



House of Commons
Education and Skills Committee

**Secondary Education:
Teacher Retention and
Recruitment:
Government Response
to the Committee's
Fifth Report of Session
2003–04**

**First Special Report of Session
2004–05**

*Ordered by The House of Commons
to be printed 1 December 2004*

HC 85
Published on 6 December 2004
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£0.00

The Education and Skills Committee

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First Special Report

On 21 September 2004 the Education and Skills Committee published its Fifth Report¹ of Session 2003–04, *Secondary Education: Teacher Retention and Recruitment*. On 22 November we received the Government's response to the Report. The response is reproduced as the Appendix to this Special Report.

Government response

Summary

The Government is grateful to the Committee and all those who gave evidence, for the time and effort they gave to explore the critical issues of Recruitment and Retention.

Recruitment and retention has improved significantly since the Committee first began this inquiry in the spring of 2003, and we are pleased to be able to record the progress and success we have had in some areas that were more problematic at that time.

The Committee has made a number of conclusions and recommendations covering a wide range of factors which have an effect on the retention and recruitment of teachers. But, before getting into the body of the recommendations themselves, it is worth reflecting generally on the progress we have made. The number of new recruits to teacher training rose by 51% between 1999–2000 and 2003–04 and vacancy rates have fallen from a high of 1.4% in 2001 to just 0.7% this year. Not only are the raw numbers of recruits into teaching improving but so is their quality, whether measured by their qualifications on entry to training, or the proportion who successfully complete their courses and go on to take up teaching posts. We believe we have come a long way in addressing the recruitment difficulties in schools and Teacher Training Agency (TTA) deserves much credit for this success.

On retention issues, too, we have much to feel positive about with teacher numbers at their highest for 20 years. We need to give the lie to the perception that significant numbers of teachers leave the profession within a few years, never to return. One of the great things about teaching is the opportunity it provides people who want greater flexibility in their lives. Many teachers will therefore take a break in service at some stage during their careers, but we need to be clear that about three-quarters of those who enter teaching are still in the profession 10 years later. Looking towards the latter end of a teacher's career we continue to build in greater flexibility again to enable those who wish to change their working arrangements to do so with confidence.

Despite all of these successes we must not allow ourselves to become complacent and the Committee's report helps us guard against that. While we agree with the Committee that there are now few serious problems with the recruitment and retention of teachers, we also recognise that it is always possible to do more in some areas.

1 First Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2003–04, *Public Expenditure: Schools' Funding* HC 112.

- We need to keep succeeding with our behaviour improvement strategies as these are fundamental to keeping teachers in the classroom;
- Continuing to challenge ourselves to raise the standards of leadership and management in schools will also be critical and we will be helping the NCSL to strengthen its position as a strategically focused, powerful hub of school leadership; and
- With the TTA we need to build our vision for a new teacher professionalism to help teachers take greater responsibility for their careers and development within a structured framework of standards, regular reviews and rewards.

The Select Committee's conclusions and recommendations are in bold text. The Government's response is in plain text.

Induction of newly qualified teachers and continuing professional development

While the expansion of the Early Professional Development Programme is welcome, the research which indicates that the success of the induction process varies widely from school to school is worrying. Most worrying of all is the evidence of 'rogue' heads and managers who may blight someone's career before it begins. Training for the now mandatory National Professional Qualification for Headship, which we discuss later in this report, should emphasise the need to encourage and support new teachers, and give guidance on how to do that.

Integration of the ending of training, the induction year and subsequent support in the early years of a teacher's career is also extremely important, and we recommend that the Government and bodies such as the Teacher Training Agency and the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers put together a formal entry programme to bring these different elements together.

We recommend the introduction of a formal entry programme integrating the end of training, the induction year and support in the early years of a teacher's career. This could reduce significantly the number of teachers who are no longer teaching within five years of qualifying.

The Government believes the Committee is right to focus on the importance of training and development of teachers, particularly in the early years of their career. Our wish to bring coherence and consistency to this area was a key reason behind our decision to place the responsibility for initial teacher training (ITT), induction and continuing professional development (CPD) into the hands of a single organisation, the TTA. The Government wrote to the TTA in September 2004 to extend its remit to cover teachers' CPD, and specifically asked it to develop proposals to provide guidance to schools on CPD and human resources. One element of this is likely to be helping each school to understand the need to invest in high-quality induction and CPD in order to recruit and retain the best staff.

