HOUSE OF COMMONS

Education Committee

Oral evidence: Teacher recruitment, training and retention, HC 1207

Tuesday 11 July 2023

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 11 July 2023.

Watch the meeting

Members present: Mr Robin Walker (Chair); Miriam Cates; Mrs Flick Drummond; Nick Fletcher; Kim Johnson; Andrew Lewer; Ian Mearns; Mohammad Yasin.

Questions 58 - 116

Witnesses

I: Russell Hobby, CEO, Teach First; Melanie Renowden, CEO, National Institute of Teaching; Richard Gill, Chair, Teaching School Hubs Council; Dr Annabel Watson, Senior Lecturer in Language Education, University of Exeter; and Dr Jasper Green, Head of ITE, UCL IOE.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Russell Hobby, Melanie Renowden, Richard Gill, Dr Annabel Watson and Dr Jasper Green.

Q58 **Chair:** Welcome to our second session on the Committee's inquiry into teacher recruitment, training and retention. Today we will be hearing evidence from Russell Hobby, the chief executive of Teach First; Melanie Renowden, chief executive of the National Institute of Teaching; Dr Annabel Watson, senior lecturer in language education at the University of Exeter; Dr Jasper Green, associate professor of teaching and head of initial teacher education at IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society; and Richard Gill, chair of the Teaching School Hubs Council. Welcome—we have a great deal of expertise on the panel.

Apologies, some of my members have been put on to Bill Committees, so we do not have the full attendance of the Committee. You are just outnumbered at the moment by Committee members, but there may be some chopping and changing during the session because some people have questions in the House.

You all represent different parts of the teacher training and development system. I am keen for each of you to give an overview of how you react to the Department's so-called "golden thread" reforms to teacher training and development and how you see those going so far.

Melanie Renowden: Hello, I am Melanie, from the National Institute of Teaching. We are a new organisation that has been set up to boost the quality of teacher and leader development. We are doing that by researching what works in teacher and leader development and then applying it through our programmes and sharing it with the sector.

We are positive and optimistic about the teacher development reforms, both the fact that they have a coherent and sound underpinning evidence base and that they start through the core content framework in initial teacher training and progress through the early career framework in developing skills at an atomistic level, which is then built up in terms of composite skills, in such a way that that helps to build early confidence for new teachers and to develop their practice as they move into the early stages of their teaching career.

One of the things that I think is important is the way that the reforms have established a real consistency of entitlement and also, importantly, embedding, as a core component of teaching as a career, a focus on professional development and continuously developing your skills. It is not seeing teacher development as something that is "done" in the first year or two of your progression into the profession. All those things, I think, are very important and encouraging.

There are early—because it is still early days—but very promising signs in the way that the reforms have been rolled out and received in schools. We do need to listen to the feedback that is coming back from schools.

That is very important in continuing to make adjustments. This is a huge change programme so, of course, there will be areas where we need to listen and improve. I do also think that, given the scale of the change programme that this represents, we need to give it time to bed in to start to see the returns on the changes that have been made.

Richard Gill: I think that I am going to find myself copying a lot of what Melanie has just said. I am Richard Gill from the Teaching School Hubs Council. Teaching school hubs are the backbone of the delivery infrastructure for ECF and NPQ and have an important role, coming out of the market review moving forward, in ensuring that the ITT system is better joined up than it is currently.

We, too, are extremely optimistic around the reforms. As Melanie has just said, early indications are very positive, both from ECTs and from mentors and schools. But equally, yes, we must listen to the feedback. Rather than just repeating everything Melanie has just said, the CCF/ECF review, which DFE is currently undertaking, is an important opportunity for the Department to listen to the sector and react accordingly.

Dr Watson: I am Annabel Watson from the University of Exeter. We are a very long-standing provider. We have been around for decades and we have been evolving our initial teacher education through research-informed approaches for a very long time. We cover a large geographical area, lots of rural—

Chair: All of the south-west, pretty much.

Dr Watson: Yes, pretty much. We do not quite get to Bristol but nearly. We absolutely welcome the approach being taken here to have that consistency of teacher development. We are perhaps slightly less wholeheartedly optimistic, in that we have some concerns about the balance of consistency of provision against flexibility of provision. We would like to make sure that, going forward, we are not over-prescribing what our beginning teachers are learning and what they are learning as they enter the profession. We believe that having a backbone, as I think Melanie called it, is a great idea, but it needs to be implemented with sufficient flexibility to allow teachers to make choices about what it is they need support with. I believe that, in the previous session of this Committee, the unions said something quite similar about some of the ECF, in particular, being a little bit repetitive, a bit overly prescriptive and standardised, and not really responding as flexibly as it could do to the different needs of different teachers.

Dr Green: I am from IOE. We have been educating teachers since 1902. We are one of the largest postgraduate providers of initial teacher education in England. We are quite unique, in that we have an ITT programme that covers early years all the way up to further education, involving adult education, and we also have an ECF programme.

To echo what people have said, I think that there is real potential in these reforms in terms of a coherent programme of professional development, really putting the emphasis on mentoring and seeing mentors play a key role in leading new teacher learning. This idea of a coherent programme between what happens at a provider such as IOE and what happens in school is key.

But to echo some of the potential concerns that we are all committed to working to try to solve, mentor workload is something that we know is a challenge, both in relation to ITE market reforms and ECF. We are seeing first hand the challenges that is having on availability of placements for our student teachers. You are in danger of entering a cycle where mentor workload is high, which prevents schools offering high-quality placements, which then further adds to the teacher recruitment and retention crisis you are trying to address.

National frameworks provide some coherence, but it is about their flexibility and being able to be contextualised for the schools that they are operating in.

We see first hand the benefits of bursaries, but we question why some of those bursaries are not available for other subjects, such as religious education, where there are clearly shortfalls and the one-year approach is a challenge.

I want to leave you perhaps with the idea of the market review. Again, there are lots of opportunities and strengths there, but it is putting an immense workload on the sector. That means that providers such as ourselves cannot do some of our day-to-day work. It is about what this is stopping.

Our focus should not be on consistency; our focus should be on quality. Our focus should not be on loads in terms of the number of hours or days that mentors do, but on thinking much more about what the quality is. I think that, when our focus is on load, it drives unhelpful behaviour and puts people under quite a lot of pressure.

Q59 **Chair:** Russell, you are at the front end of bringing people into this space, I guess, and very much focused on the recruitment side of things. Do you feel that these reforms will make a difference on that front and can make the profession more attractive?

Russell Hobby: We also deliver quite a lot of the early career framework at the same time. I find myself agreeing with most of what my colleagues here have said in other words what next for the ECF. We need more capacity for mentors and we need to think about the overlap between the initial teacher training framework and the early career framework. There is too much duplication for someone who has gone through a high-quality ITT route. Those are fairly easy reforms that could make this work. I also do not think that we should underestimate that this is one of the most

significant changes to early career development in the sector in a decade or more. It is going to take a bit of tweaking to get it right.

In terms of attracting people in, the opportunities for career development and progression are important, and graduates expect that. I think that they are vastly overshadowed by salary, working conditions and flexible working. So this can be the icing on the cake, but unless the cake is baked to the right proportion, then it is not going to have the impact that we want.

Q60 **Chair:** To the panel more generally, do you think that there is a timescale within which these reforms as a whole—we have talked quite a lot about the ITT and ECF, and there are also the NPQs further up the chain—and the focus on CPD will make a substantial difference to retention in the sector?

Richard Gill: Optimistically, we will have the first cohort of ECTs complete this year. Early indications from independent reviews and so on are positive. I do not have the percentage in front of me, but a high percentage of ECTs are saying yes, they will stop in the profession, when compared to pre 2020. Based on early data, we have to be optimistic, but it is sensible that we need to get to the goalposts, we need to get to the end of the year 2 training and beyond, before we really know what the true picture is. There is enough in the system at this point in time that would suggest that ECF is having the required impact.

Chair: Is that what you are saying in your cohorts as well?

Dr Green: I can respond for IOE's ECF programme. Professor Qing Gu has led some research looking at our own programme, and there are positive things coming out of that in terms of the benefits that teachers are finding with the programme. But the aspect where there is more work to be done in making these reforms successful is mentor workload. There is still a lot of thinking that needs to be done around that.

If you take us as a provider in London, the requirement of the new quality requirements is 20 hours of mentoring, as I am sure you are aware. If you are a school that works with more than one provider, is that 40 hours of mentoring? Well, we can discount it as providers, but we are left as a provider with finding the solution to that. The complex landscape of mentoring in terms of ECF and ITE makes that incredibly difficult.

So I think that there is further work to do on the thinking around what a mentor curriculum could look like. Again, I want to emphasise that it needs to be flexible and that if it becomes overly prescriptive it will become problematic. It needs to involve a rich evidence base and not be overly narrowed to one type of research.

Q61 **Chair:** When I have spoken to early career teachers, the thing that they have valued most is the mentoring in the programme. It seems to be the

thing that they see as adding the most value. On some of the criticism that we have heard from some quarters about it not being subject-specific enough, I have heard from teachers that that can be made up if they have the right mentor and someone who has the subject knowledge to engage with them on their issues. Getting that balance right, as you say, between sufficient flexibility to allow the mentors to do the work most effectively and to focus on quality rather than determination, but without detracting from the fact that the whole process is designed to make mentoring more important, is an interesting part of the challenge, is it not?

Russell Hobby: It is possible to make the ECF subject-specific—ours is subject-specific. It is logistically really hard, and you need a certain scale to do it, but that can certainly be addressed as well.

You mentioned the NPQs, and I don't want to neglect them in this discussion, because that is the further end of the golden thread as well. The new, reformed NPQs are proving, I think, in early days, very successful and are very highly regarded by the recipients of them. That has an impact on teacher retention that will pay off in the long run. It is also about the quality of leadership in schools. If you look at turnover rates between schools, they can vary very significantly as to who is leaving the profession. Very often if we want to look at what is going on at the front end, we need to look at the back end of the system as well: how are we preparing heads and senior leaders to do that? I think that the new NPQs have some real potential for that.

Dr Watson: I would like to refer to Russell's comment calling this the icing on the cake. The proviso is that to keep teachers in teaching you need to make the job a job that they feel they can do well. Some of that involves the huge pressures of picking up on work not able to be done by social services and so on, which I know that you have heard before.

Chair: This Committee is very well aware of that.

Dr Watson: I know. It is worth considering a few specifics. On mentoring, in particular, if you consider the capacity for mentoring a computer science teacher in north Devon—thinking about those real shortage subjects in areas where there are few schools and it is a massive struggle to recruit those subject specialists—then one challenge is finding the mentors, in the region even, to provide that input. There is a big logistical issue around those mentoring specialisms. So I think—I'm sorry, I have lost my train of thought for a moment. I will pass to a colleague.

