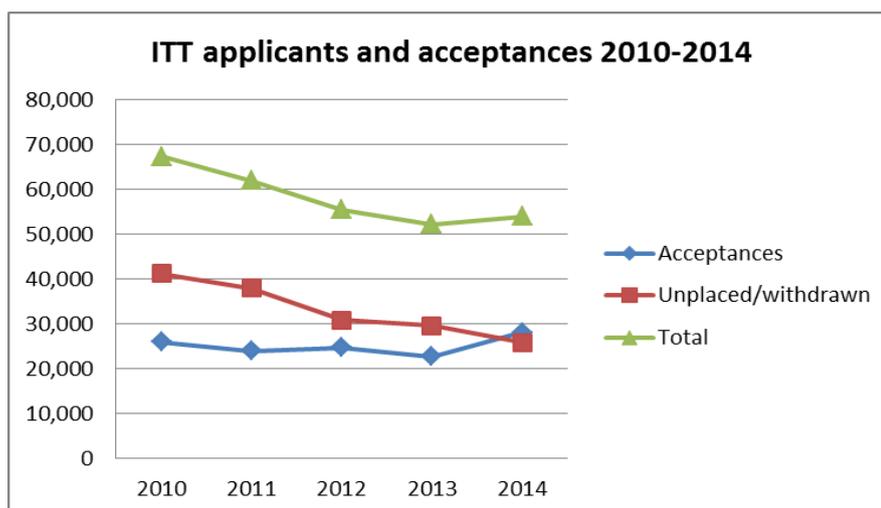
1. The issues highlighted by the Select Committee in the remit for the Inquiry are wide-ranging and merit further extended discussion and consideration. Within the confines of the word limit for submissions, the NASUWT is only able to give a brief overview of the key areas of specific concern identified by the Committee.
2. The NASUWT has raised with the Government, on numerous occasions, its concerns about the implications of education policy since 2011 on teacher supply. Successive submissions by the Union to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) since 2011 have highlighted the growing problems in relation to teacher recruitment and retention and the contributory factors to this.
3. The NASUWT has since 2011 conducted an annual survey of teacher opinion on a range of issues affecting their professional lives. In its evidence, the NASUWT pointed to the high numbers of teachers seeking to leave teaching altogether, the decline in the number of graduates seeking to train to become teachers and the substantial numbers of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) places remaining unfilled.
4. The increasing difficulties in teacher supply have been acknowledged, in part, by the Minister of State for Schools.¹ However, in setting out the DfE's position on this issue, the Minister declined to describe the current situation as a 'crisis', stating merely that the system faced a 'challenge'.
5. The NASUWT believes that the Minister's description understates the scale of the issues facing the education system in terms of teacher supply. The Union is clear that the current position can accurately be described as a recruitment and retention crisis. The basis for this assessment is set out below.

¹ Vaughan, R. (2015). 'There is no teacher recruitment crisis'. *TES*. (3 July). Available at: (<https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/schools-minister-there-no-recruitment-crisis>), accessed on 14.11.15.

Recruitment into the teaching profession

6. The most recent data from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) End of Cycle Analysis Report 2014 (Figure 1) establish that approximately 54,000 people applied to postgraduate teacher training through the new UCAS Teacher Training (UTT) application scheme in 2014.²
7. While this represents an increase in the total number of applications for higher education-led ITT for courses starting in 2013, it is lower than the 55,502 applications made in 2012 and confirms a 13,000 decrease in the number of applications since the peak of 67,289 applicants for courses starting in 2010. This represents a decrease in applications of approximately 20% between 2010 and 2014, a period which coincides with the imposition by the Coalition Government of public sector pay restraint, coupled with a deterioration in working conditions.
8. The erosion of teachers' pay in the period 2010-15 has meant the value of teachers' pay has declined by 13.8%. Furthermore starting salaries for teachers are currently 20% lower than the average starting salary for other graduates.

