



Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP
Secretary of State

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Neil Carmichael MP
Chair, Education Select Committee
House of Commons
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Dear Neil

When I appeared before your Committee on 9 September, you asked me to send you further details of our plan regarding the recruitment and retention of teachers. I am writing in response to that request.

High-quality teachers are the single most important factor in determining how well pupils do in school. The Government is committed to ensuring that teaching is a high-status profession that attracts the brightest and best graduates, and to giving schools the freedoms they need to recruit and retain top-quality teachers.

Since the publication of *The importance of teaching: the schools white paper 2010*, we have introduced a series of initiatives to raise standards of teachers and teaching. This is part of our strategy to create a world-class education system, and within this, the key constituents of our plan to recruit more high-quality teachers includes:

Financial incentives

We offer generous bursaries and scholarships to attract the best candidates for teacher training in the subjects that face the biggest recruitment challenges and have recently announced our 2016-17 offer. This includes £30,000 tax-free for graduates with a first class degree training to teach physics; an increase from £25,000 this year and there are increased bursaries in other core subjects including maths, biology, chemistry, computing, languages and geography. We also offer a prestigious scholarship, worth up to £30,000 for physics, and £25,000 for maths, chemistry and computing trainees, run by the subject's professional body.

We continue to provide the opportunity to earn a salary while training to teach, via our School Direct (salaried) route. We offer schools grant funding towards trainees' salaries, which from 2016-17, for trainees in maths and physics ranges from £25,000 nationally to £29,900 in inner London.

STEM package

We have introduced specific policies to support recruitment to priority STEM subjects. As announced by the Prime Minister in December 2014, we are investing £67m over the next five years in training an extra 2,500 maths and physics teachers and upskilling 15,000 existing teachers, to improve teaching in these crucial subjects. Alongside targeted programmes to increase applications for teacher training, we are supporting career changers to enter teaching and helping returning teachers re-join the profession.

Our investment in STEM teaching includes:

a) Career Changers

We plan to utilise the skills and experience of career changers by building new, more flexible teacher training routes that meet the different needs of this target group. This includes, for example, having awarded 18 School Direct lead schools grant funding of up to £20,000 to develop and recruit to part-time and abridged School Direct (salaried) ITT courses in maths and physics. This is underpinned by an enhanced advisory service through the Teaching Line, targeted marketing through our *Your Future | Their Future* campaign and our *New Year New Career* activity.

b) Returners

We recently announced the *Supporting Returning Teachers* pilot, which will support secondary schools aiming to improve teacher recruitment in priority subjects by removing the barriers that prevent already qualified teachers from returning to the classroom. As part of this pilot, we are helping schools to provide a tailored package of support for those wishing to return to the profession and offering grant funding of up to £1,900 per teacher.

c) Chairs in maths and physics

We continue to support specialist routes into teaching, including Chairs in maths and physics, which is specifically aimed at recruiting highly expert post-doctoral maths and physics researchers, including from overseas, on an uplifted salary of between £32-40k.

Subject knowledge enhancement

We offer fully funded *Subject knowledge enhancement* (SKE) programmes in a variety of subjects, to help increase the number of graduates eligible to train to teach priority subjects. SKE courses that refresh and build on an applicant's existing subject knowledge are available, alongside bursaries for eligible applicants.

School Experience Programme

The *School Experience Programme* (SEP) offers prospective trainees the chance to experience life in the classroom, and provides the school experience that is an entry requirement of many initial teacher training (ITT) courses. We fund this opportunity for trainees interested in physics, mathematics, chemistry, computing, and languages teaching, and have just extended this to include biology and geography.

Marketing

Well designed and creative marketing is an important aspect of our plan to meet next year's ITT targets and attract the best graduates into the profession. Our marketing programme will focus on both career changers and new graduates, particularly in priority subjects. We will use a range of channels and approaches that have proved successful, including a range of advertising – the centrepiece of which is a national TV campaign - and digital/social media channels, public relations support, an extensive events programme, recruitment brochures for priority subject registrants, a targeted email programme for registered candidates, as well as marketing through schools.

Teach First

Teach First is a prestigious teacher training route open to high-performing new graduates who may not otherwise have considered going into teaching. These trainees are placed in the schools where they are most needed, including in some of the most deprived and challenging areas of the country. We are funding the expansion of Teach First into every region of England, enabling Teach First to reach 90 per cent of eligible schools by 2016. This is a key part of our plan to recruit more top teachers across England, including in more rural, coastal and disadvantaged areas.

Whilst ensuring that we recruit sufficient numbers of new trainee teachers, we are also committed to supporting schools to retain good teachers – that is why we have made significant policy interventions in areas such as improving pupil behaviour and tackling unnecessary workload for teachers. The widely reported statistic that 40% of teachers leave after their first year is simply not true. In fact, almost 90% of teachers continue in the profession following their first year of teaching, which has been the case for the last 20 years.

The number of teachers in our schools is at an all-time high, as is their level of qualification:

- There are now 454,900 full time equivalent (FTE) teachers, up 5,200 from last year and 13,100 from 2010;
- in 2014/15 there were over 33,000 maths and over 6,000 physics teachers in schools in England, both increases on the previous year;
- the overall teacher vacancy rate has remained low, at just 0.3% in November 2014. This rate has remained stable at around 1% or below for the past 15 years;

- the proportion of all teachers with a degree or higher is 96.6% and has risen by 2.3 percentage points (from 94.3%) since 2010;
- there are now more, better qualified teachers in England's classrooms than ever before. A record 17 per cent of trainees starting in the last academic year held a first class degree; almost three quarters had a 2.1 or above.

We have already exceeded our ITT recruitment target for primary school teachers this year and we are making sustained progress in the secondary sector, including in key subjects such as English, maths, physics and chemistry where recruitment is ahead of last year's performance. Further details will be available in the ITT census, which will be published shortly.

Whilst we have made substantial progress in recent years, we recognise that teacher recruitment – particularly in key subjects such as maths and sciences – becomes more difficult as increased opportunities open up to graduates in a strengthening economy. At the time of the last census, the national data showed that there are a sufficient number of teachers in our schools. But that does not mean that individual schools are not experiencing significant recruitment challenges – and we are doing what we can to make it easier for them to recruit and retain the best possible teachers, for example by giving schools a much greater role in initial teacher training, and affording them more flexibility in how they pay their teachers.

We remain focused on attracting more top graduates into the profession; particularly in those core academic subjects that help children reach their potential. We are committed to ensuring that teaching is an attractive and viable career that can continue to attract the brightest and the best graduates, and to give schools the freedom they need to recruit and retain top-quality teachers.

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