Chair: We will come over to Melanie then.

Melanie Renowden: I have two points. One is on flexibility. We have touched on that a few times as we have been talking, and I do think that it is important to think about that in two strands. One is making sure that we are using and communicating the existing flexibilities, because there

is sometimes a portrayal of the reforms as perhaps being overly prescriptive, and a thinking that the only way we can bring in those flexibilities is by making changes to the parameters that we are working within.

Actually, there are some flexibilities already in place, particularly as this is the first cycle—if I take the ECF as an example—where mentors can change the sequence of the way that they are working through modules with their early career teachers. However, lots of them are quite wary about doing that. This is all new to them, so they are not yet in a position where they have sufficient knowledge and confidence to make use of the existing flexibilities. So it is about existing flexibilities, as well as potentially looking to see where we might need to make adjustments and tweaks within the parameters that we are working in to introduce some new flexibilities. That was one thing on flexibility.

Just quickly on retention, as well as the important point that Russell makes about the relationship between teachers, job satisfaction, retention in the profession and the relationship with line managers and certainly the leadership of the school and the leadership culture that has been established, where professional development for leaders is obviously important in them being able to lead people and organisations effectively, the evidence is promising on the link between professional development of the individual, their confidence, their sense of job satisfaction and then, ultimately, their retention. It is important that we are talking about and thinking about professional development not just as a tool for teacher effectiveness, but also as a really important tool for teacher retention.

Dr Green: I just want to pick up the point about the importance of school organisation and having a culture of professional learning within a school. I think that sits with leadership, and it also sits with flexibility. You need often quite brave leaders and confident leaders to be able to resist the temptation to be overly compliant, and particularly at the moment that is an important piece of work that is ongoing, and NPQs are supporting that.

Q62 **Kim Johnson:** Good morning, panel. Most of you have mentioned how optimistic you are. However, you know that we are in the midst of a crisis in the recruitment and retention of teachers. According to the NEU, 40,000 teachers left the profession last year. With that in mind, how confident are you that you will meet your targets for this year? What are the challenges to meeting those targets, given that the University of Hull, the University of Plymouth and University College Birmingham have closed their initial teacher training courses for September, and London South Bank is winding down its primary-only PGCE for next year. With all that in mind, where are we going and what are we going to do?

Russell Hobby: Graduate-level interest in the teaching profession is the lowest that it has ever been, and last year we said the same. People keep looking at this as well. A third of *The Times* top 100 graduate employers,

with whom we are often competing for teachers, are offering starting salaries of £40,000 now. Not only are they watching their graduate friends start on £40,000, but those friends are working at home on a Friday, too. It is incredibly hard for the teaching profession to compete with that. The basics are around getting a good starting salary, and a £30,000 starting salary was exactly the right thing to offer and would be a competitive one. It is now a lot less competitive than it would have been if it had been brought in when it was originally planned. So the teaching profession is falling behind in real terms.

When it comes to people leaving the profession, it is more about workload, I think, although people have their own individual reasons, too. People joining the profession also hear the stories about workload and that makes them think twice about it. There is a twin-pronged strategy needed, both to raise starting salaries, and hopefully all other salaries too, and to look at working conditions in school—the overall volume of work and the percentage of it that is devoted to bureaucratic activities, because I think that is a key determinant as well. Teachers do not mind working hard in the classroom; it is working hard on things that they do not believe are adding to pupil welfare that puts them off.

The recruitment market for next year is looking as tough as it was last year. We are optimistic that our numbers will be increasing this year as well, but we have not finished our recruitment season yet.

Kim Johnson: Do you think that you are going to meet your targets?

Russell Hobby: I don't think I am going to meet my target.

Melanie Renowden: We are welcoming our first intake of trainees as the National Institute of Teaching this year. We just brought them together around the country last week. I am confident that we will hit our target for our first intake this year, but that has been hard fought.

In terms of some of the challenges that we are seeing, we see financial barriers to entry. We see challenges in the perception of teaching as a career, the attractiveness of teaching as a career, and competition from other professions. Recruitment is a function not just of the attractiveness of the profession but also of individuals' abilities to overcome the barriers to join it. We need to be tackling both the attractiveness of the profession and the routes into teaching.

For us, in terms of what we think that we can collectively be doing to respond to that, the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship presents an opportunity to open up a new pathway into teaching and to grow the potential of that pathway. That helps in terms of the financial barriers for those who are looking to train to become teachers.

Given the very significant shifts that we have seen in the employment market since the pandemic, it is time to think about how we repackage and recommunicate teaching as a career, as well as learning from other

professions on things like flexibility. I do think that we have an opportunity and a responsibility to be communicating those things where teaching out-competes other professions as well. In terms of purpose, community, connection and job security, there are many facets in which teaching is an incredibly attractive profession, and we need to get better at communicating those. The opportunity to indulge your love of subject is another example.

Showing career-long professional development is also something that we should be doing more of. I think that is attractive to people thinking about their career options. Learning from other professions about what we can do to respond on things like flexibility is important as well. We are seeing a lot of demand for that from incoming trainees.

Dr Green: To put it in scale, IOE recruits around 1,000 teachers a year for early years, primary, secondary and FE programmes. We have seen a slight increase in applications but, overall, offers are slightly down—around 5% across our programmes. That is to do with applicant quality.

It is worth saying that we are seeing significant reductions in subjects such as RE and music, relative to this point last year. It is worth pointing out that these subjects do not have bursaries and, in my mind, they should have bursaries. By not having a bursary you are saying something quite clear about the value of those subjects to prospective applicants and you encourage applicants to go on to subjects that they are perhaps not best suited to teach.

Are we expecting to reach our targets? For primary, yes; further education, yes, in a number of subjects—English, languages, psychology, social science and computing. Again, it is worth showing the relationship between that and bursaries. However, I think that we are not for specific subjects at secondary.

Kim Johnson: Jasper, in terms of the 1,000 recruited, how many of those actually complete the course?

Dr Green: We have completion rates around 93%.

Kim Johnson: Do you have anything to add, Annabel?

Dr Watson: Yes. We saw a significant decline last year, and our numbers this year are roughly in line with that, although we have seen a positive impact from some bursaries. In some of our secondary bursary subjects, such as English and maths, we have had an uptick but not back to the levels they were two years ago.

One thing that is worth considering is the motivation behind why people enter teaching. I am not sure that the marketing of teaching really plays to those motivations. I also think that different people are motivated to join through different routes. Having different routes is very important, and we know that a lot of the trainees who join with us are motivated by

the opportunity to engage with research and gain an academic qualification, alongside their significant time practising in school. We also see quite a few of those motivated by the opportunity to go on to study at master's level and complete a master's, which is a retention opportunity. That is alongside working on our School Direct routes with people who really just want to be in school from day one.

I am not sure that the DFE Get Into Teaching site properly communicates the different opportunities and ties to those motivations. I think that there is an opportunity, if we are talking about how we encourage entrants, to think about the different motivations. I have talked about the academic side of it, but there is the cachet of Teach First attracting some people. It is horses for courses, really. There is potential there, but to your initial question, we will definitely not hit our targets.

Richard Gill: To your direct question, top line, as a fact coming from the panel, the total figures this year will be down. That is very obvious from everything we are hearing and everything you are hearing from my colleagues today.

But I think that we have to be careful; we have to be a bit more granular as to how we look at that data. You are hearing just today out of the four providers that some expect to be full and others don't. If you look at the regional variation, the west midlands, for example, is doing well for recruitment this year, which bucks a historic trend. The other part of the granular level is subject level. There are many subjects that are overperforming year in, year out, but the total figure is then undermined by those subjects where there are particular challenges, which the bursaries are trying to address.

The second point, which is another part of your question, is around communication. I do think that a lot has happened in the system to try to make applying for teaching easier, but there are still a lot of voids in the system. We have had a pandemic, which kept school leaders and others quite busy for some time. Just to reinforce my optimism from earlier, one thing that has come out of the market review—recommendation 10—is responsibility for teaching school hubs to have a strategic role in this space to try to ensure that there is better local join-up, better intelligence and, let's be honest, improved relationships among schools and providers.

Q63 **Andrew Lewer:** This seems like a useful opportunity to raise this point, and it is not specified anywhere else—I hope I am not treading on any of my colleagues' toes—but to be non-granular for a moment, I hear, certainly anecdotally, that a lot of people are put off teaching because of worries about classroom control and discipline; they love their subject, and they would love to have the opportunity to teach it, but they are worried about disruptive classes—yesterday's news will not necessarily have helped with that. How much of that is a major issue, possibly exacerbated by the pandemic and all the mental health issues that have

been raised a great deal as a result of that, just on that overall spread putting off people going into the teaching profession?

Dr Green: Obviously, those factors play a role, and the pandemic continues to have an impact on schools. However, I think the overarching thing about whether teachers stay teaching or not is around whether their work is meaningful, whether they are motivated and whether they have some agency in what they are doing. When that creeps over into doing bureaucratic paperwork or administration, that is when we see teachers wanting to leave. I don't think that it is around behaviour on its own. I don't think that it is around other aspects. I think that it is around whether teachers see their work as meaningful and they are motivated, and that comes down to leadership.

Dr Watson: I want to agree wholeheartedly with that, but also to say that there probably is a perception that behaviour is challenging. However, we find across the 200 to 500 trainees that we train that they rate our behaviour management input and their confidence at managing behaviour at about 98% on leaving—sorry, 98% of them say that they think it is good or very good, so they feel confident. I think that might be a perception that is not borne out once they are actually in the classroom.

Andrew Lewer: Perhaps in the marketing, then, the reassurance of lots of tools and skills to be able to deal with that, so you will not have to worry about it, would help get people in, and, once they are in, you are away.

Dr Watson: Absolutely. I just want to echo what Jasper said about agency. It is not just about bureaucracy. It is not just the filling in of forms that drives teachers out. It is also about their belief that they can teach in a way, and the curriculum content, that they believe is important and that reflects their discipline. My background is secondary English teaching, and there are all sorts of debates at the moment about the nature of the subject in school and the curriculum and what that should look like, could look like and does look like. That is far more important to the teachers who I work with, the mentors, than behaviour management, which can be solved through the learning of strategies and whole-school approaches.

Chair: I think that everyone wants to come in on that.

Russell Hobby: Prospective teachers are always worried about behaviour management. It is the thing that makes them nervous. They have been for decades and will continue to be so. I don't think that it puts them off, although a sudden rise in news stories of the like we have seen recently would make some people think twice.