Figure 1



Source: DfE ITT census

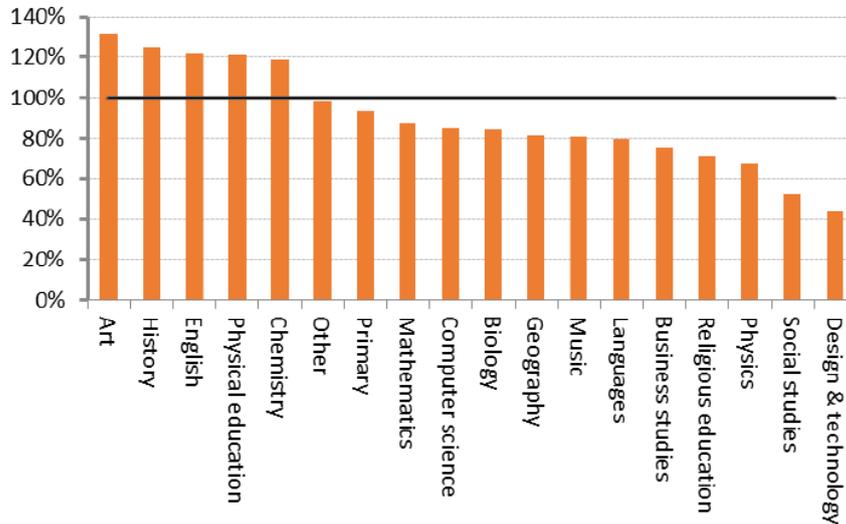
² Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) (2015). *End of cycle report*. Available at: (https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/utt_eoc_2014_eoc_15_03_27_1.pdf), accessed on 14.11.15.

9. It is important to recognise that the significant fall in recruitment into teaching evident since 2010 contrasts starkly with experience during previous recessions, in which slow or negative economic growth has been strongly correlated with increases in applications for courses of ITT.
10. This suggests that, despite the considerable financial incentive schemes to recruit graduates into teaching the policies pursued by the previous Coalition and the current Conservative Governments for the education system have had a powerful disincentive effect on graduates in relation to their choice of teaching as a career.
11. The DfE Statistical First Release (SFR) for the academic year 2014/15 provides provisional figures on the number of new entrants to have started, or expect to start, and ITT program in England.³ The SFR confirms that the number of new entrants onto a training programme fell from 32,779 in the academic year 2013/14 to 32,156.
12. Despite the increase in the proportion of applications accepted, ITT courses remain significantly undersubscribed. The 19,213 entrants to primary programmes in 2014/15 represented only 93% of the DfE's target. The DfE also fell short of its secondary recruitment target, with the 12,943 entrants to programmes representing only 91% of the number identified as necessary by the DfE. Overall, postgraduate courses met 94% of the target number of recruits while undergraduate courses only secured 89% of the total number of entrants felt to be sufficient to sustain satisfactory recruitment levels.
13. The SFR data further confirms that the majority of subjects did not recruit sufficient trainee teachers to meet the targets set by the DfE. (Figure 2).

³ DfE (2014). *Statistical First Release: Initial teacher training census for the academic year 2014 to 2015*. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380175/ITT_CENSUS_2014-15_FINAL.pdf, accessed on 14.11.15.

Figure 2

Applications for ITT by subject/phase against national recruitment targets (2014-15)



Source: DfE

14. The SFR identifies the particular difficulties experienced with recruitment into School Direct training places. Overall, the School Direct programme filled only 61% of the allocated places, with the School Direct fee-paying route filling only 57% of the places available. This serves to emphasise the concerns expressed previously by the NASUWT to the Committee about the long term implications for teacher supply of the DfE's increasing reliance on the School Direct programme which has in practice devolved responsibility for recruitment of the nation's teachers to individual schools. The data suggests schools are not best placed to meet these challenges. Furthermore, the Committee should be aware of the very real concerns about the potential for bias and discrimination in the selection to the School Direct Programme and which the Government has no levers to address. The NASUWT urges the Committee to examine this.

