Rt Hon Meg Hillier MP
Chair of Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

15 January 2019

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Dear Meg,

As you know, improving teacher recruitment and retention is one of my Department’s top priorities. I am therefore very pleased to draw your attention to the upcoming publication of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

Building on extensive quantitative and qualitative evidence, the strategy was developed collaboratively with teachers, head teachers, representative bodies, teachers’ unions, initial teacher training providers and leading experts.

The strategy outlines four key areas where focus, investment and reform can have the biggest impact on improving teacher recruitment and retention.

Priority One: Create the right climate for leaders to establish supportive school cultures

At the heart of this will be reforming the accountability system. In particular we will radically simplify the system, making Requires Improvement the sole trigger for an offer of support – abolishing floor and coasting standards. The new Ofsted framework will have an active focus on reducing teacher workload, with inspectors considering staff workload as part of the leadership and management judgment. They will also look unfavourably on schools that implement burdensome data practices, and will refuse to look at internal assessment data.

Priority Two: Transform support for early career teachers

We are launching the Early Career Framework, which will underpin a fully-funded, two-year package of structured support for all early career teachers linked to the best available research evidence – alongside funded time off-timetable in the second year of teaching and additional support for mentors. We will create a major shift in the incentives for new teachers by introducing phased bursaries, with staggered retention payments to encourage good people to remain in the
profession, as well as to join.

Priority Three: Build a career offer that remains attractive to teachers as their careers and lives develop

We will develop specialist qualifications to support clearer non-leadership career pathways for teachers that want to stay and excel in the classroom. We will invest in these new and existing leadership qualifications, and will do so disproportionately in challenging schools. We will support headteachers to transform approaches to flexible working in schools.

Priority Four: Make it easier for great people to become teachers

We will radically simplify the process for becoming a teacher, introducing new digital systems designed to make application much easier and more user-friendly. In particular, we will introduce a new ‘one-stop’ application system for ITT, which will be easier to use and designed to better meet the needs of potential trainees. We will review the ITT market to support it to work more efficiently and effectively.

In the strategy, we have sought to address the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee and the National Audit Office. We have also briefed colleagues from the National Audit Office on the strategy.

We will share a copy of the published strategy with your Committee upon launch.

JONATHAN SLATER
PERMANENT SECRETARY