I think that there are more behaviour concerns inside schools at the moment. There is a rising mental health challenge that many young people are reporting, and it has been widely attested to. There are

attendance challenges in schools. What we are also hearing from those working is quite a strong rise in parental complaints and parental unhappiness with schools. The problem with schools is that they are the frontline of the state for many people. The rest of us get to sit somewhat back from that, and it is the headteacher and the classroom teacher who are dealing with rising frustrations in the country as a whole.

When you add all that together, I do hear a number of experienced teachers saying, "It is just too much at the moment," and there are many factors just making that job harder. I think that the solution to those is for Government to stand up for schools and teachers and to be very clear about what their expectations are for engagement. To return to another theme, it is also about leadership; it is about equipping headteachers to support their teachers and to make sure that the behaviour policies are strong enough.

Chair: Richard and then Melanie, and then we do need to get back to Kim because otherwise we will not make enough progress.

Richard Gill: I will be very quick. I completely support what my colleagues have said. I am sure that it is in your evidence base already. There is a moment of optimism here—we keep using that word, don't we? A significant percentage—something like 86%—of ECTs at the end of year 1 last year reported that they felt better prepared to deal with behaviour in classrooms and supporting students with SEND. There is real optimism in terms of the particular aspect that you raise.

Melanie Renowden: Practically speaking, we had our first group of trainees in with us last week, and one of the things that we spent time on with them in preparation before they go into their first school placements in September is classroom routines. We also have them in for a week in August, where we are looking at behaviour and further embedding that work on classroom routine. To echo what Annabel and Jasper have said, when we get them in, we are equipped to do a good job of giving them the confidence and the skills that reassure them before they go into their schools that they can grapple with these issues well.

I do think that we need to do a bit more investigation of what is happening further up the pipeline, so that we can have a better understanding of the people who never make it that far, who might be making choices based on perceptions of what they are reading and who the general impression of the profession might be putting off. That is something that we are keen to do further investigation and research on.

Q64 **Kim Johnson:** Jasper, according to reports, 1% fail ITT. You just mentioned the 93%. If you survive the course, then you qualify. How do you respond to the Department telling ITT providers to reject fewer applications, and how could the Department work with providers to encourage greater numbers of high-quality applicants?

Dr Green: The focus needs to be on quality and not quantity. Otherwise, you will solve a short-term problem but store up trouble for later. Those students who are inappropriately admitted on to courses will then go into schools and that will erode further the culture in schools and add to workload. It will also lead to withdrawal rates, and that is important as well. It will add pressure to the ITE year and lead to more students withdrawing.

I personally think that the key is retention, both during that ITE year, thinking about how we can support students better, and that progression from the ITE into year 1 and year 2 in schools. I understand the Department's need to recruit more teachers, but we need to be careful in relation to just simply opening the doors. A number of steps have already been taken—moving references to later, increasing the number of offers. We need to be careful that we maintain the gates to the profession. I think that is very important.

Melanie Renowden: I would agree. In terms of training providers, the incentives are to take people where we think we can do a good job of supporting and developing them to be excellent teachers. There are a lot of people being rejected, and that is something we do need to look at. But, certainly in our experience, this is less about us rejecting people who are not suitable—we are taking people who are suitable—and more about attracting in lots of people who then do not have the right background, experience or qualities to successfully pass that quality bar. We have a mismatch between what we need from people and then the people who are applying, and that matters because there is a lot of time, effort and resource drawn into doing that screening of people, which could be spent elsewhere in supporting our teachers to develop. To an extent, it connects back to the point about what is happening further up that attraction and recruitment pipeline so that we are getting the right people choosing to apply.

Q65 **Kim Johnson:** Is there a national standard or a quality standard by which all providers operate?

Russell Hobby: There is the teacher professional standards, which we assess against. I think that we are all applying similar quality of criteria but, as was said, we are also different routes. A teacher who will thrive on one route would not thrive on another. You want some level of individual discretion for a provider, too.

Q66 **Ian Mearns:** I cannot help thinking that, on Kim's question about the Department saying to people, "Recruit more and reject less," it is about us holding Ministers to account for missing their targets for teacher recruitment in the first place—I am seeing a couple of nods and a couple of wry smiles there. That just seems to be a given. I think that Jasper said earlier that recruiting the wrong people just means that you have a bigger problem with retention further down the line, and I think that is fairly obvious.

I have also been a little confused at the contradictory nature of some of what has been said so far. There has been an awful lot of optimism expressed, but that sounds to me more optimism for the individual institutions that you represent rather than for the strategic national picture. Would that be fair? At the moment, the strategic national picture is that we are not recruiting enough, we are not retaining enough and we are not retaining enough for long enough. That is the position that we are in. Then, of course, Jasper you reeled off a whole range of courses where you had met targets and that were full, and then you skirted over the ones where you are under-recruiting—in particular, specialisms in secondary schools.

Chair: You are being harsh.

Ian Mearns: I do not think I am being harsh, Chair. He skirted over it.

Chair: He was quite explicit about music and RE.

Ian Mearns: Yes, but he did not give us the list of subjects that were being under-recruited, and particularly secondary specialisms. I think that is fair for me to say.

Also, in terms of the way in which the accreditation process has taken place, it has left a number of regional and sub-regional black holes. I am sure that Annabel, at Exeter, is delighted that Plymouth did not get accredited, and it is probably good from that perspective from the south-west—I am being provocative here, obviously. But the thing is that when teachers go into teacher training and then do their placements, they quite often end up teaching where they have trained. If you have regional or sub-regional black holes, that then means a major recruitment and retention crisis for those sub-regional or regional black holes. Are you aware of any regional or sub-regional black holes in initial teacher training, and what are we going to do about it?

Chair: I think that Annabel has been itching to answer that one.

Dr Watson: There was an earlier point there, too. I will just say that we were devastated to lose Plymouth, because it has been really important in the region.

I wanted to perhaps offer a slightly generous interpretation of the "reject fewer applicants" directive. Where I think there is thought provocation is around the diversity of entrants into the profession and whether, possibly, there may have been unconscious bias at play. A lot of that is about enticing people to enter, but one of the things that we have had for quite a long time to support diversity is a race equality resource officer. This was an initiative we brought in in around 2006 because, in the south-west, we have relatively low ethnic and racial diversity. In terms of thinking of solutions, we have the capacity, because we are a large institution, to designate someone to provide support for teachers who might feel out of place in the schools in our region. That is not something

that all providers would be able to do, but it is potentially something that could be provided on a national level—that designated, tailored support for those people who might need it.

As for black holes, the Education Policy Institute published something suggesting that the south-west could be a cold spot because the providers who were not reaccredited would account for currently about 30% of teacher education places.

Ian Mearns: In Cumbria also, yes.

Dr Watson: Yes. That said, we do not think it is now, because of the number of new providers that have been accredited. We are actually quite densely packed in terms of providers, but where there is potentially a cold spot is in relation to particular secondary subjects. This goes back to what I said earlier about who will mentor a computer scientist. We had a computer scientist trainee last year, whose first job as an ECT was the head of department in one of our partner schools because there is just not that subject expertise. We have similar issues with art and design and some of those subjects where you can go and earn a lot of money in industry instead.

Ian Mearns: Increasingly, year on year, it is getting worse. We are getting more youngsters in secondary schools being taught maths or science by not qualified maths or science teachers.

Dr Watson: You can see the impact of that on the curriculum offered. We know that schools that do not have physics teachers are less likely to offer triple science at GCSE. That is the main route for going into STEM careers, so there is quite a significant impact from losing those particular specialisms.

Addressing that is tricky. We have tried to support those subjects in our region through a School Direct distance route, where we work closely with schools to try to provide that subject specialist input. As Jasper said earlier, it is about providing the time and the funding for the mentors. We have to get high-quality mentors in those subject fields and give them sufficient time to do that input. It needs to be not on a school level but on a multi-school level, because the individual school is employing a computer scientist because they do not have anyone.

Richard Gill: I want to build on Annabel's point around cold spots. We do have to be careful at the moment. There is not enough evidence in the system, as the example of the south-west shows. Part of the data that is being used by some of our researchers currently is comparing supply against 2021, which was the boom year for recruitment.

Q67 **Ian Mearns:** The thing is that that, inherently, to me, poses a question: if there is not enough evidence, why isn't somebody going out there to find the evidence to make sure that there is not a problem in six months, one year, 18 months or two years' time?

Richard Gill: That is absolutely recommendation 10 of the market review. I cannot give you the impact of that yet, because teaching school hubs have only just been asked to do that role. The evidence has never been in the system. Even at a level as granular as which schools providers work with, you just do not have that information readily available. Which schools are disengaged but might be interested if they had a relationship or a connection with a provider? That has never been available.

Q68 **Ian Mearns:** Does anybody have their foot on that particular ball?

Richard Gill: Teaching school hubs have now been asked to do that role from September.

Q69 **Ian Mearns:** Is there any evidence that they are doing the evidence gathering?

Richard Gill: The evidence is, as Annabel has implied, that the providers on the ground in the areas that are perceived as cold spots—you mentioned Cumbria, and the south-west was mentioned by Annabel—are telling us, "No, we don't think that is the case," not just because of the new providers coming into the system, as Annabel has stated, but also through the new partnerships that are being created. At this point in time, again the evidence is not there of what those partnerships are—it is still early days.

Chair: Russell and Melanie both look like they want to come in.

Ian Mearns: I am sure that Jasper wanted to respond to the specific question I put to him as well.

Q70 **Chair:** I know, but just to follow up on that, as a supplementary question, I guess, for those of you who are in this space and providers yourself, are you finding that some of the people who did not pass through the accreditation process are reaching out to form partnerships, or is pride getting in the way of that in some cases? That would be interesting to understand as well.

Russell Hobby: Certainly, we have built partnerships with about 10 providers who were not accredited or are newly accredited so that they can continue to provide, including in Cumbria as well. The system can correct that set-up over time; the question is whether there is any turbulence in the meantime.

You are certainly right, though, that the places where people go to university and where they train to teach are not always in the places that we need them to teach. That is compounded by the fact that a lot of graduates would also envisage their first job as being in a city rather than a rural or coastal area. It really is Teach First's raison d'être to move people around the system, so we can see the hard end of that when we are asking people not to go to London but to go to Cumbria instead.

There is an emerging opportunity here, too, which is coming out of a negative side of things. A growing cold spot that we are finding is that the cost of living in some parts of the country—in London, in particular, and places in the south-east—is getting to the point where the teacher's starting salary is not sufficient to cover that, along with many other professions. We can make a case that the cost of living is different in other parts of the country.