15. The Government has set much store by the Teach First programme but this recruits only approximately 1,600 out of the 35,000 teachers the DfE set as the number necessary it is necessary to recruit annually.

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16. In light of this evidence, it is clear that problems with recruitment into teaching are intensifying and creating significant barriers to ensuring adequacy of teacher supply to the extent that 'crisis' rather than a 'challenge' is a more apt description.

The quality of trainees by degree classification

17. The DfE has continued to seek to draw attention to the fact that the proportion of entrants into ITT with a degree classification of 2:1 or higher increased from 66% in 2011-12 to 72% in 2013-14 as evidence that its policies are securing a better qualified teacher workforce.⁴

18. However, it should be recognised that the proportion of trainees entering teaching with 2:1 or above has been increasing over a considerable period of time. The increases since 2010 represent a continuation of the trend rather than an outcome attributable to policy since that date.

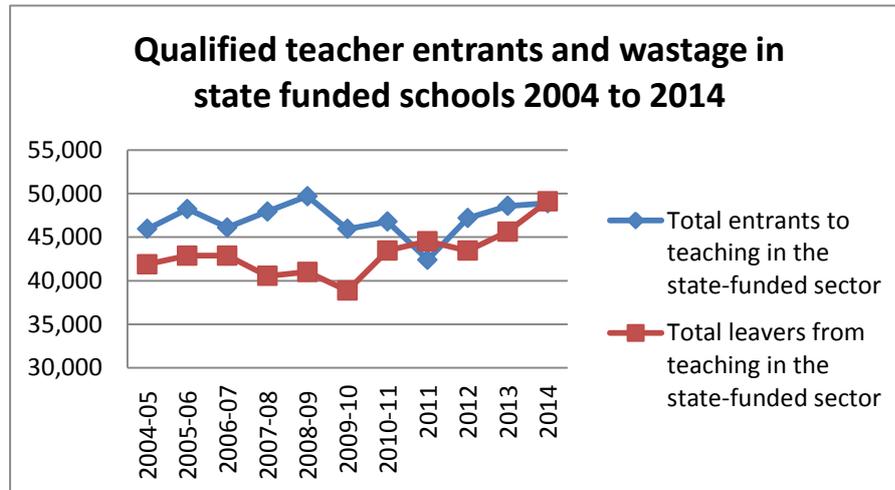
Teacher wastage

19. Levels of wastage from the teaching profession, other than for reasons of retirement or death-in-service, have risen significantly. The School Workforce Census confirms that between 2011 and 2014, the number of teachers leaving teaching rose from 24,330 to 31,350.⁵ The School Workforce Census 2014 data further confirms that for the first time since data was collected on its current basis, the total number of entrants to teaching in the state funded sector was less than that of those leaving the profession (Figure 3). Since 2011, only 4370 more teachers entered the teaching profession than have left. It is important to note that this period also co-incides with the introduction of increased flexibilities over teachers' pay and conditions of service.

⁴ DfE (2015). 'Nick Gibb: The importance of the teaching profession' *Gov.uk* (5 September). Available at: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-the-importance-of-the-teaching-profession>), accessed on 15.11.15.

⁵ DfE (2014). *School workforce in England: November 2014*. Available at: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2014>), accessed on 15.11.15.

Figure 3



Source: DfE

20. These figures echo the outcomes of the NASUWT annual Big Question Survey (2015) of teacher opinion which found that:

- 58% of teachers felt that their job satisfaction had declined over the past 12 months;
- 78% of teachers indicated that they did not feel that they were empowered professionally to deliver the best outcomes for their pupils;
- nearly seven in ten teachers (68%) had considered quitting the profession altogether in the last twelve months; and
- 68% of teachers would not trust their head teacher to make fair and objective decisions about pay progression.