Another part of the TTA's new remit is to develop proposals to bring greater coherence to CPD through professional standards and progressive expectations. In developing its

proposals, the TTA will take into account the Committee's recommendation. A representative of the Employers Organisation for Local Government was co-opted onto the TTA Board as a non-voting member from August 2004.

The Government agree with the Committee about the importance of teachers experiencing a continuum of support and guidance throughout the early stages of their careers. The structured support that they receive during their ITT, and then as a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) through the induction support programme, needs to be sustained and to continue throughout a teacher's career.

There is already a formal entry programme in the sense that each NQT is entitled to a statutory induction support programme. This creates a foundation for teachers' careers and an expectation for their CPD. We recognise that there is a job for the Government, the TTA and others in helping those who have a responsibility to NQTs to understand that entitlement and to make sure all NQTs receive their due. That is one of the reasons why new induction standards were introduced in September 2003 to provide a more coherent progression from the level of practice required for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) to the completion of induction. These were accompanied by revised induction guidance to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of all concerned in the induction process, including headteachers, to ensure a greater level of consistency.

Furthermore, as all the evidence indicates that the role of the headteacher is crucial in ensuring that the whole school is committed to supporting and developing its staff, the revised national standards for headteachers emphasise the need for headteachers to build a professional learning community within their schools and that headteachers are knowledgeable of the relationship between managing performance management, CPD and sustained school improvement.

The Committee was specifically keen to ensure that the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) recognised the need for Head teachers to provide the necessary support to new teachers. We believe that, within the training materials for NPQH, there are already significant elements which focus on the induction, retention and development of teachers. The training modules are rewritten annually and the theme will be further developed this year with increased focus on retention.

We hope the above measures will provide clarity, coherence and leadership to the early professional development of NQTs. However, each new teacher begins their career in a specific school, with particular pupils, and each has their own priorities for learning and development. It would be wrong to impose a uniform support programme on all NQTs, when many already complain that current arrangements are not differentiated enough.

We also need to be clear that it is not just teachers in the early stages of their careers that need support and opportunities for professional development. That is why, instead of expanding the pilot Early Professional Development Programme (EPD) as previously planned, we have decided to build on the lessons learned from that pilot and devote its efforts towards building the capacity of schools for effective CPD. In that way schools are being encouraged to develop more systematic and structured approaches to professional development for all their staff.

The Committee will also be interested to know that, in partnership with the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) and TTA, the Government has commissioned a six year research project ('Becoming a Teacher') to explore teachers' experiences during ITT, induction and early professional development. The project began in 2003 and has collected data from trainees on a number of ITT routes. It will track these trainees through their first four years of teaching to explore the relationship between, and impact of ITT, induction and EPD on retention and early career paths.

Understanding these links more clearly will help us to improve the quality of ITT, the induction year and subsequent support in the early years of teachers' careers, and to increase the impact they have on teachers' learning and development. It will also enable us to target resources where they have the greatest effect.

Finally, while acknowledging that 'wastage' from ITT and from those in the early years of their teaching careers needs to be reduced, it is important to dispel the myth that significant numbers of teachers leave the profession within a few years, never to return. About three-quarters of those who enter teaching are still in the profession 10 years later.

Continuing Professional Development is clearly very important in improving teachers' skills and morale and thereby in helping to provide better education for pupils. We urge all those concerned with the management of teachers to ensure that CPD becomes an integral part of teachers' careers. We also recommend that it looks for innovative ways of providing that development, and in this context we welcome the plans for the Teachers' TV channel for which programmes are currently being piloted with a projected launch date of early 2005.

The Government welcomes and shares the Committee's views on the importance of CPD in improving teachers' skills and morale.

The Government's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners will provide the basis for a new teacher professionalism that should help to ensure all teachers engage in and are supported in their professional development throughout their careers. One of the five key principles underpinning our strategy is a major commitment to staff development. The strategy envisages CPD creating stronger links between development and career progression and having a central role in realising the transformation agenda. This will help ensure that personalised learning is delivered across the system, and will also enable schools to play their part in responding to the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters'. It will also encourage teachers, through a teaching and learning review process, to take ownership of their own development. By integrating CPD into performance management arrangements, it will become a powerful lever for raising standards. It is also at the core of the new work the TTA have been asked to take on under their expanded remit for teachers' CPD mentioned earlier.