We just introduced a relocation allowance a couple of weeks back for people who have to move across the country. It is a relatively small sum, but our application numbers for that went up by about 40% on average in the weeks after that ,compared to the weeks before. Cash can be a relatively straightforward lever. When it is tight, though, what we need to do is to make sure that it is going where it is needed most, so blanket solutions are hard. Unfortunately, again, in our system it tends to be that the money flows to the places that already have enough of it anyway.

Ian Mearns: Did you want to come back, Jasper, on the secondary specialisms?

Dr Green: Yes, I am happy to talk about that and a bit about cold spots and market review.

I will be clear that I think the market review, in how it was done as a paper exercise, was very problematic for providers. Not seeing first hand the quality of the provision has undermined some of the work that the market review was trying to do and has left us with cold spots, and those providers who were not accredited have gone on to get praise from Ofsted. I think that it is important to say that.

It is also important to say that there are real challenges around the partnership. You can spend a lot of time looking at partnership and how to move towards creating one, but ultimately any unaccredited provider could then apply for accreditation later on. It will have an impact on the host institution in terms of the work that will be required to do that, and funding in order to enable that will not cover the costs required. It is a challenging thing to think about any provider partnering with other providers, but we all, as a group of people invested in initial teacher education, want to try to make that work.

On the subjects, I am happy to give them to you. They are history, mathematics, biology, physics and religious education. That is what we are estimating to be under target, but we will see. Applications shut in August.

Chair: It is unusual for history to be on that list, isn't it?

Dr Green: Yes, it is.

Q71 **Ian Mearns:** Quickly, Annabel, you said earlier on that there was an uptick with bursaries but not to the levels of two years ago. Were your

courses full two years ago?

Dr Watson: They were approaching full. We take as many as we can, so we have pretty high opportunity. We were almost full two years ago.

Q72 **Mrs Drummond:** Can I ask a supplementary because you have asked the question that I was going to come on to later? On what we have been talking about—the reaccreditation—you mentioned partnership. Has the accreditation system stifled innovation, or are partnership and other ways of working the way that you get around that?

Dr Watson: I think that it has certainly disrupted what might have been innovation. We were, for example, considering offering a part-time PGCE, which is something that we know might attract people, and we had to park that, because we were busy managing that process of making sure that our course could be redesigned and so on. There are certainly things that were in the pipeline—we are constantly developing and evolving our courses—that were disrupted.

Melanie Renowden: I would say that it is probably a bit of both. I recognise what Annabel is saying but, to give you an example of an innovation that has happened, one of the new requirements within the quality requirements is that there are intensive training and practice periods within the initial teacher training experience of a trainee. Those provide an effective bridge between what happens in the centre with providers and what is happening in the school.

We ran a pilot last year looking across four providers at ways of developing those intensive training practice weeks. We gathered up that experience. We shared it with the system. One of the approaches that was trialled there was using approximations of practice, some of which were digital approximations of practice, to get as close to a live environment as we can with trainee teachers before they are in front of classrooms. I think that there are opportunities for innovation.

Mrs Drummond: Not over-prescriptive, which I think was your word earlier, yes.

Melanie Renowden: Yes. It is taking those opportunities and ensuring, of course, that we have the capacity and the focus to then pick them out and take advantage of them.

Q73 **Ian Mearns:** Jasper, from your perspective, what are the particular challenges in running specific ITT provision for further education at the moment? How could the Department mitigate these problems?

Dr Green: Many of them are similar to what we are seeing in primary and secondary: retention of teachers, which then has knock-on effects for mentors, and having sufficient numbers of mentors in further education colleges and other FE settings, which then impacts our ability to find placements. This year, that has been a challenge for us—to find sufficient numbers of high-quality placements.

In terms of what the Department can do, there is something around the stability of bursaries, enabling us to plan strategically in the long term for teams, to develop capacity in our own teams but also capacity in colleges. Stability is probably the most important.

Q74 **Ian Mearns:** Within stability, would you also include, from an employment perspective in FE, security of tenure?

Dr Green: In relation to mentoring, yes, because where your mentors develop is within those colleges over time. You probably are looking for someone to be in a college for three or four years, at which point they are confident with their own practice and looking forward to mentoring somebody else.

Ian Mearns: That is interesting—three or four years now being regarded as someone with significant experience in that sector, but there you go.

Q75 **Mrs Drummond:** There are lots of different ways of getting into teaching. Are there too many? The reason I am saying that is that the Department is trying to make it easier to become a teacher, but is that just adding to the confusion?

Russell Hobby: I don't think that it matters how many ways there are; it is more about how clear we are at communicating them. The more different approaches there are that suit different needs, as was said, the better. They also boil down into a few bigger headings, with minor variations. If we can be very clear what you would get out of an employment-based route versus a higher education-based route, and how apprentices might differ from the degree-level approach, there are not that many different divisions. In other sectors, there are hundreds of employers maintaining very different graduate schemes that people navigate as well. It would be about really clear communication about the differences between them and a system that enabled people to filter themselves through to the right area, and then we could celebrate the diversity, not restrict it.

Q76 **Mrs Drummond:** They have moved the postgraduate applications to the Department. Has that helped as well?

Dr Watson: There is a very easy quick win in explaining the different routes better on the DFE Get Into Teaching website. At the moment, I keep hearing that the advisory service is helpful, but the website as a starting point is not very helpful. It has a day in the life of a teacher trainee that is a single, particular model, and things like that are terribly unhelpful. That seems to me like an obvious quick win.

Richard Gill: On a similar point, I take the premise of your question. There are actually only three; there is a perception out there that there are far more than three because, of course, there are sub-groups off them. I know that the DFE is planning to ensure that that message is far clearer, but currently, as has just been heard, there are some quick wins

here like the website that could certainly clarify some of these points far more succinctly than perhaps they do currently.

Q77 **Mrs Drummond:** You say there are three. What do you consider those three are?

Richard Gill: Here we go—here's the test. Postgrad funded, undergrad funded and postgrad salaried.

Q78 **Mrs Drummond:** Okay. There are ones that you start in school. There is Teach First and there are all the other things. I just find it completely confusing—they are SCITTs and then this or that. Maybe it is the language and that it should be boiled down to those three so that people are very clear about how to apply.

Dr Watson: There is quite a significant difference between the categories within those categories, so it does need to be communicated. Doing a PGCE with us would look very different to doing one with Teach First, even though they might both be postgraduate. One might be salaried or unsalaried; we have done salaried PGCEs that are extremely different in structure.

Richard Gill: That is about structure, isn't it? It is not about the route into.

Dr Watson: No, but in terms of communicating what is going to be the best fit for the different needs and motivations of different people, that does need to be clarified and broken down.

Q79 **Chair:** What you are saying in terms of the Get Into Teaching website, just to be clear, is that you want the Department to be clearer about the alternative routes through and the range of opportunities?

Dr Watson: And mapping those to what we know motivates people and what people might need.

Melanie Renowden: I think that we are in harmony on this. I do think that there is a quick win. This is an area where the Department could make a good, positive intervention and, if it doesn't, it will probably end up trying to reinvent it locally. That is where we are at—thinking that we need a more helpful, applicant-friendly diagnostic that takes people through the choices and how to select a route that best suits their starting point and their aspirations. It would be better if we were not all doing that individually, I think.

Q80 **Chair:** Thinking about the practicalities of that, who needs to sit down with the Department to make that work? Is it all of you? Is it the whole sector? Is it the teaching school hubs that have that responsibility under recommendation 10? What is the most effective way of getting that done?

Melanie Renowden: A selection of people who can represent different parts of the system and represent the different routes. It would be in all our interests to have a system that works very well there.

Q81 **Mrs Drummond:** All five of you, so we will put that in our recommendation then because it is very important.

My last question is about the routes like the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship. That is fairly new, although you could say some of the other routes were apprenticeships in the first place. How do we make those valued and understood by applicants?

Melanie Renowden: We are offering the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship this year. We have a group of apprentices training with us who have just started. Awareness remains relatively low, I would say—improving, but still low—and that is among prospective apprentices, but schools and headteachers are also not as familiar as we would like them to be that this is an available option.

The postgraduate teacher apprenticeship is a great addition, in that it removes financial barriers that, particularly in primary, can prevent particular applicants from progressing into the profession. We think that it is a good and important route that has lots more potential. It is not currently being realised, because the numbers remain pretty small overall.

It also has the potential to make an important contribution in recruitment into special schools and into AP. There are very skilled and experienced teaching assistants who could be fantastic candidates for special schools, for whom the apprenticeship would be a brilliant route into teaching. That is a sector where we know that recruitment and retention is particularly critical—we have real challenges recruiting teachers into that sector. The postgraduate teacher apprenticeship can make an outsize contribution to some particularly challenged parts of the system.

Q82 **Mrs Drummond:** What sort of people are taking the apprenticeships at the moment? Are they straight from university as postgrad, or are they mostly people coming from the outside?

Melanie Renowden: They have some teaching experience. It comes back to the point about giving people guidance on the route that is best for them. It would be helpful for us to describe at a system level the people who would benefit from that opportunity. They have some teaching experience; maybe they have had six months of experience as an unqualified teacher in a school or they are a teaching assistant, but they have some experience. Then they are able to be employed by the school as an apprentice, and their training is the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship to support them to develop as a teacher. They then will pick up the qualified teacher status and the endpoint assessment for the apprenticeship as well.

There are some challenges with it. There are a series of requirements and expectations with the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship, lots of which are in place because they are common to the apprenticeship system as a whole. They are there for good, sensible reasons at a macro system level in terms of how apprenticeships work, but they translate not brilliantly well into teaching. For example, the requirement that it is four terms, 12 months, so you have apprenticeships starting at a different point to the rest of your trainee intake and at a point that is not ideal from a school calendar point of view. There is that aspect.

The administration of it has a very high overhead, and there are some aspects in terms of things like maths and English qualification and equivalency, where there is a significant doubling up that then creates extra workload for providers and extra expectations on participants.

I know that the Department is aware of these things and also sees the promise of the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship. It has brought together a group of people to try to tackle some of these barriers and points of friction. We all want to see that move forward with some urgency, because I do think that it has enormous potential, particularly coming back to the point that Ian was making about it being a complementary route. In addition to moving teachers into communities where it is very difficult to find teachers, this is a pathway for people who are already in those communities as well.

Q83 **Mrs Drummond:** Going back to Ian's point, are there enough providers to do the academic side of the apprenticeship?

Melanie Renowden: There are a lot of providers already. It definitely can grow. As I say, it is a combination of having awareness and uptake from headteachers, awareness and uptake from participants, and then growing the provider pool as well.

Q84 **Nick Fletcher:** I would like to talk about bursaries. How successful do you think they have been with regard to subject shortages? After the initial teacher training, are they helping to keep teachers within schools? Melanie, you seem keen to answer.