21. Comparable figures were reported in an independent ComRes poll which found that:

- almost six in ten teachers (59%) state that they had seriously considered leaving their current job in the last 12 months;
- over half (52%) had seriously considered leaving the teaching profession over the past year; and
- well over half (56%) disagreed with the statement '*I would recommend a career as a teacher to a friend*'.

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Retirements

22. The current demographic composition of the teacher and school leader workforce highlights the implications of retirements for the supply of teachers in future.
23. Between 1992-93 and 2014-15 the number of retirements per year from the workforce by teachers of pension age increased from 3,310 to 9,150. This was notwithstanding the greater restrictions placed on the ability of teachers to access retirements introduced over this period.
24. It is, therefore, important to note that the School Workforce Census confirms that approximately 86,400 full-time equivalent teachers, almost 19% of the total, are aged 50 or over and that, as a result, age-related retirements are likely to continue to exert pressure on maintaining the sufficiency of the pool of active teachers.
25. In addition to age-related retirements, evidence suggests that a significant proportion of teachers will continue to seek early exit from the profession, including through the use of actuarially-reduced pensions. The DfE's *Teachers Working Longer Review*, is examining evidence in relation to poor practice in schools regarding the management of older teachers which may contribute to teachers seeking to retire early rather than to work until their normal pension age.

Vacancy rates

26. The pressures described above in relation to teacher recruitment and retention are reflected in the current vacancy rates.
27. The vacancy rate data may not capture the full extent of issues in respect of teacher supply. The basis upon which annual vacancy rate data is calculated was changed by the Coalition Government in 2010 so that such data is now collected in November instead of January. The data, therefore, now excludes the significant number of vacancies that arise at the end of calendar year and is,

therefore, likely to understate the extent to which teaching posts are not filled permanently.

28. Clear evidence exists that teacher vacancy rates are becoming extremely problematic. Data from the 2014 School Workforce Census confirms that the vacancy rate is now at 1.2%, an increase from 0.6% in 2010. The current rate is approaching the 1.4% teacher vacancy rate, calculated on the pre-2010 basis, reached in 2000, acknowledged at the time by the School Teachers' Review Body as indicative of substantial teacher supply problems.
29. Further evidence of increasing barriers to filling vacancies is confirmed by the increase in the number of unqualified teachers working in teaching roles in schools from 16,620 to 20,320 between 2013-14 and 2014-15.
30. It is also clear that the issues of teacher supply are driving schools to deploy teachers to teach in subject areas which are not their first specialism or for which they have not been trained. The School Workforce Census confirms that only 79.8% of mathematics lessons in year groups 7-13 were taught by teachers with a relevant post A-level qualification in the subject, a decrease from the 82.7% of lessons taught by such teachers in 2013. Comparable declines have occurred in relation to English and science.⁶

The teacher supply crisis: implications

31. It is clear that the problems in respect of teacher recruitment and retention highlighted above will have significant impact on the provision of education in schools. Pupil numbers are increasing significantly across the system. DfE data confirms that all state-funded school sectors, except maintained nursery schools, are projected to experience sustained increases in pupil numbers between 2015 and 2024.⁷

⁶ DfE (2015). *op.cit.*

⁷ DfE (2015). *National pupil projections: trends in pupil numbers – July 2015*. Available at (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-pupil-projections-trends-in-pupil-numbers-july-2015>), accessed on 15.11.15.