The Government agrees that innovative ways need to be found to provide CPD. It is important that the profession recognises that CPD is not just about going on formal training courses. Some of the best CPD is delivered by practitioners. A recent review of research by EPPI (the Centre for Evidence for Policy and Practice Information) has demonstrated the significant impact that collaborative CPD—working with colleagues in other schools, observing one another, providing feedback about teaching and learning,

engaging and reflecting together on the art and craft of teaching, promoting practitioner enquiry and research—can have on teacher practice and pupil performance.

As the Committee have suggested, the introduction of Teachers' TV will add to the range of innovative CPD provision. Teachers' TV has the potential to be a major influence on the CPD capacity-building agenda, providing opportunities for teachers to learn and innovate and to progress. It will provide the ability to open up the processes of classroom practice, teacher reflection or coaching will offer a unique opportunity to teachers to observe classroom practice on an unprecedented scale. This new innovation has the ability to provide access to formal expertise through lectures, training programmes and master classes; reduce the need to travel to get access to training; create flexibility about when teachers can undergo training, allowing individuals to have access to content on demand so that they become 'leaders of their own learning'; and reduce the cost of training, the cost of supply cover and the uncertainty relating to the quality of supply cover.

Teachers from minority ethnic communities

It is clear that there is a need for more teachers from minority ethnic communities, and a need to ensure that they are able to make equitable progress in the profession. Addressing the recruitment, retention and career progress of teachers from minority ethnic communities must be a priority for the DfES and the Teacher Training Agency.

The Government agrees that it is vital that we have a more representative school workforce if minority ethnic parents and pupils are to have confidence that their needs will be met in our schools; and that teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds will find teaching an attractive, worthwhile and long-term career.

This latter point is being addressed through the programmes of the TTA and the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). By November 2006 the TTA aims to increase the recruitment of trainees with a minority ethnic background to 9% of all new entrants. When this national target has been achieved, the TTA will strive to sustain recruitment at this level for a further three years.

The TTA has a number of initiatives in place to address these issues. These include the Teaching Advocate Programme, which enables those enquiring about teaching to ask questions of a serving teacher, and where currently about 9% of teaching advocates are from a minority ethnic background and more are being recruited. Similarly, 22% of participants on the TTA's programme of taster courses for those interested in teaching were from a minority ethnic background. Currently over 16% of the enquiries received about postgraduate teacher training are from people from a minority ethnic background.

The TTA's 2003 census of new entrants showed that 2,637 trainees from a minority ethnic background were recruited for this academic year. This is 8.7% of the trainees recruited where the ethnicity is known and 1,009 (62%) more than in 2000. In addition there are 679 trainees from a minority ethnic background following an employment based route to QTS.

As the Committee has identified, there is a real need to address the progression of minority ethnic teachers to management and leadership roles, and the NCSL is already developing innovative strategies to address the issue. Alongside their general leadership

support programmes are the 'Equal Access to Promotion' and the 'Investing in Diversity' programmes which are specifically aimed at ensuring minority ethnic teachers and senior managers achieve their potential by taking up key leadership roles within the profession.

Within the NPQH, figures relating to minority ethnic candidates are now systematically gathered, and individual NPQH centres are encouraged to take active measures to recruit from under-represented groups and try to recruit tutors from these groups as role models. Programmes such as Leading from the Middle are attracting more teachers from minority ethnic groups and this should lead to an improvement in recruitment from them to headship in the longer term.

It is also important to note that the measures that the Government is already pursuing to encourage teachers to remain in the profession such as classroom behaviour improvement projects, a reduction in workload via the National Agreements, increased pay flexibility and, in some areas, the Key Worker Living housing package, will bring equal benefits to all teachers including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Workload

We hope that further progress will be made in the current year on numbers of additional staff to assist in the implementation of the agreement. The regrettable decision of the UNISON conference in June 2004 to withdraw support for the agreement is a substantial setback. Given the potential benefits of the agreement the DfES should make it a priority to keep all parties on board.

The DfES needs to do its utmost to keep the workload agreement in place and to encourage those who are not participating in it to do so.

The Government entirely agrees with the Committee about the importance of the workload agreement and is absolutely determined that it should remain in force. That is why we play a key role in the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group. Working with all our partners is important to us, and we are pleased to report that UNISON has decided not to suspend its involvement in the National Agreement but is consulting branches on the issues raised at conference.

The Government recognises the Committee's hopes for further increases in the number of staff working in schools. Over the last few years this has been a key priority and there have already been significant increases: schools now have 17,500 more teachers and 54,000 more support staff than they had in January 2001—both figures are full time equivalents. There is no doubt that the richer mix of skills being brought into schools by these larger numbers of support staff has been crucial to enable workforce reform to take place.