Melanie Renowden: I do not want to monopolise, so I will keep it short. What we have seen in bursaries is that they have worked in some subject areas. We have seen less positive impact from the bursaries on physics and MFL, where recruitment remains very challenging.

I do think that the relationship between bursaries and retention is very important here, the evidence being sound and strong in terms of the relationship between bursaries and recruitment that they are an effective recruitment tool but do not tend to deliver in terms of retention. In making sure that we have levels of bursaries that remove financial barriers and encourage people into the profession, I do think that we need to think about the structuring of financial incentives as people move

into teaching and progress through their early careers of teaching, such that it incentivises them to stay and you get the retention benefit as well.

Q85 **Nick Fletcher:** Is there no point in doing these bursaries if they are not going to stay?

Dr Green: I agree with Melanie that it needs to be a long-term approach. For example, you could say that bursaries were for three years for a provider. I suppose that there are two ways to think about long term. One is that, for the student, as they move into school, the bursary continues to be paid, but the other one is that, for the provider, it has assurances that a bursary will be available for the subject for a period of three years.

Some of the bursaries are very high—I think £27,000. Whether you need such a big bursary for one subject, I question that, and whether you could take some of that money and apply it across more subjects at secondary would be something that could be a suitable next step. I know that UCET also supports that.

I also think that there is a need for travel costs. The cost of living has increased, particularly in London. If you take a PGCE, there are the fees, but on top of that you have your travel to placement every day. That can be a significant cost that for students, but at the moment that is not considered sufficiently.

Dr Watson: I would like to briefly pick up on the idea of bursary specifically for regional areas rather than just subjects. We did a project that was DFE funded pre and during covid, where we were looking at trying to place high-quality trainees in schools in areas that we struggle to get trainees into. In order to make that happen, we had to provide accommodation bursaries because parts of the south-west are extremely expensive in terms of rental costs, because of tourism. Transport, as Jasper was saying, can also be challenging. It would be worth considering whether bursaries might be provided on the basis of location, not just subject.

Nick Fletcher: I want to go back to the question that I asked there. If they do not stay, is there any point in the first place?

Dr Watson: Speaking from my limited evidence of the trainees who we work with, I don't think that we see people particularly dropping off in bursary subjects. I do not think that there is a higher level of attrition in bursary subjects.

Dr Green: I would echo that point, but I think that is an area that we need to do more research in—following student teachers beyond year 1, year 2 and year 3, depending on the bursary. I know a study looked at repayment of student loans over time, although it was a relatively small sample. Having more things like that, to really understand the effects of

these things further down the line, is really important. But this certainly helps recruitment in the short term, and that is some of the battle won.

Q86 **Chair:** At the risk of being controversial, the Government are talking in the NHS workforce plan about potential golden handcuffs for dentists. Would you see it as counterproductive for teachers to have those in shortage subjects, or do you think that that is something that could be explored?

Russell Hobby: I would explore it. The natural culmination of all this logic is that, yes, you do need to help people get through their training costs up front. But if you could target some of the spending to staying three, five or seven years and link it to regional and local hotspots—schools serving low-income communities, if you have worked for five years in one of those schools—and back-end some of that 27K, for example, that would, I think, cover all these concerns.

Dr Watson: I just want to caveat that with: nobody stays in teaching for the money.

Mrs Drummond: If they are unhappy, you would not want them in the classroom.

Q87 **Kim Johnson:** Panel, at the previous evidence session with trade union representatives, they were talking about how teachers were teaching subjects that they were not specialists in—physics and maths, for example. Are you now seeing the result of that in terms of recruiting teachers in those specific areas and retaining them?

Russell Hobby: I was writing an essay on this for maths just last week. If you wanted every young person in this country who is studying maths to be taught by a maths graduate, you would need to recruit 20% of all maths graduates to join the teaching profession every year, on a consistent basis. The things that they can do with that degree are quite phenomenal in other parts of the country as well.

The simple answer is that we are not going to have every young person taught by a degree-level specialist in their subject. It is similar stats for physics and for other things as well. It is possible to teach maths and other subjects well from a good A-Level grade, but you need to invest in significant subject knowledge enhancement to give people the confidence to do that, particularly for a subject like maths where people, given a choice, feel a lot less confident in teaching that outside of their specialism. We are going to have to do something just to build up people's confidence in teaching from A-Level if we want to hit that.

Q88 **Nick Fletcher:** That brings me straight on to the next question. The subject knowledge enhancement courses, what are your thoughts on those? I think that Russell was about to answer.

Miriam Cates: You have changed the question, though.

Nick Fletcher: Well, slightly.

Russell Hobby: I think that they have a central role to play in the system. We are not going to get all the teachers that we need from the degree topics that are being studied. There is a vicious cycle then, because if we are not creating enough people with maths A-Levels, we will not get enough maths graduates and so on, so it is about subject knowledge enhancement at different levels of the system. It is also possible for teachers to convert later on in their career. If you have been teaching biology, you may want to come in and teach physics, but additional support at that point would help.

We do need to think carefully about where we are deploying those teachers. If you are teaching A-Level, it is good to have a degree in that subject matter, but if you are going to teach it to GCSE or key stage 3, then we could be more flexible on that.

We also find, again, that people tend to go to different schools in the country. It will be the case that the schools serving more affluent communities get more access to the graduate-level teachers, so, again, a targeted retention payment to low-income communities might help, too.

Melanie Renowden: There is another option here, in terms of increasing the pool that we are reaching into, which is the degree apprenticeship. We talked about the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship before, which is already up and running, albeit at about 1,000 a year. The other thing that could help here is a degree apprenticeship. You have this limited pool of maths graduates, to take Russell's example, to pick from, but you could be supplementing that by creating a new pathway for prospective teachers to enter and be employed in a school and to train and develop their subject knowledge in tandem through a degree apprenticeship.

Again, it is something else that the Government are looking at and that we are keen to see being developed as a potentially beneficial additional pool. It has the potential to make an outsize difference in areas where it can be toughest to recruit as well.

Richard Gill: To build on that, Melanie, I completely agree that it is something that needs to be explored. The trailblazer group have already identified a couple of key challenges that may be unintended consequences. One is around subject specificity at secondary. In terms of some of the people who might be interested in this particular course, is the subject specificity there for them already? That links back to Russell's point around only being able to teach up to GCSE rather than A-Level. Affordability for employers is a key barrier at the moment, and unless particularly the latter is tackled, then it is going to be very difficult to get off the ground.

Dr Green: One of the things that is a real core of our secondary programme is its subject specificity: 80% of all the teaching happens through a subject lens. Our graduates represent an excellent pool of

students who go out into schools and teach at A-Level. One of the challenges that we are finding is in relation to placements, finding placements that can guarantee A-Level teaching and having the capacity there. That links to Ofsted requirements. You are inspected against the age range; whether you declare 11 to 16 or 11 to 18, you have to guarantee placements in that age range, and that poses challenges for providers like us in being able to assure that all our students get A-Level teaching opportunities during their training year.

Melanie Renowden: This is a challenge that the system needs to respond to. There are people who are being priced out of teaching as a career. Just going through the subject degree route and then going into a PGCE, or even some of the other pathways we have talked about today, does create financial barriers that prevent people from entering the profession who could go on to be very effective teachers. Yes, we need to respond to those challenges on degree apprenticeships, but I think this is something for us all to get our heads together to and work out how we can come up with a pathway that does have that rigour and does give everybody confidence in terms of subject specificity, but does open up teaching as a career to people who have previously been priced out of it.

Q89 **Ian Mearns:** I have a quick supplementary. If we are going to try to boost the expertise among the teaching profession in particular subject specialisms, what quality control mechanisms are in place or are going to be put in place to make sure that subject knowledge enhancements are up to the right level for everyone? Melanie, is that a good question? I don't know.

Melanie Renowden: I suppose it is a complex question because there are lots of different routes that we all run, and how we build the development of subject knowledge into those routes differs, quite reasonably. Subject, of course, is a vital element. Through the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship that we run, and with the around 500 teachers doing the QTS PGCE pathway with us as well, we spend a lot of time on individual subject days, as well as on subject pedagogy being embedded through the work that teachers do in the days in the centre—this probably takes us back to an earlier point—and with their mentors in school. Having provision and capacity at school level through placements for effective subject mentoring happening in school is important as well.

Q90 **Ian Mearns:** If this is going to be regarded as a solution within the teaching profession, how can Ministers, who might have to sit there in front of us and talk about subject knowledge enhancement, be confident that what is going on out there is of a good enough quality and is solving the problem? That is the crucial question.

Russell Hobby: Headteachers are your ultimate quality control. They will know whether they are fit to teach the subjects that they have. If they are desperate for recruits, they will reluctantly take on teachers who they do not believe are ready, but it is about a fair and honest assessment by

heads of whether they are getting the quality they need. The second line of defence—

Q91 **Ian Mearns:** We already know that there are non-specialist teachers teaching youngsters specialist subjects now. It is because headteachers, with all their professionalism and all their wishes to get it right, know that they cannot get anybody else at the moment, so they have to have an expedient.

Russell Hobby: But some of those will be good teachers as well. That is the other thing. A degree does not guarantee that you will effectively be a teacher of this subject. It is an outcome measure that we want here—are the kids learning from it? A headteacher will take who they need to have, but off the record, if you ask them if they are getting the quality that they need, they will tell you whether it is good enough or not.

Q92 **Ian Mearns:** We cannot have this being measured by whether kids get good enough grades in their A-levels or not. We do not want to have that sort of experimentation, where youngsters either pass or fail. We have to get it right for the kids, in the last analysis, haven't we?

Chair: Very quickly, because we need to make some progress with the brief, so I will go to Jasper and then Melanie.

Dr Green: Providers like us are responsible for making sure that graduates who graduate with a PGCE and QTS have the relevant subject knowledge and expertise to teach that subject. It is not just what they know but the pedagogy that goes with that. It is key. A lot of the reforms have been in the generic sense, which is understandable for lots of reasons, but it is key that we remember that teachers are teaching something. Teaching science is different from teaching history, and we need to hang on to that, because it is very easy for it to get lost; with all this reform, it gets washed out. That is just a point to hang on to.

Melanie Renowden: Connected to that point, in terms of subject knowledge not being done at the point at which you acquire your QTS, and then you become an early career teacher, now that we have that structured development built into the first two years in teaching, there is an opportunity and a responsibility on us, and on the schools that are putting in place the mentoring, to make sure that that development of subject continues through early career teaching and beyond as well.

Q93 **Nick Fletcher:** Is there anything that we or the Department should be doing to help in these subjects? You have covered a lot, to be honest.