32. During the period 2016-2024, secondary school numbers are projected to increase by 20%, reaching 3.2 million by the end of the period. Overall, an additional 800,000 pupils will need to be catered for in the secondary education sector by 2022.
33. In the primary sector, the pupil population is projected to increase by 8% between 2015 and 2024. A recent detailed analysis of teacher supply requirements confirmed that by 2020, the total number of full time equivalent primary teachers will need to increase by 33,000 on the corresponding figure in 2010 to maintain current pupil/teacher ratios.⁸
34. This combination of increasing pupil numbers and constraints on teacher recruitment and retention will lead to significant shortages in teachers and school leaders, unless the situation is considered seriously by Government and policies to increase recruitment and retention into the school workforce are implemented. For example, based on the current DfE Teacher Supply Model, shortfalls in recruitment between 2011/12 and 2014/15 have resulted in a shortage of approximately 6,000 teachers.⁹ This is likely to result in unacceptable increases in pupil teacher ratios, an increasing reliance on unqualified staff to lead teaching and learning and teachers being required to teach subjects for which they do not have a relevant post A-level qualification.
35. The NASUWT notes the particular reference by the Committee to recruitment at ‘*senior levels*’. Policy assessments of this issue have failed to take account of the implications for leader recruitment and retention of the broader teacher supply issues. Schools leaders are drawn from the wider teacher workforce and a teacher supply problem will inevitably impact on leadership recruitment.
36. It is clear that the impact on recruitment and retention of the current teacher supply crisis will, in time, result in problems in securing a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to fill middle and senior leadership

⁸ Pearson Think Tank (2012). *Are we running out of teachers?*

⁹ Wilkins, C. (2014). ‘Is a teacher shortage looming?’ (8 December). *Schoolzone* (<http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/schools/blog/archive/Jan15.asp>) accessed on 15.11.15.

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roles. The NASUWT believes it is essential to address teacher recruitment and retention issues to support school leader supply strategies.

Policy influences on teacher supply and further action

37. It is clear that the implications of pay freezes and caps have a significant deterrent effect on the extent to which graduates are willing to consider teaching as a career.¹⁰ This is shown by the most recent Report on *The Graduate Market in 2015* data produced by High Fliers Research.¹¹

38. This indicates that competition in the market for graduates continues to intensify and that the context is set to become much more challenging for schools to recruit and retain teachers. The Report confirms leading employers are increasing graduate recruitment and that there is more demand for graduate labour across the board.¹²

39. The Report highlights the challenges facing Government and schools in competing for top graduates. In 2015, the median graduate starting salary at the UK's leading graduate employers stood at £30,000.¹³ This is significantly more than the salary a newly qualified teacher can expect to earn in their first year, with the minimum of the main pay range being £22,244. In addition to this, teachers have been subject to a two year pay freeze since September 2011 and a two year pay cap of 1% since September 2013. Increased deregulation and pay flexibilities, the dismantling of the pay scales and the removal of clear career paths have resulted in teachers entering the profession only being guaranteed the statutory minimum starting salary as any pay progression is entirely discretionary.

¹⁰ Pearson Think Tank (2012). *op.cit.*

¹¹ http://www.highfliers.co.uk/download/2015/graduate_market/GMReport15.pdf

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

40. Other conditions of service issues are also important in terms of teacher recruitment and retention. In particular, the extent to which workload has increased and is taking its toll on teachers.

41. The Secretary of State has recognised through her Workload Challenge that the lives of teachers up and down the country have been blighted by excessive workload. This is compounding the recruitment and retention crisis. The NASUWT has been highlighting this issue through its annual Big Question Survey since 2011. The thousands of teachers responding to the Survey have consistently reported workload as their top concern about their working lives. It is, therefore, deeply regrettable that Government policy has continued to increase the burdens on teachers and that effective and essential tools for measuring job satisfaction and workload have been abolished by the Government.

42. Evidence also indicates that the denigration and deprofessionalisation of teaching by the Government is having a damaging impact upon recruitment and retention into teaching. A report by Pearson¹⁴ supports the NASUWT's view that the constant denigration of the teaching profession by Ofsted and Government is having a '*damaging impact to morale (as a result of) a combination of punitive and pejorative discourses and a raft of dramatic policy changes.*'¹⁵ The report identifies this as a severe threat to maintaining effective rates of recruitment and retention into teaching.

November 2015

¹⁴ <http://thepearsonthinktank.com/2012/are-we-running-out-of-teachers/>

¹⁵ *ibid*