However, workforce reform is much wider than simply employing more staff. It is about schools re-examining everything they do, so that they can make better use of their existing time and resources. Schools are supported in this process by guidance provided by the National Remodelling Team (approved by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group), and by LEA-based Remodelling Advisers.

Pupil behaviour

In keeping with our desire and that of the Government to see evidence-based policy, we look forward to a proper evaluation of the effects of the Behaviour Improvement Projects.

A reduction in the incidence of poor behaviour in schools will help both teachers and pupils. If the Government's strategies work, they should be pursued with vigour. If they do not, alternatives need to be found. In any event, the evaluation needs to be as thorough and as expeditious as possible. We cannot afford to wait for years to discover whether or not the DfES is on the right track.

The Government notes the Committee's recommendations on pupil behaviour. The broad welcome for our policies for dealing with violent and disruptive behaviour referred to in your report is essential if we are going to succeed in helping all schools tackle these challenges for themselves.

We are clear that our behaviour and attendance strategy, which includes targeted and universal elements, concentrates on what we know works such as: strong leadership (clear expectations, consistently applied rules, skilled workforce, parental engagement backed up by sanctions); intensive multi-agency support for schools and pupils with the most serious problems; and schools working together and with LEAs to ensure the right mix of provision for pupils, both in and out of school.

To date there has been solid progress in helping schools to promote good behaviour. A good range of measures are in place to help them with the most difficult children, we have taken strong action against bullies, and have strengthened the hand of schools in preventing and dealing with violent incidents.

The Committee was also concerned to ensure there was a proper evaluation of the Behaviour Improvement Projects. The Committee will be pleased to learn that an evaluation of the various strands of these strategies has either been completed or is in progress including: a report on fast track to prosecution, an evaluation of parenting programmes, the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) and of strategies at LEA, school and pupil levels. We also receive regular feedback from our field-force and use this information, combined with the more formal evaluations to refine our strategies.

We are expecting the BIP evaluation to be completed in the first half of 2005. But we have already learnt a great deal from the interim evaluation report of its first year. Here the London University Institute of Education reported significant increases in primary school attendance across the first 34 participating LEAs. There were also significant reductions in authorised and unauthorised absences and in BIP secondary schools fixed-term exclusions were 11% lower in 2002/03 than in the previous year. The report also showed that where BIP interventions are working well, they were having a substantial positive impact. Researchers found that local programmes are providing a higher level of support to individual pupils at risk, with potential to make significant impact on their life chances.

Training teachers in challenging schools

We recommend that the Teacher Training Agency in partnership with training organisations develops a similar programme here to that of Center X to attract those who wish to teach in challenging schools and provide them with the skills and the network of post-qualification support necessary to succeed.

We consider that a programme to train teachers to teach in challenging schools and to support them once in post should be developed as a matter of urgency.

The Government agrees with the Committee that innovative approaches are needed to encourage and develop teachers to work in challenging schools. We can advise the Committee that there are already several initiatives in place which either prepare trainees to teach in challenging schools or contain strong elements of this. These include:

- Teach First—the second cohort of this relatively new scheme is now teaching in challenging London schools, and their energy, enthusiasm and professionalism has been well received. The scheme is providing important lessons about the impact of strong graduates in challenging schools and about building an 'esprit de corps' which might be incorporated into other programmes. There is scope for expansion of the scheme to other cities.
- Mainstream Initial Teacher Training with an urban element—a number of ITT providers work closely with inner London Boroughs and other urban areas to offer trainees the opportunity to undertake some of their training in London; examples include the Urban Learning Foundation which is working with a range of providers and in other inner city areas. Some inner city LEAs are using this route as a way of recruiting new teachers interested in working in challenging schools.
- Graduate Teaching Programme (GTP) —traditionally schools with recruitment difficulties, including challenging schools, have used the GTP as a recruitment tool. The TTA has facilitated work to improve the quality of training offered by finding strong schools to take overall responsibility for GTP training while the trainee works in the challenging school. This is used extensively in challenging schools throughout the country.
- Fast Track—all Fast Track trainees do one of their teaching placements in a challenging school and over 25% of these schools are in London. All Fast Track teachers are expected to take at least one teaching post in a challenging school.
- Trainee Heads Programme—since 2001 strong deputies with the potential to be heads have been placed in challenging schools under one year secondments. This has been extended from 2004 to potential deputies.
- To address the London element specifically, London Challenge is working with the Government Office for London Teacher Recruitment and Retention Unit on a project aimed at encouraging teachers to teach in London's most challenging schools. It will work with LEA recruitment managers to identify vacancies in challenging schools in London, and will broker applicants through a coordinated advertising campaign.