Dr Green: I am going to say this because I am from IOE, which is a big provider, but scale is important in some of this work. If you have lots of small providers, it is very difficult for them to have sufficient numbers of tutors for, let's say, computing, which is often a really small subject. It can become uneconomic for small providers to have the specialism and expertise to develop a core programme around computing. We have all agreed that there are different providers and they have different

strengths, but scale is important here because it allows you to provide subject specificity for a range of subjects for a large number of students.

Melanie Renowden: There is one additional thing that I would say when we are investigating what works, and particularly thinking again about subject bursaries. We have already made the point about thinking about impact in terms of not just recruitment into but then retention in the profession. We also need to look at what the effects are outside the confines of that individual subject. Somebody touched on this earlier, but you get a distorting effect happening, driven by bursaries as well, with people whose subject knowledge might be better suited to biology being tempted to stretch into chemistry, for example. So when we are investigating different approaches to using financial incentives to get people in and keep them in, it is about not just looking at them purely within the single subject discipline.

Chair: Thank you. I will bring Miriam in, and then I will bring Andrew in a bit early because I know that he needs to leave.

Q94 **Miriam Cates:** I want to explore in a bit more detail what happens in the first two to three to four years of a teacher's career. We have mentioned how retention is very difficult. What is the average point at which someone will quit? Is it after year 2, year 3? Is there a pattern, or is it very random? Just a guess, or is there any evidence on it?

Dr Green: Some numbers show that after five years you lose something like 30%.

Q95 **Miriam Cates:** At what point in the five years? What is the mode?

Dr Green: Two to three, I think.

Miriam Cates: So there is a drop-off after the more intentional intervention and mentoring finishes, potentially.

Dr Green: For me, a big part of this is around what is set up in that initial teacher education year. You sow the seeds, essentially, for a lot of the thinking, the motivation, the interest in what you are teaching, and that hopefully carries you through beyond that two to three years. If teaching becomes overly technical, and you are just focusing on reproducing techniques and manoeuvres, after about two years, you have mastered some of those. It is around making sure that our ITT programmes have a view not just for year 1 and year 2 but in the life of a teacher and thinking about professionalism and what it means to continue in that profession over time.

Dr Watson: In some parts of the country, the ECF—the two years following the initial teacher education year—has only just finished, so the statistics will be a little bit behind.

Q96 **Miriam Cates:** I did a PGCE in 2006-07, so it was under the old system, but my personal experience was that I enjoyed my school placements in

my PGCE year because of the constant feedback. You are always observed, and you always have a chance to debrief after every lesson and improve. You get a little bit of that in your NQT year—not called that now—but then you are on your own. I did not drop out; I later had children and then dropped out. Is there a relationship between what is perceived as a sudden "You're on your own" and an attrition rate, do you think?

Dr Green: To pick up one thing, it is absolutely around the culture in that school. What is it like to be a new teacher in that school? What opportunities are there for you to reflect, engage in research and try things out, go to sessions? That is set at a leadership level. It involves thinking about the organisation and culture of professional learning in that school, and it is critical.

Melanie Renowden: This could be one of the things that could be really powerful about the reforms: embedding a culture, sets of behaviours and expectations for teachers entering the profession that the feedback that you experienced in your PGCE year and perhaps in your NQT year becomes embedded. It is now within the initial teacher training, and it is becoming so in the first two years of teaching. For those who are entering the profession now, that will be their norm—having that level of support and structure around them, and feedback.

Obviously, there are statutory expectations that are placed on schools within those first two years of teaching, but it does mean that, within a school, leaders of a school are organising their school such that they are putting in place support and provision around their new teachers, with a focus on helping teachers to continue to get better over time. So there is hopefully an opportunity for a bit of a change in culture around that but there is also some work for us to do in making sure that there is not a cliff edge when you get to the end of your two years as an early career teacher and that that then progresses into continued teaching.

Q97 **Miriam Cates:** It would be interesting to look at the impact of the new framework on the drop-off rates and drop-off times, but the flip side of that better investment in the first couple of years is a much greater workload for the school and/or mentor. Russell, you have commented on some reforms; you have mentioned the workload on the mentor, for example, and how rigidly they have to stick to the framework and the content. Could you expand on that?

Russell Hobby: We touched on this in our earlier answers too. The burden on mentors is very significant, and the mentor role is starting to pick up a number of other functions in the school as well, so the same person who is responsible for I thank the could end up mentoring early career framework and possibly even NPQ. We are not taking that as seriously as we should as a system and putting money in.

Q98 **Miriam Cates:** How much off-timetable time does a mentor typically get to do the job, or is that completely up to the head?

Russell Hobby: In theory, it is 10%, but that will vary in terms of workload around it.

Melanie Renowden: It also varies in how it is implemented in schools, because there is funding that is provided to enable that time off timetable for mentors, but we know very little about how that funding is being deployed by schools. Schools also have very little guidance on what is the best way they can stretch timetables, support mentors or deploy funding to support them to respond to the challenges that Russell is describing.

Richard Gill: That is really important, Melanie. The interim review showed that only 44% of mentors would be given additional time off to carry out their mentor responsibilities.

Miriam Cates: Only 44%?

Richard Gill: There is no evidence yet to prove this, but probably recruitment and retention is the reason for that. Those mentors are needed in front of children, and when you take them out for the hour, there is a challenge. That might be part of the problem here. There is no silver bullet in terms of mentor workload. There is a range of issues, including, not least, that this was brand-new in September 2021 and mentors have had to have a new way of working and learning the curriculum. But only 44% got that additional time in that interim review—the figure might change at the end of year 2. Of course, year 2 is funded. In year 1, no additional funding is given, but it is within the GAG funding—

Q99 **Miriam Cates:** Yes, because it was already roughly the existing model. How are mentors recruited? You clearly want the best practitioners for your mentor, but the school wants the best practitioners to be in front of the exam classes five lessons a day five days a week. Being as diplomatic as possible, I know of situations where a relatively senior teacher, whose career is not going anywhere, thinks that this is something that they could do because they are never going to get promoted. You can end up with people who probably should not be doing the job of enthusing, critiquing and motivating new teachers, because they are just doing it for extra points. How do you make sure that the mentors are high quality and they are the kinds of people who are going to keep new teachers in the profession? I will come to Annabel first because you have had your hand up for ages.

Dr Watson: I can tie what I was going to say to that point. One of the things that can help teachers want to say in teaching in that middle period is getting involved in initial teacher education and mentoring ECTs. There is a development route for them; it is professional development to be in that role.

In terms of having the NPQs in mentoring and potentially other options, we have run an MA in mentoring. We did a project where we tried to bring in schools that were not involved in ITT in our region—specifically

schools that were RI, or unsatisfactory Ofsted, to see what the challenge would be. Some of those schools have stayed on board with us. We had extra funding capacity to fund exactly that kind of mentor time and mentor training to make sure that it happened, which was essential. Some of those teachers have stayed on board and become long-standing partners in those schools, precisely because they see it as hugely valuable for their own engagement with what is happening in education generally, but also in subject education. So there is an opportunity to tie those things together in terms of retaining teachers through helping them feel that the mentoring role is valued and is part of their professional development.

The other thing that I was going to say in relation to that ECF period is that I think there is a missed opportunity to bring in more subject networks. If we are talking about culture and communities, it is not just the culture and community in your school. What can help some people stay on board is being a part of that national community of specialist teachers. I was at the United Kingdom Literacy Association conference a couple of weeks ago. It is an amazing organisation for bringing teachers from all over the world—we had Australia, America, New Zealand—together with researchers and academics to look at the most cutting-edge research in literacy. That is a primary-focused organisation, but it is increasingly bringing in secondary.

Some of those networks exist, and I do not think that they are being drawn upon in that ECF period, because it is early days and it has not been around for very long. I know that that focus on what Jasper alluded to as that very generic content can be delivered in subject disciplines, as Teach First has done, but the actual ECF content that you have to cover is generic. Where is that linking to those exciting communities of practice?

Miriam Cates: In other professions—medicine, law—you do develop those specialties and those networks with people who you are competitive with throughout your career. That is interesting.

Richard Gill: Going back to Jasper's earlier point, part of your question comes back to culture. Stereotypically, it is those members of staff who coming to the end of their careers who might be mentors. I know that there are lots of headteachers who absolutely see being a mentor as part of their retention strategy. Supporting a new teacher into the profession is highly rewarding and does come down to the culture within the school.

Back to your substantive point, you are right that, pre-2021, the quality of mentoring was generally unknown. I am sure some brilliant mentoring and some less good mentoring was taking place. There is the training need now, from 2021, for mentors. Russell referenced earlier that that is not without challenge. Twenty hours for experienced mentors is a massive, massive commitment. I hope something will come out of the ECF/CCF review or, if not, that your recommendation is that we look at

the mentoring and try to make sure that it is far more focused and personalised to meet the needs of the mentor.

Dr Green: I will pick up on the points that have been made on leading mentoring being seen as a key role in a school. One of the benefits of the reforms of the quality requirement is the opportunity for us to strengthen and identify roles and to provide some funding for people—not mentors, but those people who are leading mentors in their school. But there is a challenge around that in relation to funding—for the lead mentorship team, it is for one year. We need to think strategically about putting expertise and responsibility for mentoring in a school, because they understand their context, they know who needs a bit more support, and they know who their strong mentors are. Providers like us do not have that knowledge. It is such a key role, and we need to invest more financially.

Melanie Renowden: I want to do a quick plug for a research project on mentoring that we have just completed. We carried out a synthesis of existing research, we have done some research on current practice, taking feedback from school leaders, mentors and mentees, and we have pulled all of that together. We have described a hypothesis in terms of the theory of change in mentoring, identifying those contextual factors that affect the success of mentoring and also the active ingredients that you need to have in place to deliver the benefits that you are seeking to achieve. We have done some investigation of this work; there is lots more to do.

The evidence base on mentoring in this country is still quite thin, so it is also an area where we need to investigate more and learn more about how to do things really effectively. I wholeheartedly agree that this is a next phase. A focus for all of us is how we recognise and celebrate the work that is going on in mentoring so that it becomes a valued destination in its own right.

Richard Gill: Very quickly, Chair, if you do not mind, I think the landscape is changing, albeit that that is embryonic at the moment. I can think of a number of multi-academy trusts—sadly I cannot count them on more than a pair of hands—that are now employing mentors who do not have the distraction of teaching but who meet the skills and requirements. Those multi-academy trusts are being system-led, in that they are not defined within their own multi-academy trust, but they are working with other schools that potentially are having capacity issues, and offering those services out in a collaborative way. It is a new way of working. I would not say that it was a significant percentage of the way that they work at the moment, but it is an exciting opportunity that may well evolve.

Chair: I am going to bring in Andrew to talk about the NPQ.