Additionally, there are also a number of ITT and CPD programmes already in place that prepare teachers to work in challenging schools, and the importance of this to urban renewal and community building is central to the mission of a number of training colleges - such as University of Manchester, Sheffield Hallam University, and an important part of the work of some rural colleges—such as St Martin's College and the University of Gloucestershire.

To ensure that we address all aspects of this complex issue, the Government will also address the related issue of schools that are asked to take on large numbers of hard-to-place or disruptive pupils. We will expect groups of schools and colleges, including Pupil Referral Units and special schools, to take collective responsibility for the education of young people in their area, through clear agreements which set out systems for managing excluded and seriously disruptive pupils.

Shortage subjects and teaching outside of specialisms

We do support the principle of using financial incentives to remedy teacher shortages in specific areas, but we are aware of the possibilities of unintended consequences (for example, physics trainees changing to mathematics to take advantage of financial incentives) so the effects will need to be closely monitored.

Problems with the designated shortage subjects, and with others, need to be closely monitored to make sure that policies to encourage people to teach in these subjects are effective.

More information is needed on the numbers of teachers in secondary school teaching outside their specialist subjects and the reasons why they are doing so, and we welcome the fact that the DfES is commissioning a research project into the deployment patterns of mathematics and science teachers.

Since 2000, a range of special financial incentives has been offered to trainee teachers in priority subjects like maths and science. This has helped to secure increases of 50% and 21% respectively in the numbers of trainee teachers of maths and science as well as a halving of the number of unfilled teacher vacancies in these subjects since 2001. Nevertheless, as the studies which the Government commissioned from Sir Gareth Roberts and Professor Adrian Smith have made clear, the challenge of ensuring better teacher supply in maths and science remains great. That is why the Government has already acted to build on what has been achieved since training bursaries and Golden Hellos were first introduced.

In summer 2004, the Department for Education & Skills' response to the Post-14 Mathematics Review announced a package of new measures to promote better teaching and learning of maths. These include increases in the value of the financial incentives on offer to prospective maths teachers; more places on school-based training programmes for maths graduate career-changers; and the recruitment of a whole new cadre of subject-specialist Higher Level Teaching Assistants to provide better support for maths teachers in the classroom. Shortly afterwards, the Government's 10-Year Science and Innovation Framework announced parallel measures to improve the teaching and learning of science.

With the help of strategies like these and with the continuing support of the TTA, the Government's aim is to eliminate the undershooting of its annual recruitment targets for maths and science by 2007/08.

Besides training bursaries and Golden Hellos, recruitment to shortage subjects is also benefiting from subject-enhancement courses which have been piloted by the TTA. These are designed primarily for people who already hold degrees which include a component of maths, physics, chemistry or modern languages, but who do not have the full degree-equivalence in these subjects that is required for entry to a specialist PGCE course or the GTP. Subject-enhancement courses last between 3 or 6 months and are open only to those who already hold a conditional offer of a teacher training place. These are making a valuable contribution to shortage subject recruitment and make it possible to bring into the profession people who might otherwise be lost. Independent evaluation of the pilot courses has been very positive and the Government has already announced the national rollout of enhancement courses in maths and science from next year.

The Committee has drawn attention to the need to guard against any unwanted consequences from offering additional financial incentives for one subject area over another. We do recognise the issue, but in the example offered by the Committee, the concern is unnecessary as both physics and maths teachers are considered to be in the same category of shortage subject and therefore attract the same incentive package.

The Government collects a large amount of data on teacher flows in order to monitor teacher supply in all subjects and phases, and this enables timely measures to be introduced to address teacher recruitment difficulties and helps to inform teacher supply decisions. The Committee's specifically makes mention of the additional research being undertaken to consider the deployment patterns of mathematics and science teachers in secondary schools. This research project will start in November 2004 and will provide detailed information about who is teaching these subjects, including their qualifications and experience. It will also help us understand more about teachers in these shortage subjects, particularly in terms of their professional development, motivation to teach and aspirations for the future. This in turn will help inform effective policies to encourage people to teach, and remain teaching, these subjects. It will also collect evidence about how teachers and support staff are deployed to deliver the curriculum in mathematics and science in secondary schools.

Pay and allowances

The hostility to recruitment and retention allowances appears so entrenched that there seems little prospect of their current very limited use being expanded. Different approaches are needed, and the DfES, governors, heads and LEAs, should explore alternative ways of rewarding teachers working in challenging circumstances.