Q100 **Andrew Lewer:** For people listening to this, there is a slight risk of in alphabet soup, isn’t there. NPQs are national professional qualifications.

We are still on the retention theme. To what extent do you think that the Department for Education's reforms to NPQs are promoting effective professional development, and how might that help enhance retention rates for experienced teachers?

Richard Gill: First and foremost, it is providing a universal offer of a leadership development route to all schools. I do not want to put words in your colleague's mouth, but you can go to the deficit model of the first two years and then you are left to it. Some schools have historically had good professional development routes, but they might not have been available in all schools. Having that universal offer available to all schools and teachers has to be taken as a positive.

The "but" at the moment, in the current climate, is that, although awareness of the NPQs is improving, it is still not universally acknowledged in all schools. More work needs to be done in the sector. I mentioned earlier that teaching school hubs have already had a role, and now have an even greater role, in targeting individual schools that potentially are not benefiting from that training currently.

Q101 **Andrew Lewer:** That is awareness. What about capacity?

Richard Gill: The reason the 87 hubs were put in place in the first place was to provide the national infrastructure to ensure there was north-to-south coverage around NPQ delivery. Over the last 18 months, while there are other delivery partners in the system doing an important job, those relationships with the teaching school hubs and their local partners, which was always a vision, have come to fruition. There is some strong work on meeting capacity.

I do not know if you have seen some of the broken-down numbers, in terms of the numbers of ECTs and NPQ people hubs are serving at the moment, but it is significantly different from how they might have been working previously as a teaching school. Currently, they are meeting the demand and stepping up to ensure that that maximum capacity is there.

There are further challenges ahead. We know that there are two NPQs coming on to the market next year—SEND and mathematics—so the job of growing the network and ensuring that you have high-quality facilitators and high-quality partnerships that can meet the needs of the people coming in on those courses is never done.

At this point, there is, again, lots of optimism, but the fair challenge that you may give back to me is, when we will know that we have got there, in terms of making a difference in creating that next generation of leaders? We are not going to find that out by August.

Dr Watson: I do not have a lot to add, but having that consistency of availability of NPQs to all the schools is brilliant. I would just urge the Committee to be aware that there are many other ways that teachers can grow and develop. I mentioned the UKLA conference. One of the things that I know has really motivated teachers in our partnership is being

directly involved in some of our research projects. We do not want teacher professional development to be just these NPQs.

Q102 **Chair:** That is a very fair point. NPQs are the Department's part of the offer, but there is a wider offer out there, and that includes things like the chartered institute and subject-specific forms.

Dr Green: I would add master's to that list. That is an important thing to add to the options available to teachers who are progressing during their careers. The one thing that I would urge us to find a solution on is that I think the biggest risk to teacher education now is mentor capacity and mentor workload and making sure that there are sufficient placements. Those factors are all locked in together. Finding ways in which these NPQs can be used to accredit mentor training is absolutely key. There has to be a system-level approach to support that, while still recognising that a lot of the mentors' curriculum will need to be aligned to the providers' curriculum. At the moment, they feel too uncoupled, and there is a risk that we cannot simply take an NPQ and say, "That is sufficient for this." It would be good to work towards smoothing that process out.

Melanie Renowden: Our experience of the new NPQs is positive. The feedback that we are getting from the teachers and leaders who were on our programmes has been encouraging. We think the evidence base that underpins the suite of NPQs is good. It is a sound evidence base and you get coherence across both the NPQs and other parts of the golden thread.

Also, they create a strong bridge from the evidence into school practice. I am sure that this is common to all NPQ providers. We need to be making sure that we are equipping those on the programmes in ways that support the core role and mean that they can make a difference when they get back into school the next day, rather than storing up theoretical knowledge for later.

Fee-free, obviously, is good. It does not mean completely free, because of the costs of travel and cover and those sorts of factors as well, but fee-free is still good.

As for what comes next for NPQs, we need to think about how they are utilised effectively at school and trust level. We have the potential created by the coherence of the evidence base, but I am not sure that it has yet been fully realised by schools. We need to be thinking and learning about how schools are using those NPQs so that they can be planning and delivering whole-workforce planning over time as well and joining it up back at school.

One thing they will need for that is more forward visibility of funding for NPQs. When I was reading the recruitment and retention strategy, one thing that was talked about was the use of the apprenticeship levy for NPQs. There has been an alternative way of making sure that NPQs have been fee-free for schools to access in place in the medium term, but we need to come back to how that works longer term. To do that effective,

long-term workforce planning, schools need to have forward visibility about what provision is going to be available to them as well.

It is important that we are also investigating the impact of the NPQs so that we are evaluating their success, and not just in terms of the development of teacher and leader effectiveness but also retention as well, and seeing what difference it has made there.

Russell Hobby: A lot has been said. NPQs are an emerging success story, and the content on the revised NPQs is significantly better than what went before. All I can add to what has been said is that we should not let them become the victims of their own success. We already have two new NPQs coming in, which have been mentioned. The danger within education is that, as soon as we find something that works, we try to deploy it for everything that we have. I would say that we should stick with the NPQs that we have and recognise that there is also a rich range of professional qualifications that can wrap around them.

Q103 **Andrew Lewer:** That is spot on, given that when you are in the field and doing it, lots of new things seem very exciting. We tend to forget that people who have the day job and things to do take a lot longer to get used to a new system and have it embedded and to understand it properly.

Melanie Renowden: On that point, the system's understanding of the specialist NPQs, in particular, is still developing. There is still a lot of residual familiarity with what used to be the NPQML, and we are not there yet with schools having made the translation into the new specialist suite. Adding new ones adds further complexity when they have not got to grips with the first wave.

Q104 **Andrew Lewer:** On non-NPQ professional development and its importance, I am sure that you will all think that ongoing professional development does help with the retention of teachers. Does anyone have any further views on non-NPQ professional development that we should be aware of before we move on?

Dr Green: A core part of a subject is subject specificity, where teachers can spend really some time thinking deeply about their subjects. That comes about through those master's-level qualifications that extend over periods of time, which, again, can be helpful when thinking about retention.

Q105 **Chair:** Is there an opportunity with the LLE legislation, the lifelong learning approach and so forth to attract more people into longer-term, part-time study and to help them through that route towards those higher-level qualifications?

Dr Green: Master's levels?

Chair: Yes. Is there any opportunity for people to work towards their master's piecemeal over a long period?

Dr Green: There is, yes, and part of your PGCE will give you master's, M-level, credits. There are challenges around funding at the moment, in that funding does not count unless you start a master's from zero. If you think about it, that does not help retention, because you have students who—

Chair: People who have already graduated, by definition.

Dr Green: Yes, people who already have their 60 credits. Therefore, it would make sense to take that into account and provide funding to enable them to continue at M-level. That takes time, and they will still be teaching during that period. So that is a real opportunity.

As Russell said, it is important to value the different parts of the system and to think about teacher education as an ecosystem; we want all sorts of different plants and species all coexisting. We do not want a monoculture with one crop and that is it. The strength of our system is its diversity and recognising the value of each partner.

Dr Watson: Institutionally, there is a move towards micro-credentials and providing all of our courses in units that can be mixed and matched and be done over a period and flexibly—so, a movement towards all courses being provided flexibly. Jasper is absolutely right that we are absolutely stymied by the fact that the master's loan is available only if you are doing the full 180 credits.

Master's-level study can help in areas where what we know about teaching is contested. One of the things that I work in is the role of grammar in learning to write, which is an area of huge debate. Our master's programmes that interrogate that are hugely valuable for giving teachers the confidence and authority to make judgments about areas of the curriculum that are publicly contested and the evidence base is quite limited for how theory might work in practice. There is a huge benefit from certain types of study that aim to develop people's deep research engagement and confidence. Enabling teachers to do that while they are still teaching full-time is incredibly valuable.

I have heard the phrase "what works" quite a lot today, and that always rings slight alarm bells for me. I know that my colleagues at the Sutton Trust and the EEF would always say that, if you are talking about what works, you have to think what works, for whom, when and under what conditions. What works as a concept is problematic if you do not allow for those contextual factors, and what you are trying to achieve—different people have different goals. What works for one thing might have unintended consequences. It is that sort of problematising of some areas that that level of study can help, and it can help teachers feel that they have agency, confidence and authority.

Q106 **Mohammad Yasin:** The consensus in the written evidence supplied to this Committee is that ethnic and minority teachers in England have been under-represented in comparison with the ethnic make-up of students in

schools. Today, 60% of state-funded schools—primary and secondary—do not have an ethnic minority classroom teacher, and almost 90% do not have an ethnic minority teacher in the senior leadership team. You will be familiar with the maxim that you have to see it to be it. As representatives of schools and training providers, what needs to be done, and what do you need from the Department, to support applicants, trainees and new teachers from under-represented groups? Russell, I would like to start with you.

Russell Hobby: Yes, it is something that we have been thinking about a lot, as has everybody within the system. The NFER research report, which looks at every stage of the pipeline and the progression of people from under-represented groups versus majority groups, shows that ethnic minority teachers are over-represented at the application stage and then, at every stage thereafter, they are being less successful, as in the system is discriminating against them right through from entry and into teaching as well. The key step that you outlined, of making sure that the senior leadership team of the school is at least heading towards representativeness of the community, is one of the key tipping points as to whether a school is genuinely able to serve its community or not.

What we find is working, and other organisations will be experimenting with similar things, is that contextual recruitment can play a significant role if we balance the opportunities that someone may have had earlier in life against the credentials they can show. Blind recruitment can be powerful as well. Specific schemes are looking at communicating that people are welcome and that specific steps are being taken. The kind of debate that goes on in terms of the language around the curriculum in English literature and history, for example, is an important signal that the system wants to change. Behaviour policies can play a role, as can the role that haircuts and hair policies play within schools. People are looking at these things and deciding whether the education system is a welcoming system or not. There are a number of steps that can and should be taken.

Q107 **Mohammad Yasin:** Do you agree that ethnic minority teachers are finding it difficult to get senior roles?

Russell Hobby: Yes.

Melanie Renowden: Similar to the things that Russell has been describing there, one of the things that is important to us in the way that we have established the national institute is that we are embedded in the communities and working with the group of schools that we are hoping to prepare teachers to go into and serve. Our head office is in Blackburn, and we have training centres in Bermondsey and elsewhere in south London, and in Doncaster. So it is about getting into and working in the communities.

In practice, that means that when we are running recruitment for the interviews for new trainee teachers in schools, that is held in schools in

the communities with visible representation of the communities that we are hoping to recruit from among the staff bodies in those schools. These are small practical steps that we hope are going to start to make a difference, as well as some of the things that Russell has been highlighting here as well.

Thinking more broadly about under-represented groups in teaching, postgraduate teacher apprenticeships and potentially degree apprenticeships could broaden opportunities for people who perhaps previously either have been unsuccessful in progressing into teaching or who have decided against pursuing teaching as a career; they could be attracted in if we were to add those pathways.

Another thing we are offering this year is a part-time pathway for people with caring responsibilities or people who are later in their careers and looking at a career change. Increasingly, candidates are asking about opportunities for part-time training, so that is something we are offering for the first time this year.

Dr Green: We have quite a diverse cohort. We are about 50% white and 50% black and global-majority students. One of the key things that we found with our own cohort is the importance of mentor-student relationships; that is absolutely key. There are also findings around micro-aggressions of students on placement. There are very subtle but racist micro-aggressions going on, and these need to be talked about. There needs to be a culture of openness and discussion. Some of these issues are really challenging for placement schools, but also our own colleagues.

We are looking at the ITE anti-racist framework. That is a piece of research that has come out that is specifically relevant to ITE, looking at pedagogies and what types of pedagogies are beneficial. It is about thinking about inclusiveness, giving people opportunities to hear each other's views, and thinking about what is distinctive about subjects and how to explore ideas of race and racism through subjects. Clearly defined report and support processes are key here so that when racist incidents take place, students feel confident to report, but also about how to report.

Q108 **Mohammad Yasin:** It is shocking that applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds are facing racism or any kind of discrimination. What can be done to tackle this? This is a very serious issue.

Dr Green: I think it is education.

Mohammad Yasin: The headteachers, for example, are recruiting them, so they are educated.

Dr Green: They are educated, but they are maybe not educated in these areas. We see from our students that students from white backgrounds are more likely to get employment after they graduate from us, even

though the graduation rates are the same. There are definitely potentially unconscious biases going on, but it is a process that needs to air, and we need to give partners and our colleagues time to talk about these things.

Q109 **Chair:** Annabel, you talked about some of the support that you were putting in place.

Dr Watson: Yes. We have a slightly different problem, in that ethnic diversity in the south-west is so low. We know that for pupils, something that really affects their attainment is their sense of belonging. Are they surrounded by other people who are like them, whether that is about ethnicity, race or socioeconomic background?

We have done two main things. One is to have a partnership with some London schools in Tower Hamlets. We send some trainees there, and they come back. While there, they are in a super-diverse school setting, and we use that partnership to improve what we offer in terms of our training to all of our trainees in the south-west. The other thing is having our race equality resource officer, in terms of what Jasper said about support. Do people know who they can turn to even say, "I just felt uncomfortable" when there are these microaggressions. Having that designated role has been incredibly successful, and we know that there are people who have completed their teacher training because of it—we have recent case studies—who otherwise would have withdrawn. But the issue is whether there continues to be that support once they are employed and in school.

Q110 **Mohammad Yasin:** You are right there, but we are talking about recruiting applicants from ethnic backgrounds. They are facing discrimination when they apply for the job. What can be done about that?

Dr Watson: Russell spoke about some important things that you can do in recruiting and attracting those applicants. We make that role extremely visible on our website and we make it very clear—I think Jasper talked about being explicit about welcoming—how we support people. We have applicants who say, "I know that the south-west is not full of people who look like me, so what is that you are going to do to help me?" We try to make that explicit up front to people who are thinking of applying.

Q111 **Miriam Cates:** I just want to clarify. Nobody would disagree with the importance of making sure that there are no additional barriers and that people get full support, but are you not in danger of further embedding critical race theory—another very contested idea—into schools? There have been many high-profile cases of that recently. Russell, you are almost suggesting changing what we teach in English and history to attract more people from ethnic minorities. Why would you do that? Why would you just not make sure that any confidence barriers are addressed? Wouldn't it be better just to properly crack down on racist incidents in schools, for example, as you would with any prejudice, rather than creating a tailor-made system that I think could lead to more

politicisation in schools than we are already seeing?

Russell Hobby: There is a long way between making sure the English literature curriculum does not have solely white authors in it, as was the case in some respects, and truly recognising the diversity of our history, and teaching critical race theory in schools.

Miriam Cates: Not from the evidence that I have seen.

Russell Hobby: We have to be careful about the slippery slope. You have to do the right thing in schools within this, and it is good for every young person in this country if they have an accurate idea of history and see all of literature. At the same time, you do not have to go to the full extreme of some of the theories that are being taught. The results have not been there.

Q112 **Miriam Cates:** Should we build a curriculum around what British children need to know and need to understand both for their educational benefit and also for the workforce, rather than around how we recruit a particular set of teachers?

Russell Hobby: You definitely teach for that as well, but people who are looking to join the system will say, "Is the English literature curriculum representative? Is our history curriculum accurate and broad in the way it is being done?" If we want a system that does not discourage applicants, that will be one of the signs they will look at.

Richard Gill: Back to the original point, there are probably some low-hanging fruit here—things that can be done—which I will address in a minute, and then something more systematic.

On the low-hanging fruit, a colleague asked about recruitment practices. Some providers are bucking the trend. Some providers are doing a really, really good job around BAME recruitment, but it is not widely, universally known. In terms of better communications and better sharing of good practice, that does not have to be the Department's job, but in terms of better knowledge, knowledge is power. So that is a piece of low-hanging fruit that needs to be addressed.

On the longer-standing issue, Russell listed a whole load of initiatives that Teach First is involved with, and you will find them replicated by lots of providers. But there is little up-to-date research on what the barriers are to attracting BAME and under-represented groups into teaching. We make assumptions in society, but a piece of work that would be helpful in society, whether it is Department-led or university-led, would be to get underneath the why to try to understand what the barriers are and what is preventing under-represented groups from wanting to be a teacher. If we can get down to the systemic roots, we can address this far better, rather than taking a universal approach to sort everything.

Q113 **Mohammad Yasin:** Russell, have you found any approaches effective in attracting more people from ethnic minority groups to join the teaching

profession to improve the diversity in the profession?

Russell Hobby: You have to look at your recruitment practices first and at whether they are reinforcing existing disparities or blind to them. Contextual and blind recruitment are important. As Jasper was saying, we as providers responding properly to the challenge of micro-aggressions and racist incidents in the training environment would be a very powerful step. That would help to ensure that people who have decided to join the profession are not forced out of it.

We also need to look at progression into leadership roles to make sure that that is equal and that we also have role models in leadership positions thinking about the culture in those schools. There are many other tactics as well, but those are things that stand out for us.

Mohammad Yasin: Does anybody else want to come in? We have gone over time already.

Q114 **Chair:** Thank you very much. We are over time, so I want to ask one further question, and there is one more from Miriam as well. The cost of training came up earlier as a concern for potential applicants. What support do providers need from the Department to better support those applying for teacher training and to see them through? Obviously, in a perfect world, we would all love to have everything for free, but everything comes at a cost. How high a priority should making sure that there is support in place be in the education budget?

Richard Gill: In one sentence, given the recruitment crisis that the sector is facing at the moment, it is a high priority at this point in time. To go back to my earlier point about known knowns, if finance is one of the barriers that is preventing people from coming into teaching, we need to address it. I take your point that there is not bottomless pit here, but if finance is one of the barriers, putting some more money in to solve the issues we have currently makes sense.

Q115 **Chair:** Is finance a greater barrier for graduates considering what career to take up or for career changers?

Richard Gill: I go back to my point earlier, I do not think that enough is truly known from the research. There is a lot of regional soft intelligence, and there is some research out there, but to truly get underneath the known knowns, more research needs to be done.

Dr Watson: I would just recap what we have already discussed: reconsidering bursaries based on location not just subject and also Jasper's point that maybe some of the bursaries do not need to be that high initially and that there might be some opportunity for a bit of redistribution.

Q116 **Chair:** On the location point, I guess the Department would say, "We're doing that through the levelling-up premium," which, to some extent, is looking at both longer-term and location-based approaches. Some of our

concern about the levelling-up premium is that it is very targeted to a few areas and not widespread enough considering the levels of need.

Dr Watson: The Department should ensure that it has properly reviewed where the need is and how to allocate the premium most effectively.

Dr Green: Another thing to flag is the long-term support for leading mentoring in school and for mentors. At the moment, we have funding allocated for just one year, which makes it very hard to be strategic and plan for the long term. Let's face it: mentors are one of the most key things about whether you want to stay in teaching. Therefore, there must be—

Chair: That has to be the key to the "golden thread" in the system.

Dr Green: Everything that we have talked about, fundamentally for me, comes back to mentoring. Unless that is properly resourced and financed, we will continue to have a cycle that does not actually lead to change.

Melanie Renowden: I agree about forward visibility and the ability to plan. That applies to bursaries as well, so that we can anticipate where those bursaries are going to fall.

Potentially, redistribution is worth looking at. One thing worth noting is that with some of the higher bursaries—the £27,000 tax-free—trainees in some parts of the country experience a fall in income as they enter their first year of teaching. They can come into teaching with a very demanding first year and classroom responsibilities and be paid less, effectively, than they were when they were training. So there are some slight oddities in the system at the moment.

I would reinforce the point about always thinking, when we are trying to think about recruitment incentives, about the effect on retention as well. The evidence is not strong in terms of the link between paying those up-front recruitment incentives and having an impact on retention.

Travel is a very challenging factor for people who are completely unfunded, and that is one of the things we talked about in our written evidence. In many cases, our trainees are in parts of the country where public transport is simply not even available, let alone affordable. One thing we find can be a real barrier is attending a second placement. You work very hard to find a school local to a trainee to minimise the cost and complexity of travel, but when you try to find a second placement, you sometimes have to go a bit further field, which can be really problematic for trainees, to the extent that some will even say that they cannot continue. We also know of trainees whose parents have been driving them back and forth to second placements. Finding some solution to that travel issue, particularly for those who are unsupported by bursaries or scholarships, is very important, so that they can get into schools in the parts of the country that are less well served.

Ian Mearns: That sounds like a trainee teacher maintenance allowance,

doesn't it?

Russell Hobby: We have definitely had people drop out because they cannot afford the cost of the petrol to commute, or we have had to switch their placement school as a result. Graduates face their own challenges, but career switchers too—taking a non-salaried route into teaching is hard if you also have mortgage payments or other commitments. That is a particular barrier for people.

Chair: Miriam, did you want to add anything?

Miriam Cates: No, that's fine.

Chair: Thank you very much. We have overspilled our time, but it has been a really informative panel, and I am genuinely very grateful for your time. The only reason why, at the end of the event, the panellists outnumber the members of the Committee is that a number of people had to leave to ask questions in the Chamber, but I think everyone has had their say. Thank you for some really useful input to our inquiry.