Where there are persistent problems of recruitment it is surely right in the interests of children's education that financial incentives are available to attract teachers. They have worked well in encouraging more people to train as secondary teachers, and could make a significant difference. We look forward to seeing the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendations following its consultation.

The Government agrees with the Committee that incentives are helpful in addressing recruitment and retention issues. The Committee's report notes that recruitment and retention allowances were little used in the majority of schools (though their application was significantly greater in the London area). In April 2004 these gave way to the long-standing provision for schools and LEAs to pay recruitment and retention incentives and benefits. This was to encourage schools and LEAs to think more flexibly and creatively about the incentives and benefits they wished to offer, to deal with specific barriers to recruitment or retention in their school or area. To these incentives and benefits may be attached whatever conditions they choose, for example to attract teachers they consider being of high quality. As well as giving cash sums they may also support specific costs such as travel, housing or childcare. It is too soon to assess the extent and manner in which schools and LEAs are using these flexibilities now that the flat rate allowances have ended, but we strongly support and will continue to encourage their use.

The Committee was also concerned about ensuring individual schools had the opportunity to address persistent recruitment problems. We too share that concern which is why schools already have other flexibilities within the pay system to reward teachers in particular circumstances, including challenging ones. This applies, for example, to the setting of pay ranges for members of the Leadership Group and Advanced Skills Teachers, for which governing bodies have the flexibility to take account of factors such as recruitment, retention and the particular challenges of the post.

The Government anticipates further recommendations next year from the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) about the wider use of local pay. We have addressed a number of issues with the STRB's March 2004 proposals in our evidence to the STRB of September 2004, which was produced jointly with our pay partners. In particular we set out the criteria we believe were important to achieve a successful local pay solution. These criteria were that any changes to the current system should:

- help to overcome persistent recruitment and retention difficulties;
- help to move away from sharp 'cliff-edges' where neighbouring schools in different LEAs pay their teachers differently;
- not jeopardise the stability we have achieved over school budgets;
- be capable of being managed within existing funding levels;
- support moves we have already made towards greater local flexibility over pay; and not overcomplicate the pay system.

The proposal for local pay was originally made to increase schools' flexibility to make decisions at local level to meet their particular needs. The proposals within our (September) evidence would increase schools' flexibility to make decisions to address local need in a national framework.

Leadership

We are not convinced that training for the National Professional Qualification for Headship emphasises adequately that the way in which a head teacher manages a school can be decisive in persuading teachers to remain at that school. The impact of the retention of high quality staff on improvements in pupil achievement needs to be emphasised and good practice on retention issues needs to be explicitly included in the training.

The Government shares the Committee's view that the way a headteacher manages a school can be decisive in persuading teachers to remain at that school. We need leaders (and leadership teams) who can combine the ability to manage all the people in schools, and money, with the creativity, imagination and inspiration to lead transformation. That is why we are pleased that leadership and management in schools continues to improve. In their 2003 report on school leadership and management, Ofsted reported that in secondary schools, the proportion of leadership and management judged to be good or better has increased from 56% in 1996–97 to 84% in 2001–02.

While we note the Committee's concern about the training for National Professional Qualification for Headship, we are confident that it will continue to provide the changes and improvements in leadership that will both retain staff and improve pupil achievement. The programme includes a number of elements including face-to-face training, online work, networks to support and share good practice, tutoring, school-based work and self study materials. The latter materials include 32 units which are rewritten each year, and the Committee will be pleased to learn that the next set of materials will include further work on recruitment and retention.

It is important to note that the theme of retention draws heavily for effectiveness on a number of skills which run throughout the whole NPQH programme and include work on developing positive relationships, teamwork and sharing leadership, developing a positive ethos, emotional intelligence, making the most effective use of all resources, including staff and continuous staff development.

We do place great importance on schools retaining highly effective staff. The recently revised National Standards for Headteachers set out the knowledge and professional qualities expected of an effective headteacher, and provide that they should 'recruit, retain and deploy staff appropriately' and are committed to 'the sustaining of staff motivation'. Furthermore, the school governing body sets head teachers' objectives within the context of the school development plan, and these must be linked to pupil performance.

Mature entrants/age profile of the profession

Given the need to continue to recruit in the region of 30,000 trainees a year into Initial Teacher Training, it is essential that the Teacher Training Agency should aim to recruit people from the widest possible pool—mature entrants, those from minority ethnic communities, those seeking part-time work and those returning to the profession amongst others.

More varied careers are likely to become the norm in all fields of work and teaching will need to adapt to accommodate that trend and facilitate flexibility to allow people to move in and out of the profession.

What is needed is a good balance within the teaching profession; those who have long-term careers in teaching, those who teach and then move on to another career and those who come to teaching as a second or third career.

The Committee will be interested to know that amongst its successes in recent years the TTA has attracted a greater proportion of people over 25 into teacher training. For instance, in 2001–02, 51% of all trainees were over 25 and 21% over 35. These people are often in their second or third career and they bring a range of valuable skills and experience into schools. Most of them are training to teach secondary shortage subjects such as mathematics (35%), ICT (30%) and science (26%). The Government therefore entirely agrees with the Committee's comments and is glad that the excellent work the TTA is doing to recruit from a much broader base is being recognised. This will of course continue.

Teacher training institutions and schools are growing increasingly reliant on mature entrants and returners; valuing the skills they bring to the teaching profession. The rapid growth in the GTP has been an effective way of attracting older, career changers into the profession and improving its age profile. Traditional routes will continue to be the main way into teaching for most people, but employment-based routes will make a significant contribution to teacher training and recruitment and reflect the need to ensure that a range of routes are available to would be teachers whatever their starting position.

It is also important for mechanisms to be found to encourage those coming towards the end of their career to stay in teaching in some capacity for as long as possible so that their expertise is not lost. The age profile of the teaching profession, with 50% aged over 45, could have serious implications for staffing in our schools over the next ten to fifteen years unless the situation is managed properly.

The DfES, National Employers Organisation for School Teachers and the Teacher Training Agency need to develop a managed approach to retirement to ensure that there is no sudden exodus of half the profession, and that adequate numbers of new recruits are brought in to the profession over the next decade.

The Government acknowledges the point the Committee makes about the importance of managing the expected number of retirements anticipated from the profession over the next few years.

Flexibilities already exist in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) which allow teachers to manage the last years of their careers in a number of ways, including a move from full to part time working while having their pension benefits calculated using their full time equivalent salary. There are also arrangements that allow them, with the support of their employers, to 'step down' from a post of responsibility during the years leading up to retirement and protect their pension benefits from the consequences of the reduction in salary that is associated with this.

Our proposed changes to the TPS will allow people pursuing more than one career within a working life, taking career breaks or otherwise seeking improved work life balance, to do so and still build greater pension benefits in the TPS in ways that are more flexible than under the existing arrangements. The Government's consultation on the modernisation of the TPS specifically refers to challenges which will be faced by employers in the future and asks for ideas on how they can be resolved. It also suggests changes which would provide enhanced flexibilities and allow teachers to manage working patterns towards the end of a career or to work beyond normal retirement age to receive enhanced pension benefits. These changes should help to spread the effect of retirements, help employers plan and enable schools to retain the expertise of teachers who would be prepared to continue working but in a different pattern.

Furthermore, as part of its package of reforms of the taxation regime that governs occupational pension schemes, the Government proposes to allow members of occupational pension schemes to draw some or all of their occupational pension benefits from the age of 55, without the requirement that the individual has retired completely from that employment.

Both we and employers have recognised that there will need to be adequate human resource (HR) management capacity to meet the needs of a workforce, shaped to maximise the capacity of the institution to meet its objectives, and we are encouraging institutions to consider how their existing HR arrangements could be adapted to optimise the match between these arrangements and pension flexibilities.

But is not of course all about increasing the flexibility for our older teachers. We also need a firm grasp of our requirement for new teachers over the coming years. The Government's teacher supply model is used to inform the allocation of teacher training places for future years and therefore to ensure that there are adequate numbers of NQTs in future. The model takes into account a range of factors including the age profile of current teachers, as well as projected trends in pupil numbers and projections of wastage from and entry to teaching. As was detailed in our evidence to the Committee in mid-2003, the TTA is currently pursuing various successful recruitment policies to provide sufficient teachers during the coming years, particularly in shortage subjects.

Wastage from training and qualified teachers who do not enter teaching

Concerns about the high level of drop-out from initial teacher training could be addressed by seeking to expand the employment based routes.

Any expansion of employment based training must include appropriate support for trainees and for their schools.

The Government shares the Committee's view that unnecessary wastage from ITT should be reduced wherever possible. While it continues to be a concern, the problem has to be seen within the context that about three-quarters of those who complete ITT in England each summer take up a teaching post in a maintained school in England by the following March. Others find their first posts in other parts of the UK, or start their teaching careers later. Many teachers will take a break in service at some stage during their careers—for

example, to have a family—but about three-quarters of those who enter teaching are still in the profession 10 years later.

Part of the solution is to make sure that trainees are aware of the realities of the profession before they start training. For some, teaching will not be the right career, and it is important that they are counselled out of the profession or fail to gain QTS. The TTA has an extensive range of career exploration opportunities to enable potential applicants to find out about training to teach and teaching as a career before committing themselves to training. These include open schools visits and 3-day taster courses. Regional careers advisers are available to give impartial advice and guidance to career changers so they can make informed choices about their suitability for teaching and the most appropriate route to QTS. These services are likely to reduce the small number of people who gain QTS but do not enter teaching.

To provide information that will help us understand why trainees drop out, the TTA has commissioned a study to examine the wastage rates between gaining QTS and entry into the teaching profession. The initial findings certainly suggest estimates of wastage that are too high, but the research does also seem to show that most trainees gaining QTS eventually engage in teaching or some other work in the education sector. The picture is complex but training colleges also support this view, and the TTA will disseminate the findings to the sector and discuss further action as appropriate. The ‘Becoming a Teacher’ project is also exploring reasons for drop-out from ITT and for non-take up of teaching posts on completion of training. Around 87% of the secondary trainees surveyed as part of the study in 2003-04 indicated that it is ‘very likely’ that they will enter teaching on completion of their ITT programme with only 1% feeling it to be ‘fairly unlikely’ or ‘very unlikely’. The project will be looking at the actual take up of teaching posts later this term. We will of course consider what if any further action is needed in light of these findings.

The Committee is right to draw attention to the positive affects of employment based routes into training. Demand for places on employment based training remains high and the number of trainees starting has increased considerably in recent years. For instance, in 2003–04, there were 4,200 trainees starting on the GTP, Registered Teacher Programme or Overseas Trained Teacher Programme, an increase of more than 1,000 trainees compared with 2002–03. This compares with a total of just 440 trainees on these routes in 1999–2000. The TTA plans to expand the number of places available to be able to respond to this demand. However, as the Committee makes clear, it is important for trainees to have access to support while training and the Government considers it is essential that schools provide a strong, supportive, learning environment for trainees, with school based mentors. Training providers therefore have to ensure that trainees are only sent to schools where there are good support mechanisms.

The government’s five year plan

As part of its five year strategy, the Government must develop a plan for the structure and strategic management of the teaching profession which addresses the specific issues we have identified; without sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers, all plans for improvements in school provision will come to nothing.

The Government agrees with the Committee that without sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers all plans for improvements in school provision will come to nothing. We believe we have come a long way in addressing recruitment difficulties in schools and the TTA deserve much credit for this success. But we must not be complacent and the TTA will continue to gather data and review access to teacher training from the widest range of prospective teachers to ensure they continue to get it right. We anticipate them bringing the same drive and determination to their new remit for CPD which they will be pursuing alongside their extended remit on occupational standards, HR principles and training and development plans for school support staff. Increasingly we see the TTA evolving to become the focus of HR expertise and guidance to support improvement and modernisation in schools.

We are also clear that the quality of leadership and management in schools will be critical to helping them overcome these challenges. Following the recent review of the NCSL, we will be helping the College to strengthen its position as a strategically focused, powerful hub of school leadership, supporting the overall strategy.

Beyond that the Committee is right to highlight our Five Year Strategy as the mechanism for developing the structure and providing the strategic management of the teaching profession. The Strategy sets out our vision for a new teacher professionalism and envisages teachers taking greater responsibility for their careers and their development within a structured framework of:

- standards that clarify what is expected of teachers at different stages in their careers—from QTS to Excellent Teacher Status—and provide a range of career pathways;
- regular reviews that are focussed on teaching and learning—both effective classroom practice and learning outcomes—and that inform decisions about professional development so teachers can make progress in their careers and improve their practice; and
- a system of rewards that reflects teachers' contribution to teaching and learning and their commitment to professional development—both to their own development and to the development of other school staff.

We believe that the greater clarity about expectations and standards, the emphasis on teaching and learning, the opportunities to learn skills and progress, and rewards that recognise the contribution made to pupil attainment and to developing the expertise of others, will all enhance the attractiveness of teaching. It will also help to raise the status of the profession, especially when taken forward alongside the ongoing remodelling of the workforce and the reform of the teachers' pay scale.